

I'm not robot!



Tony Medina’s I Am Alfonso Jones is a heartfelt look at the tragedy of young black men dying at the hands of the Police. Alfonso, a trumpet player at Henry Dumas Academy of the Arts has normal teenage worries and dreams. He wants to be cast in the school play as Hamlet. Does his friend Danetta feel the same way about him? The last thing he thought would happen while suit shopping at the mall is that he would be gunned down by an off duty police officer who mistakes a hanger in his hand for a gun. In the afterlife, Alfonso rides a ghost train filled with other victims of police violence. They ride the train, share their stories and seek justice. Alfonso walks among the living and sees that his death is a call to arms around the world. He sees how his death affects his family, the man who shot him and the world at large. Stacey Robinson’s and John Jennings’ illustrations add movement to the story and make the graphic novel accessible to younger readers just beginning to understand the Black Lives Matter movement. I recommend this title to younger and older readers alike. After being killed by an off-duty police officer, Alfonso Jones wakes up in the afterlife on a train guided by other victims of police shootings. Meanwhile, his family struggles with their grief and seeks justice in the streets. Tony Medina is a poet, graphic novelist, editor, short story writer, and young adult and children’s book author. Born in the South Bronx and raised in the Throgs Neck Housing Projects, Medina earned a BA in English at Baruch College, CUNY, on the GI Bill, and an MA and PhD at Binghamton University, SUNY, where he received the Distinguished Dissertation Award. Medina has published 24 multi-genre award-winning books for adults and young readers, the most recent of which are Che Che Colá (fiction); Death, With Occasional Smiling (poetry); Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Boy(children’s); I Am Alfonso Jones (graphic novel); Resisting Arrest: Poems to Stretch the Sky (anthology), and the poetry chapbook Breathing in the Ruins (Floodgate/Stay Thirsty 2022). Medina’s awards include the Paterson Prize for Books for Young People (twice), the Langston Hughes Society Award, the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award honor, Special Recognition from the Arnold Adoff Poetry Award, and the Firecracker Alternative Book Award from the American Booksellers Association for In Defense of Mumia. His most recent book, Death, With Occasional Smiling (Indolent Books,) was a finalist for both the International Book Award and the Independent Book Award, while his verse memoir, My Old Man Was Always on the Lam, was a finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize, and the audiobook adaption of his children’s verse biography, I and I, Bob Marley (Live Oak Media), featuring actor Jaime Lincoln Smith, received the 2022 Audie Award in the Young Listeners category. Medina has appeared in several documentaries and CD compilations and has read/performed his work all over the United States, as well as in Germany, France, Poland, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and the Netherlands. The first professor of creative writing at Howard University, Medina’s poetry, fiction and essays appears in over 100 journals and anthologies, including Where We Stand: Poems of Black Resistance; The Future of Black: Afrofuturism, Black Comics, and Superhero Poetry; We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices; Manteca! An Anthology of Afro-Latine Poets, and Brown Sugar: A Collection of Erotic Black Fiction, as well as Sheree Renée Thomas’s Dark Matter, Ishmael Reed’s Hollywood Unchained, and Kevin Young’s Library of America anthology, African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song, and as an advisory editor for Nikki Giovanni’s Hip Hop Speaks to Children. Medina has also been featured on NBC’s philanthropic reality show, Give, PBS’s White House Chronicle, CBS’s Great Day Washington, SiriusXM’s Kids Place Live, Medgar Evers College’s Writers on Writing, Forbes magazine, and has worked extensively with the non-profit literary organizations Say It Loud, Behind the Book, and Meet the Writers. Medina’s book, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Boy, was featured on Let’s Learn NYC for PBS and his graphic novel was a Barnes & Noble Graphic Novel Best Seller, a finalist for the Excellence in Graphic Literature Award, and was a #1 Book to Action feature in the Orange County Public Library System of California, among other honors. His books, Serious Trouble and Everywhere Drums: Poets from the Black Arts to Black Lives Matter (coedited with Mudiwa Pettus) are forthcoming from Third World Press. Follow him on Facebook; Twitter: @PoetTonyMedina and Instagram: poettonymedina. His