PSA: If You're Offended By The #BlackLivesMatter POZ Cover Then You're Stupid

January 22, 2016 By Shawn Decker

I noticed some blowback on POZ's Facebook page after the recent issue went up, which features the cover story "Black Lives Matter". Here's a sampling of what was written in the Comments section on Facebook:

"*How about all lives matter, why does it have to be racist now wtf hiv doesnt discriminate why should we, umm yea idk if i wanna be part of POZ anymore....*"

"*Really POZ??? Why not do the front page with all lives matter!!! HIV does not care what race you are and you shouldn't either!!!!*"

"*All lives matter . This is racist . I'm so over this "black lives matter" . #AllPozLivesMatter*"

"*Offended I am All lives matter May stop reading POZ*"

There were some supportive comments, too. But I couldn't help but wonder how many others were offended when they saw the cover story? HIV has disproportionately affected communities of color for decades now. As a white guy, I'm not offended by the "Black Lives Matter" movement because I support a reduction in unnecessary abuse (lethal and non-lethal) by law enforcement. As someone with HIV, I recognize that it was the courage of the gay community and the bleeding disorders community- both minority community's *sans* the inclusion of HIV- that has given me the opportunity to simply be here today.

So anytime a community speaks out in protest of a genuine threat to their existence, I feel a kinship.

With the HIV community, I start at a default sense of comradery. I know the many diverse struggles we face, medically and socially. It bonds us. But there are also aspects of living with HIV that I can only empathize with from afar- there are compounded struggles that I will never face based on the fact that I was born to a middle-class white family. And knowing about those struggles makes me a more informed member of the community.

If you’re offended by what you’ve just read then, well, you’re stupid.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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