
WHY DO WE NEED A BLACK PRESS?

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Op-Ed by founder, editor and publisher of The African-American Voice, Robert Lloyd.

WHY DO WE NEED A BLACK PRESS?

The question is, WHO needs a Black press? Can we AFFORD a Black press?

Because you are 2% of the population but 6% of the police stops, 12% of the incarcerated, 6% of the homeless, when because you are Black you are 6 times more likely to have to spend 40% of their income on housing.

If that 2% were concentrated in a specific community perhaps we wouldnt need a Black press because we would get the news at the local grocery story. We would get the news at the local soul food restaurant. We would get the news at the community center. We would get the news from our children in the Black schools.

When you are 2% scattered across the city, the only places are the denominationally divided Black churches. If you are interested in a national perspective, you can go the internet and the media. Regionally you can go 280 miles to Seattle or 350 miles to Portland. But there is no other way for the 2% to be in communication than a local Black press.

And there is no way for Black people to know how they are being represented in the local institutions: educational, political, financial, etc.

Spokane has a Black newspaper that keeps us abreast of national Black issues, interviews Black entertainers and celebrities when they come to speak at the white institutions, for example Gonzaga University and to a lesser extent Whitman, Eastern Washington University and the community colleges.

There was a time when Spokane had a Black press that had a broad cross section of the Black community that would meet and discuss and debate the issues of the day and distribute the paper through the mail, key distribution points, Black churches, barber and beauty shops.

Let me give you an example of why a small Black population needs a Black press.

County courthouse - two courtrooms, same day, same time, same floor:

Courtroom #1

Three quarters filled with social activist advocates and family for the biracial defendant. Six of them are Black. Four white supporters are there for the white victim. A Black reporter from the local TV station is there.

Courtroom #2

Eight or nine supporting friends and family, all Black except for the white wife of the Black defendant. Two supporters of the white victim. No press.

Why does it make a difference if you have a Black press?

If you have community communication you have transparency and knowledge of what takes place. When you do not have community present you have no transparency nor do you have the possibility of support and advocacy.

This lack of presence is a contributing factor to disproportionality in treatment and outcome and takes place in all your institutions.

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