

style

FASHION by Cavario H KING

HHW SPENDS A DAY AT THE MAGIC SHOW
WITH FUBU FOUNDER DAYMOND JOHN

Daymond John was born in Brooklyn, but grew up in Hollis Queens. As an adolescent, he was a driven entrepreneur and became immersed in a pervasive inter-city movement called hip hop. Daymond was reared by a strong single mother who inspired him to always push to the next level, "think bigger" she would say whenever he presented her with a scheme to improve their working class conditions. In the early '90s Daymond, inspired by the rash of hip hop oriented styles, pulled together a rag tag squad of friends and associates to ultimately build what would become the most successful and long running, Black-owned clothing brand to date.

FUBU or For Us By Us, gave birth to a pride and connection that had not previously existed between the powerful urban demographic and a clothing manufacturer.

Through a series of employment and entrepreneurial endeavors, Daymond developed and steered his work ethic, acquiring the business acumen of a world class CEO before the age of 21.

Before FUBU was the worldwide success that it is today, it was a modest start-up being run from a private house in Queens, attesting to the fact that from humble beginnings many great things arise. Few understood the many fast changing trends coming out the most powerful youth movement since Rock & Roll. "I think it was a combination of being in the right time and frame of mind," says Daymond, who saw the writing on the wall when many of his counterparts were just writing on walls. Daymond has recently released his memoirs, "Display of POWER," an exercise in pragmatism that will leave readers feeling pumped.

DAYMOND JOHN: A licensing company comes along when they feel the brand is respectable enough that they can make money off of it. They understand that you need to extend into a particular territory and they can do a better job than you can. These are big guys so you have to be on top of your game so that they come to you. The guys that do our female line do Earl Jeans, Gasoline and Jordache; the first name brand denim guys in history.



RUSSELL SIMMONS: I watched him evolve and build a company and then I watched him become the behind the scenes man that owns a bunch of companies. I think Daymond John is a person that reminds people that the purpose of being rich and famous is to build other people in the same way. So the fact that that's the path that he's on right now is inspiring and I hope that other hip hop entrepreneurs recognize.



DAYMOND JOHN: When I sat down with my book writer I had a menu; I said, I wanna address how white people think about us, I want to address my version of black on black crime, giving back or whatever the case was. He was like, "Well people need to know who you are so we have to write your story or else it's gonna sound like you're just teaching everybody. Your life is gonna be the clothes line but we're gonna put these pins on it and these different pins are gonna be editorial. That's what the gray sections represent."



DAYMOND JOHN: We're partners with Longstreet, they're the licensing company that has Makaveli and Notorious, they handle our boy's division, as well as our socks and hosiery. We have thirteen licenses when you add up boots, bags, boys, girls, leathers, Tuxedos and suits. How licensing works is, a company will come to you and say, "We're willing to give you anywhere from 6% to 15% of what we sell if you let us make your product in this certain category." They'll design and manufacture it and we'll approve it, then they ship it out to their respective accounts.



KOOL HERC

DAYMOND JOHN: I was influenced by the B-Boy movement that Kool Herc and them started because the music was initially coming out of the Bronx. [Although] to tell you the truth Afrika Bambaata confused me. I had my break-dancing sweatshirt with "Pisces" on one side and "February 25th," on the other along with the little Playboy (emblems) with the flashes on them. I used to go down to Mr. Lee's and get that done. I was like 10-years-old.