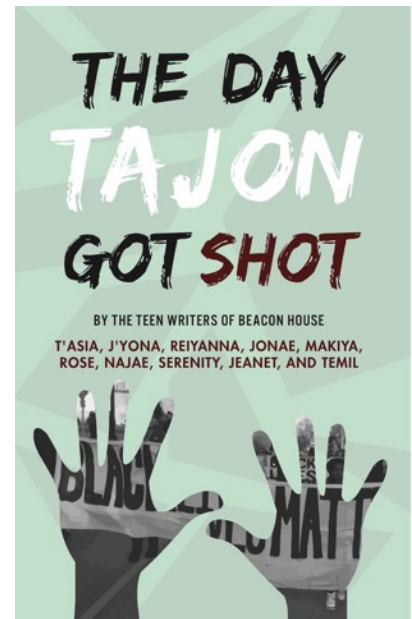


# *The Day Tajon Got Shot*

by the Teen Writers of Beacon House

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In March 2015, ten teen girls from **Beacon House** in Washington, DC started writing a novel during the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. They began with one central question: What really happens in a community when a black youth is the victim of violence by police? How are those lives affected? Each writer takes on the perspective of a central character – the victim, the police officer, the witness, the parent, the friend, the officer's kids – and examines how it feels to be a human being on all sides of this event. Their stories thoughtfully explore issues of race, violence, loyalty, and justice in a community torn apart but seeking connection.



## ***THE DAY TAJON GOT SHOT* DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What is the Black Lives Matter Movement and how does *The Day Tajon Got Shot* contribute to the Black Lives Matter discussion?
- 2) What tone does the opening poem, *The Evidence*, by Camisha Jones set for the novel?
- 3) *The Day Tajon Got Shot* not only tells the story of Tajon and those around him through words, but also through images -- photographs, newspaper clippings, tweets, drawings, a running timeline through the top of the pages, a scrolling EKG... Describe the role that these images play to further the narrative.
- 4) *The Day Tajon Got Shot* follows a chronological order of events, but jumps between the points of view of several different characters. How does the sequencing of events and the perspective of the characters influence how the story is told?
- 5) Why do you think so many perspectives around Tajon's shooting were included in this book, especially those of the police officer and his family and other bystanders? Do you think it was challenging for the authors to write from so many different perspectives? Why?

- 6) *The Day Tajon Got Shot* was written by ten teen writers. Discuss what you imagine the writing of this book was like between multiple authors. What role do you think collaboration played in completing this novel?
- 7) At the end of the novel, the teen authors leave the fictional world of Tajon and enter into a personal narrative. What is the affect of this transition and why do you think the authors chose to make it? What ending would you give the book if you were the writer?

***THE DAY TAJON GOT SHOT* WRITING PROMPTS:**

- Choose a character from the novel who resonates with you and write a story from their past that is not included in the book but that has shaped who they are. Or who they will be 5 or 10 years from now.
- Write a poem in response to a current event or news article that has moved you to want to take action.
- One day, Officer Pete visits Tajon in the hospital room, but leaves when he realizes he is not welcomed by Camilla or Dwayne. Write a scene in which Officer Pete does get to meet Tajon in the hospital. What does he say? Do Tajon's mother and father also get to confront Officer Pete? If yes, what do they say?
- Write a scene from the perspective of a character not represented in the book. In your scene make sure to describe how the community unrest has affected them and how they react to it.
- Fill in your own responses to these "We Believe" statements:

We believe that Tajon...

We believe that the mothers of black boys and girls...

We believe their fathers...

We believe no sister...

We believe no friend...

We believe police officers...

We believe that in order to change, we should all...

We believe...

We believe in a world where...

We believe...

We believe Tajon...



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