website is tonymedina.org. The ghost of fifteen-year-old Alfonso Jones travels in a New York subway car full of the living and the dead, watching his family and friends fight for justice after he is killed by an off-duty police officer while buying a suit in a Midtown department store. By Tony MedinaIllustrated by Stacey Robinson, John Jennings Alfonso Jones can’t wait to play the role of Hamlet in his school’s hip-hop rendition of the classic Shakespearean play. He also wants to let his best friend, Danetta, know how he really feels about her. But as he is buying his first suit, an off-duty police officer mistakes a clothes hanger for a gun, and he shoots Alfonso. When Alfonso wakes up in the afterlife, he’s on a ghost train guided by well-known victims of police shootings, who teach him what he needs to know about this subterranean spiritual world. Meanwhile, Alfonso’s family and friends struggle with their grief and seek justice for Alfonso in the streets. As they confront their new realities, both Alfonso and those he loves realize the work that lies ahead in the fight for justice. In the first graphic novel for young readers to focus on police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement, as in Hamlet, the dead shall speak—and the living yield even more surprises. Foreword by Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative and author of Just Mercy. Read the Foreword by Bryan Stevenson and Tony Medina’s Author’s Note. Book Trailer: I Am Alfonso Jones Check out Tony Medina’s article in the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Journal, Language Arts, titled, “Alfonso Jones Matters.” This is a personal narrative detailing Tony’s construction of a protagonist for a graphic novel that captures the quest for justice at the heart of the Black Lives Matter movement. Watch the BCALA / GNCRT Black Lives Matter Comics Reading List panel discussion with Stacey Robinson and John Jennings. Stacey Robinson STACEY ROBINSON is an assistant professor of graphic design at the University of Illinois and an Arthur Schomburg Fellow with an MFA from the University at Buffalo. As part of the team “Black Kirby,” he works with fellow artist John Jennings to create graphic novels, gallery exhibitions, and lectures that deconstruct the work of comic book legend Jack Kirby into re-imagined Black resistance spaces inspired by hip-hop, religion, the arts, and sciences. Robinson lives in Illinois and can be found on Twitter (@ProfSARobinson) and Instagram (@StaceyARobinson). John Jennings co-edited the Eisner-nominated anthology The Blacker the Ink. He is a professor of media and cultural studies at the University of California, Riverside, and the Nasir Jones Hiphop Fellowship at Harvard’s Hutchins Center for African & African American Research. Jennings lives in California. The Latinidad List of Best Books of 2017, Latinidad Best Books for Teens, New York Public Library In the Margins Top Ten List, In the Margins Top Ten Great Graphic Novels for Teens, American Library Association (ALA) Ten Best Graphic Novels of 2017. Forbes Choices, Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) Skipping Stones Honor Award, Skipping Stones Magazine Best Books for Kids, New York Public LibraryThe Hate U Give meets The Lovely Bones in this unflinching graphic novel about the afterlife of a young man killed by an off-duty police officer, co-illustrated by New York Times bestselling artist John Jennings.Alfonso Jones can’t wait to play the role of Hamlet in his school’s hip-hop rendition of the classic Shakespearean play. He also wants to let his best friend, Danetta, know how he really feels about her. But as he is buying his first suit, an off-duty police officer mistakes a clothes hanger for a gun, and he shoots Alfonso. 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But as he is buying his first suit, an off-duty police officer mistakes a clothes hanger for a gun, and he shoots Alfonso.When Alfonso wakes up in the afterlife, he’s on a ghost train guided by well-known victims of police shootings, who teach him what he needs to know about this subterranean spiritual world. Meanwhile, Alfonso’s family and friends struggle with their grief and seek justice for Alfonso in the streets. As they confront their new realities, both Alfonso and those he loves realize the work that lies ahead in the fight for justice.In the first graphic novel for young readers to focus on police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement, as in Hamlet, the dead shall speak—and the living yield even more surprises.Foreword by Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative and author of Just Mercy. Tony Medina is a poet, graphic novelist, editor, short story writer, and author. 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