

3.24 The Loving Story

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SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Three, Episode 24: "The Loving Story."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:13
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 00:49
Hello, First Name Basis Fam. I am so glad you are here. It's Loving Week. I know that Loving Day is just a day, but I decided that we should celebrate for the whole week. So it's Loving Week over here at First Name Basis. And if you're not sure what I'm talking about, don't worry. The episode will explain it all. Today we are celebrating Richard and Mildred Loving, who took their interracial love story all the way to the Supreme Court. And as many of you know, I am working on a special Loving Day episode that will include all of your interracial love stories. So I asked you to submit love stories and to explain to me what Loving Day means to you. If you are in an interracial relationship, and I have heard from so many of you, I cannot wait for all of you to hear this episode. It's going to be so magical. If you are a crier, get your tissues ready. So that will be out on Saturday, June 12, which is actually Loving Day.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:55
Today, what I'm going to share with you is the story of Richard and Mildred Loving. And I actually pulled this episode from our Bite-Sized Black History program. So if you're not sure

what I'm talking about Bite-Sized Black History is a program that I created so that you can share amazing Black Americans from history with the little ones in your life that you love. So if you're a teacher, or if you're a parent, this program is absolutely perfect for you. I have 12 bite-sized podcast episodes, all eight minutes or less, because as a former teacher, I know that those kiddos don't have an attention span longer than about 15 minutes. So you listen to a bite-sized podcast episode, and there's a coloring page that goes along with each episode. So all the episodes feature a Black American from history, and I tried to take people that were lesser-known, people who were overlooked by our history books, but that we definitely need to know about. And I really wanted to explore Black joy and Black achievement and Black excellence, because so much of the time we are focusing on Black struggle, and we all need to be reminded that Black people are so multi-dimensional, so magical, so divine. So we have dancers, we have engineers, we have doctors, we have inventors. And of course we have civil rights leaders like the Lovings that you'll hear today.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 03:22

So we've got the 12 bite-sized podcast episodes, each one featuring a different person from Black history. Then you have 12 coloring pages, that is an illustration, a custom illustration, of the person that you learned about. And it also comes with reflection questions so that you can foster conversation with the little ones that you are trying to teach. I am imagining you snuggling up on the couch, pressing play on Bite-Sized Black History and having really good, deep conversations about what does it mean to be Black in America? What are some things that we can learn from the Black community and Black people? And how can we be in solidarity with one another? So because of Loving Day, and because of Juneteenth, June is just a really exciting time for us. Because of both of those things, I wanted to do a Bite-Sized Black History sale. So Bite-Sized Black History is going to be on sale for a couple of weeks. And I'm so excited for you to snag it if you haven't already. I will definitely leave the link in the show notes.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:27

So what I wanted to do today is give you a taste of the program. So the episode that you are going to hear is the Richard and Mildred Loving episode straight from Bite-Sized Black History. And I also want to give you the coloring page and the reflection questions. So here's the deal. If you go to firstnamebasis.org/loving, you will be able to put in your email and get the free coloring page that goes along with this episode. It's a coloring page of Richard and Mildred, they are so adorable, and the reflection questions that go along with it. And you can choose—there's one that's just a coloring page if you have younger kiddos, and there's one that is the coloring page and the reflection question if you have older ones. And that is one of the most common questions that I get is, "Wait, what age group is this good for? What age group is perfect for Bite-Sized Black History?" Well, let me tell you, I originally was thinking, "Okay, maybe kindergarten and first grade and up." But after we launched in February, I heard from so many moms that their children were loving it all the way from three-year-old preschoolers to 12-year-olds in sixth and seventh grade. So I think that it will be perfect for a wide range of your kiddos.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:43

All right, I am so excited to share this episode with you. Don't forget to go to

firstnamebasis.org/loving to grab your free Loving Day coloring page. And I will leave that link in the show notes as well as the link to Bite-Sized Black History for our summer sale.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:03

Welcome to Bite-Sized Black History. I'm your host Jasmine Bradshaw. Let's learn together.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:17

Hello, my friends. This is Episode Two of Bite-Sized Black History: "Mildred and Richard Loving: Good Troublemakers." Now, it might sound kind of silly to call someone a good troublemaker, but let me tell you why we are calling them that. There was a man named John Lewis, and he was one of the most inspiring civil rights leaders that ever lived. And one time he said, "Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month or a year. It is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble." And that is what Mildred and Richard did. They got into some good trouble.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:10

The Lovings never set out to be civil rights icons. They simply wanted to get married and have a normal family life, but they had to get into good trouble when the state told them that their love was against the law and tried to keep them apart. Mildred is multiracial. She's Black, Native American and European, and Richard is white. So it was against the law for them to be together when they got married in 1958. Mildred and Richard met when Mildred was 11 and Richard was 17. Richard was a family friend, and they knew each other from living in the same neighborhood. They didn't fall for one another until much later, because Mildred actually thought that Richard was too arrogant when he was in high school. As Mildred got older, they became friends and fell in love and then decided to get married, but they had to leave the state to do so, because Virginia had what was called the "Racial Integrity Act," and this made it illegal for white people and Black people to marry each other. So they decided to leave their home state of Virginia and travel to Washington, D.C. so that they could get married.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:21

