

5.2 Rich People Commit Crimes, Too

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SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Five, Episode 2: "Rich People Commit Crimes, too."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:14
Teaching our children to be inclusive and anti-racist starts with us within the sacred walls of our home. First Name Basis is designed to empower you with the confidence you need to be a leader in your family and a change maker in your community. Together, we will wrestle with hard questions and use the answers to create the world we want: a world that reflects our values of inclusion, compassion, and courage. I'm your host, Jasmine Bradshaw, and I am so excited to be on this journey with you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:51
Hello, First Name Basis fam. I am so glad you are here. All right, I bet you're wondering why in the world you are hearing from me twice in one week. Well, it's because I feel like there was something that I left out of the episode this week. So this week, our episode was called "What about Black-on-Black Crime?" And in that episode, I explained everything you need to know about responding to that question—how you can dispel the myth that Black people are more violent than white people, and so on. So the thing that I feel like I left out of the episode is the fact that rich people commit crimes, too. I was very specifically talking about violent crime in this episode, but I don't think I made that very clear. So this week, when I was recording the "Ask Jasmine" question, I realized that the question that was asked lent itself perfectly to this addition that I needed to make to the episode.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:46
So if you haven't yet heard the episode, "What About Black-on-Black Crime?" pause this right

now and go listen to that, because this isn't going to make very much sense if you don't. But once you listen to that, come back to me so we can talk about the fact that rich people commit crime, too. Now if you're like "Ask Jasmine", what is that? What are you talking about? I have to tell you that every single week, we send out Fam Favorites. Those are our favorite resources, our favorite quotes, and our favorite question about the episode from the week. So I get on my stories on Instagram and I ask you if you have any questions from the episode. And then I take one of your questions and I answer it in like a mini podcast episode called "Ask Jasmine." And the only way that you can usually access "Ask Jasmine" is through our Fam Favorites email. So I am sharing the "Ask Jasmine" question with you this week, because I really want this addition to live in the podcast library forever, because I think it's a really important clarification, but usually I don't post "Ask Jasmine" on the regular podcast feed. You have to be on our email list to get the "Ask Jasmine" mini podcast episode for the week. So if you are not yet on that email list, go ahead and go to firstnamebasis.org/fam. It's just F-A-M, and you can sign up to get on the list so that you can get our Fam Favorites, resources, quotes and "Ask Jasmine" question every week sent straight to your inbox. So I will make sure to put that link in the show notes. You can just head on over to the show notes and click to sign up. But right now you are going to hear the "Ask Jasmine" question for the week where I help you understand that rich people commit crimes, too.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 03:35

Hello First Name Basis fam and welcome to "Ask Jasmine." Our question today is how do you respond when someone says, "Those communities are the ones who need the police the most." Now this question goes along with our episode for this week, which is called "What about Black-on-Black Crime?" And in that episode, I break down exactly how you can respond when someone hits you with that question, "Well, what about Black-on-Black crime?" when you're trying to have a conversation about systemic racism. So what do we say when someone says "Well, those communities are the ones who need the police the most." It's important that we start by understanding the history of policing.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:17

Now I don't have time to go through the entirety of the history, but there is an amazing podcast that I will point you to. It is called the through line podcast is produced by NPR, and they have an episode called "American Policing," where they go through the history of how policing was started. The important information that you need to know for this conversation is that the modern American police force that we see today was born out of slave patrols. And many of you probably already know that I don't usually use the word "slave." I use the term "enslaved." But I think it's important to stay true to the vocabulary here, just in case you're researching on your own. So slave patrols were groups of white men, armed white men, who would patrol neighborhoods looking for Black people who had run away to try to escape enslavement. These armed white men would violently capture Black people and take them back to their enslavers.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:13

So these slave patrols gradually transformed into police forces, and I think that detail is really important for us to understand, because it helps us see that the police force was never designed to protect Black neighborhoods. The police force was designed to maintain social

order and protect white property. So the thing is, Black people want peace and safety like anyone else, but the reality for us is that the police do not bring peace and safety to our neighborhoods. There's a police abolitionist, her name is Mariame Kaba, and she explains, quote, "We should redirect the billions that now go to police departments towards providing health care, housing, education and good jobs." She says, "If we did this, there would be less need for the police in the first place." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:07

