Black Lives Matter: Fighting Violence and HIV

January 5, 2016 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

The January/February 2016 issue of POZ magazine is online.

Here's an excerpt from my editor's letter:

Some of us have the luxury of being able to choose how to identify racially, but based on our appearance, most of us do not. As a result, society labels us and we then label each other. Those labels carry assumptions and lead to consequences. For black people, those consequences too often can be deadly.

The Black Lives Matter movement was born out of frustration with those deadly consequences. Although the deaths of black people at the hands of police remain a focus of the movement, the idea of confronting violence committed against black bodies in general has expanded its scope of advocacy.

Our cover guy, Ashton P. Woods of Black Lives Matter Houston, is a great example. As an HIV-positive gay black man, Ashton brings all those identities to the table. Black Lives Matter activists are now finding common cause in fighting violence and related issues like HIV. Click here to read more about the intersections of both movements.

To read my complete letter from the editor, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.