When they were finally married and blissfully in love, they returned home to live close to their family and friends. But they were only married for a few weeks before their house was raided by the police in the middle of the night. The police busted down their door while they were sleeping, and they asked Mildred who she was. She responded, "I'm his wife." As the police officers shine the flashlights in their eyes, Richard pointed over to the marriage certificate that was hanging on the wall. That's when the sheriff told them that their marriage certificate didn't hold any sway in Virginia, and they were both arrested. Even though they had traveled all the way to Washington, D.C. to get married, their marriage was still illegal in Virginia. Because Richard was white he only had to spend one night in jail, while Mildred had to stay for multiple nights. And this was really hard on her body, because she was pregnant with their first child.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 09:20

When they were finally released from jail, they had to go to court and they both pled guilty to violating Virginia's racist laws. And now they had a choice to make: they could either spend one year in jail, or they could pay a fine and agree to leave the state of Virginia and not return together for 25 years. With a baby on the way, they didn't want to spend time in jail, so they were forced to leave the state. They moved to Washington, D.C. and had three children, but they desperately missed their family and friends in Virginia. They would sneak back sometimes to make visits, but it was always very scary, because they were looking over their shoulder, worrying if they were going to get caught and get arrested again. They really did not like living in the city. The city life just was not a good fit for their family, and after their son was hit by a car, they decided to secretly move back to Virginia so they could live the life they wanted with the people that they loved. But this life of secrecy came with a price. They could never relax and take a deep breath, because they were so afraid of getting caught.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 10:34

Mildred was so frustrated and scared that she decided it was time to make some good trouble. And this is when she wrote to the U.S. Attorney General, Robert Kennedy. She explained to him in her letter what was going on. When Robert Kennedy wrote back to Mildred, he told her about the lawyers at the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU. These were lawyers who are fighting for what was right lawyers who are fighting for justice, and thankfully, they agreed to take the couple's case to court. When they first went to court in Virginia, they didn't have very much luck in the fight. The judge on their case said, "Almighty God created the races: white, black, yellow, Malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement, there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix." The judge told them that God did not want them to be together because they were different colors. But they knew that that was not right. They were in love with one another and had a beautiful family together. So they were forced to take their case all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 11:52

As I mentioned before, they never wanted to be civil rights leaders, they just wanted to have a happy life as a family. So they asked their lawyer to go to court on their behalf. When the lawyer asked Richard if there was anything that he wanted the court to know, he said, "Tell the court I love my wife and it is just unfair that I can't live with her in Virginia." It was just as simple as that. He loved his wife, and his wife loved him, and the court agreed. On June 12, 1967, the Supreme Court unanimously agreed that the Lovings, and interracial couples all across the country, deserve to be married to one another. Now it's important to note that not all interracial couples could get married on this day. Only heterosexual couples were allowed to get married. Interracial couples from the LGBTQ community were not legally allowed to marry one another until June of 2015. Every year on June 12, interracial couples all over the country celebrate Loving Day in memory and gratitude for Mildred and Richard Loving, who made good trouble so that we could marry who we love no matter their skin color. And that is the story of Mildred and Richard Loving: Good Troublemakers.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 13:17

Okay, this might seem kind of silly, but I'm sitting here tearing up. I mean, I just listened to the episode because I love their story. And I just know that I wouldn't exist without Richard and Mildred. I would not exist as a Black biracial woman. My mom is white. My dad is Black. I wouldn't exist. My children wouldn't exist. I'm married to a white man. It's just so powerful. So here's what I hope you will do. If you love that, will you play it for your kids? Play it for them. Download your free coloring page at firstname.basis.org/loving Play the episode for them and color the picture together and see if it's something that they're into. If they love listening to this episode, then they are going to love Bite-Sized Black History.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 14:11

I'm just so excited to celebrate Black history together because I needed this when I was a kid. I needed Bite-Sized Black History. I didn't like learning about Black history. You might have heard this story before: it was so hard for me because it was just full of sadness and struggle and I thought, "Is this what it means to be Black?" Thank goodness for my family who taught me otherwise, but I needed Bite-Sized Black History in my life. I needed the joy. I needed the inspiration. I needed to learn about all of these amazing figures that were overlooked. So Bite-Sized Black History is on sale for a couple more weeks to celebrate Juneteenth and to celebrate Loving Day, and I hope that you will embrace this opportunity to invest a great experience for your family or for your classroom if you're a teacher. And don't forget this Saturday, we will be having a special Loving Day episode with all of your beautiful stories. I am not kidding, I'm so excited. I know I've said that a million times. How many times can I say excited? I'm just so excited to share what you have shared with me. I feel like it's so sacred. The creation of your families and your sweet love stories are just precious, and I'm so grateful that you have entrusted me with them. Okay, I will see you on Saturday.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 15:40

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.