I think what Mariame Kaba is trying to say here is that it's important to go to the root of the cause. So yes, we see violent crime in under-resourced and over-exploited communities, but what is the cause of this violent crime? The root cause is lack of access to education, housing, jobs, health care. All of these situations where we see systemic racism built into the design are the places where we need to target our resources and our funding so that we can really get to the root of the problem and help stop the crime before it even happens. Now, I need you to understand that not all Black people are police abolitionists. There was an article that I read from Vox and I will link it. It is amazing. It's called "How Black People Really Feel About Police Explained." And they go through tons of polls and studies and lots of research about how different Black people from different circumstances feel about the police and what they want to see happen. The hard part is that it really feels like we're being told that either we have to deal with violence from the police or violence in our communities. And we're given this either or situation. But in the article it said quote, "A close review of innovative research from Johns Hopkins and Yale University's Portals Policing Project and Black Futures Lab's Black Census Project broadly indicates that Black people desire more community investment alternatives, more police transparency and accountability, and an end to police racism and brutality. In other words, they want a systemic, nuanced and ameliorating approach, not an either or." End quote. So Black people are not a monolith when it comes to what we want to see from the police or happen with the police force. But we all agree that we don't want violence from the police, and we don't want violence in our communities.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:05

Now there's one last thing that I want to address when it comes to this question or this statement about how those communities are the ones who need the police the most. I feel like this is something that I left out of the episode this week. And I feel like you're kind of seeing anti-racism in action. Anti-racism really is about learning and developing and growing your understanding of what racism looks like in our communities and how you can react to it to create a more equitable society. Now, when I was talking about crime in the Black-on-Black crime episode, I don't think I was clear enough that I was specifically speaking about violent crime, because the reality is rich people commit crime all the dang time. So while the statistics show that violent crime is higher among under-resourced, and over-exploited communities, all communities have crime, regardless of income. I'm thinking of crimes like tax evasion, fraud, drugs, wage theft, the list really goes on and on. And the truth is, these crimes can have very similar effects on communities and on families, as the violent crimes do. When we're thinking about violent crimes hurting and killing people, things like wage theft can absolutely hurt and kill people. When we're talking about wealthy employers who are denying their employees wages that they've earned or underpaying them, then those employees aren't able to feed their families, they're not able to feed themselves. And we know that the effects of living in

poverty degrade people's mental, emotional and physical health. So yes, it's a much longer term effect. It happens much more gradually. But when we look at the outcome of violent crime and "non-violent" crime, sometimes it really is the same.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 10:05

Let's think about taxes for a minute. There are so many wealthy people who hardly pay any taxes, and then they continue to benefit from community resources like the rest of us. It's just not fair. And my husband Carter and I were talking about how we personally know more than one rich white man who has committed some sort of serious white collar crime that has hurt both individual families and communities as a whole. So even though these rich white men are engaging in behavior that hurts our communities, they can pretty much buy their way out of it. They do things that really hurt people, and then they aren't held accountable because they have the funding. The fact that our legal system is based so heavily on whether or not you have the financial resources to buy your way out of getting into trouble is a function of racism.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:01

So I really made a mistake in painting this picture that crime only happens in under-resourced or over-exploited communities. Crime happens in all communities, it just depends on which type of crime you're focusing on, and which type of crime you think the police need to be handling. So when someone says, "Those communities are the ones who need the police the most," I would help them see that just because the community is affluent doesn't mean that it's crime-free.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:31

All right, y'all, I hope that you learned a lot from that. And I'm so grateful that I got to share this extra information with you. I feel like it's just sitting a lot better with my heart and with my conscience. So thank you for listening. And if you enjoyed that "Ask Jasmine" segment, make sure you sign up for Fam Favorites. Just go to firstnamebasis.org/fam. That's F-A-M, or click the link in the show notes to sign up, and you will get Fam Favorites sent to your inbox every week after an episode airs.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 12:03

My friends, thank you for being here. I hope you can feel how much I believe in you, and how deeply I know that when we work together, we can make real change in our communities. Any of the books, podcasts, or articles that I reference will be linked in the show notes. If you are looking for more detailed notes, be sure to head over to our Patreon community. On our Patreon site. I provide all of the outlines that I use to make the episodes and everything is linked there. So you don't have to take furious notes while you are listening. And don't forget to join us over on Instagram at [firstname.basis](https://www.instagram.com/firstname.basis). If you're interested in partnering with First Name Basis or doing some kind of collaboration, please email us at hello@firstnamebasis.org. All right, have a great week my friends, and I will talk to you again soon.

