

Artists and Writers of Color Continue to Add Color to Comic Conventions

Comic writers and artists of color continued to add new dimensions and attract new fans at Phoenix Fan Fusion and other comic conventions.

PHOENIX, AZ, UNITED STATES, June 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Cristopher Priest, the first African-American writer in the world of Marvel comics, smiled as a fan tightly clutching his copy of "Deathstroke," hesitated some distance from his exhibit booth. Priest, beckoned him to go ahead and come closer to get his autograph. Priest was one of the few exhibitors of color at the Phoenix Fan Fusion convention June 4-7, 2026. While some of the long-time attendees at this annual comic convention that began in 2004, can recall being thrilled to see actors such as Billy Dee Williams, LeVar Burton, Nichelle Nichols, or, more recently, Sonequa Martin-Green, there were no featured Black actors at this year's event. Eight years after "The Black Panther," which had not received much pre-release promotion, shocked Hollywood by making \$1.35 billion worldwide, some may wonder if the growing anti-DEI trend has infected the comic world.



Latique Curry is a comic writer and artist who appeared at Phoenix Fan Fusion June 5-7, 2026.

“

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Latique Curry

Priest, who was born in Queens, New York, used the typewriter he had asked for to write his own Batman novel at 10 years of age. A later job at a comic book store and graduation from the High School of Media Arts led to him becoming a 17-year-old intern at Marvel Comics, and its first Black writer. He was an editor at DC comics in the early '90's. As Black actors were historically only being

offered roles as maids or thugs, Priest was driven from the industry by being restricted to only

writing about Black characters. Priest returned to the comic world when he became the author of "Deathstroke" in 2017.

Priest has been an inspiration for many other people of color who dreamed of turning a hobby of collecting comics into a profession of writing them. [Latique Curry](#), also, originally from New York, was exposed to all the cultural arts by his parents. He started drawing when he was seven. He is settled in Mesa, Arizona, after retiring from the Army. He is with Miscreant Anthology, and has participated in every genre from graphic novels to fantasy and photo realistic illustrations. He was selling beautiful color prints of a wide variety of comic heroes and heroines in the Phoenix Convention Center. "I love being in this comic space," Curry said, "And give thanks to the glory of God for my success."

[Stranger Comics](#), which has been at Phoenix Fan Fusion for 10 years, features the beautiful Black comic heroine Niobe. Excitingly, Stranger Comics has partnered with Legion M, the booming movie production company owned by fans, to produce "Defiant: The Story of Robert Smalls" graphic novel, which has been nominated for awards. Sebastian A. Jones, the exuberant founder of this independent comic book company, was born in London, came to the US at 18, started in the record business, and has been an actor, author and teacher.

With the exception of California, the boom in Black comic conventions has generally been east of the Mississippi (<https://bierdandpowerful.com>). As most know, the granddaddy of comic conventions is the San Diego Comic-Con, which began in 1970, and attracts hundreds of thousands annually. For years, the only place Americans could hear from and about African-Americans in comics was at its annual Black Panel. It was founded by Michael Davis, the outspoken creator of Static Shock, and was a unique place where people could openly and honestly discuss both the successes and challenges of being a person of color in the comic world.

But, with the escalating demise of historically successful Black-owned newspapers, the spreading ban of books by Black authors, the struggle of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and the challenges Writer/Director/Producer Roger Coogler had to overcome to get the horror film "Sinners" made, is it unreasonable to think that the success of the Black Panther and characters



Denise Meridith, author, columnist and CEO of Denise Meridith Consultants and World's Best Connectors, met with Christopher Priest, the first African-American writer at Marvel Comics, at the Phoenix Fan Fusion Convention on June 5, 2026.

like Black Lightning, Luke Cage and A-Train might have been temporary?

But "money still talks" and culture in America can overcome biases. "Sinners" wound up being both a \$370.2 million critical and commercial success. "Black Panther 3" is in production with one of America's most popular actors-Denzel Washington, joining the cast. People still line up to get [Christopher Priest](#)'s autograph. Priest, Curry and Jones all raved about the great experiences they have annually at the Phoenix Fan Fusion. So maybe there will be more African-Americans involved in more comic conventions throughout the US in 2027.

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Sebastian A. Jones is the founder of Stranger Comics and was a major exhibitor at the Phoenix Fan Fusion June 5-7, 2026.

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