

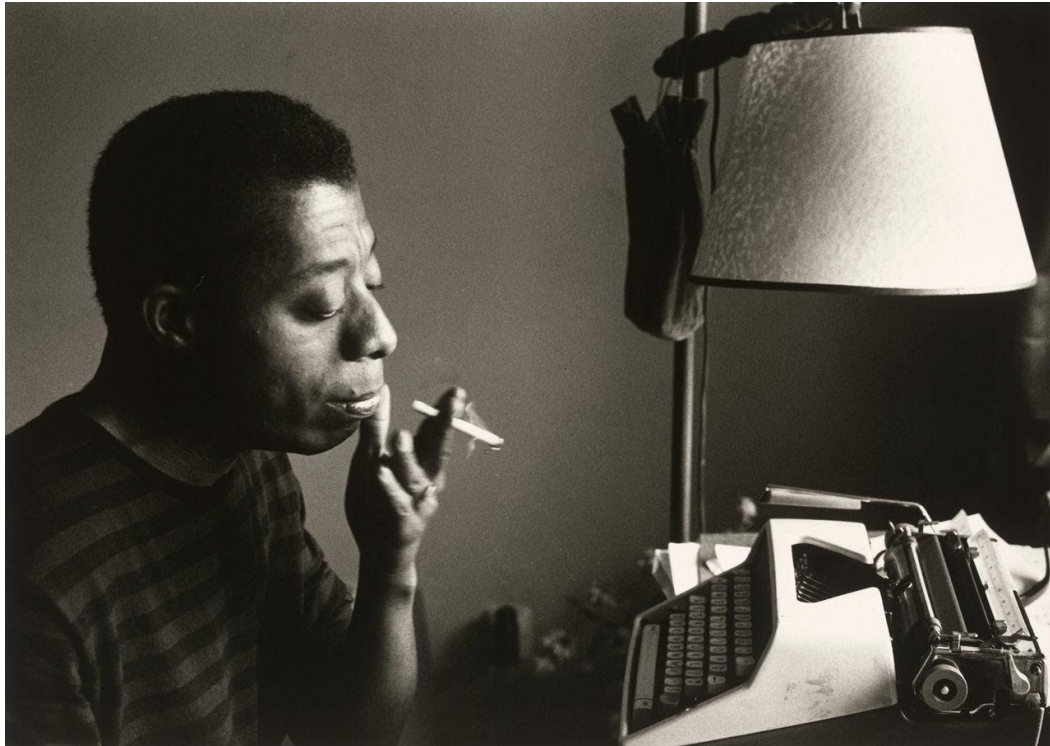
How Cannabis Influenced & Shaped The Black Culture

by Victoria Antoine



Dizzy Gillespie (1960)

Black Culture - Cannabis has been part of our culture since the 1920s-30s during the Jazz era. This is a story of cannabis. It is the story of deeply entrenched elements of culture demonized and disparaged yet unable to be uprooted. It's no wonder their stories are intertwined in ways that go far deeper than their connections to the creative world. Cannabis gives us a unique creative vibe when we as an artist trying to create something meaningful with our work. Well-known artists such as Billie Holiday, James Baldwin, Snoop Dog, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong and many use cannabis to help them to be more creative with their mastermind of work.



James Baldwin (1963)

Louis Armstrong, the father of Jazz described the way that cannabis made him. He said *"It makes you feel good, man. It relaxes you, makes you forget all the bad things that happen to a Negro. It makes you feel wanted, and when you are with another tea smoker it makes you feel a special sense of kinship."* Louis Armstrong was ahead of his time. Cannabis was used for "creativity smoke" to help us more relaxed and be more creative.

I smoke cannabis for medical and recreational use. When I smoke cannabis it really helps me more relaxed and brings out my creative work such as screenwriting and filmmaking. Cannabis gives us black artists freedom of expression. I like cannabis so much that cannabis should be legal nationwide!

The downfall of cannabis is there are black and brown people are still getting arrested for small possession of cannabis. They re getting harsh sentences in certain states. According to ACLU's original analysis, According to the ACLU's original analysis, marijuana arrests now account

for over half of all drug arrests in the United States. [8.2 million marijuana arrests between 2001 and 2010, 88% were for simply having marijuana.](#) Nationwide, the arrest data revealed one consistent trend: racial bias. Blacks are 3.73 times more likely than whites to be arrested for cannabis. It's very depressing that blacks are more likely to get arrested for simple small possession of cannabis.

Musicians like Louis Armstrong and Bob Marley brought cultural awareness of cannabis to a broader audience, the intersection of cannabis and hip-hop is one of the pillars upon which acceptance and appreciation for cannabis. An album such as *The Chronic* by Dr. Dre, *Black Sunday* by Cypress Hill, and *Doggystyle* by Snoop Dogg were among the first mainstream pop-culture references and exposure to cannabis a generation of teenagers experienced. Cannabis is part of the black culture! As Hip-Hop emerged as a cultural force, rappers made it a part of their music, stage shows, and merchandise. Snoop Dogg has gone on to create a wildly successful multi-faceted cannabis empire including brand strains and growing kits while staying in the mainstream by doing this like hosting TV shows with Martha Stewart.

While medical and recreational cannabis use has become more legal state by state. There are recreational use programs such as social equality who are affected by the war on drugs and addressing the cannabis-related injustice and inequalities in the black and brown communities. It's only fair that cannabis should be federally legal in the US. In the near future, there would be more black and brown cannabis entrepreneurs who are going to help their communities by the effectiveness of the war of drugs and create more opportunities for others.