

4.5 Culture Is Not A Costume

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SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, season four, episode five—"Culture is Not a Costume: Cultural Appropriation on Halloween.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

Let me give you an example. So there's a company that is based out of Phoenix (shout out! Actually not a good shout out, because this is a really horrible example. But y'all know I live in Phoenix, so that's why I'm saying shout out, but I kind of take it back because I don't really want to be associated with this). Anyway, there's a company in Phoenix. It's called Yandy. And they make quite saucy Halloween costumes, if you know what I mean. And they had an entire line of costumes that was based on Indigenous culture. And the thing to know is that it's not that it was just appropriation. Activists in the Indigenous community said that the costumes put Indigenous women in danger, because they contribute to the over-sexualization and fetishization of Indigenous women. Now, the line of costumes—when you hear the names of the specific costumes, you're gonna be like, "Oh, yeah, I know exactly what you're talking about." Here are some of the names of the costumes from Yandy's line of Native American women. First, they have Native American Seductress, Native American Sweetheart, Native American Princess, Native Beauty. And in the past, they've even had names like Sexy Indian, and Sexy Pocahontas. Gross, so gross.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

I was reading an article that was written about this specific issue. And Danny Miller of Dakota ancestry said, quote, "We need people to stop normalizing these costumes. They create an exotic other for people who are not white. People are making a choice. They're participating in upholding colonialism. By purchasing these costumes, they're reinforcing the fetishization of Indigenous women without our consent. It sets up a slippery slope to be dehumanized and

invisible-ized." End quote. So like I was saying earlier, these Indigenous activists are making a connection between these sexy costumes and the sexual abuse that's leveraged against Indigenous people and Indigenous women. But it doesn't stop there. These depictions of Indigenous people, these characters, actually contribute to lower self-esteem for not just Indigenous people, but Indigenous children. In that same article that I quoted from earlier, it says, quote, "scholarly research on stereotypical depictions of Indigenous peoples, such as sports mascots and Pocahontas costumes, found that they lowered the self-esteem of Native American children. These portrayals remind them of the narrow lens through which others see them, adversely affecting their self image. This is especially troubling given that Native American youth have higher rates of suicide compared to juveniles from other groups." End quote. So when people say things like, "Oh my gosh, it's just a costume, relax, it's supposed to be fun, it's supposed to be funny," we need to respond with this research that is connecting not only sexual abuse, but suicide, to these horrible caricatures of Indigenous people.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

If you need a little bit more of a foundation to go off of, a background, I think these statistics might help. It says, "More than 60% of Native American and Alaska Native women have been physically assaulted, and one in three have experienced rape or attempted rape in their lifetime. Nearly all—97%—of these women have experienced at least one act of violence committed by a non-Indigenous person." End quote. That is such a sobering statistic to me, the fact that more than half of Indigenous women have experienced physical and sexual abuse, and that so much of this is perpetuated by people outside of their culture, because of the way that they've been sexualized. And I know that there are other cultures of women who have experienced this same thing. But it's also important to note that statistics show that Native Americans are twice as likely to experience rape or sexual assault than all other races. Not just white people. Usually the statistics are comparing a group of people of color to white people. But no, this says than all other races. In responding to this issue with Yandy, an activist named Faith Spotted Eagle said quote, "They trespass our bodies like they trespass our land. Indigenous peoples never really can heal from historical trauma when we are still resisting the forces of violence that stem from colonialism. These costumes are a constant, visceral reminder of colonizer occupation." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

So with that connection and those statistics in the front of your mind, I want to take a minute and guess. Take a guess if Yandy responded positively to the activists when they brought all of this to their attention. The answer is no. Of course. Of course the answer is no. Did you guess correctly? They said, "Absolutely not. We are not taking these costumes off of our website." Now, I do need to tell you that these protests have been around for a very long time. But this specific one against Yandy was started way back in 2017, and Yandy responded to the protests in 2018. So the activists had to wait an entire year to even get a response from the company. I have to read you the quote from Yandy's PR manager. Her name is Sarah Chamberlain, because I really I can't even paraphrase it, I can't even make this stuff up. She said Yandy values, quote, "the Native American community and the state in which we reside. To say otherwise is disheartening." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

Okay, we have to pause here and break down the first part of what she said. So she starts off by centering herself, and her own comfort, and the comfort of this company. And instead of examining their impact, she's saying, "You just called us racist. And that makes us sad." Right? "It's so disheartening. We're so sad that you called us racist," even though the actions that they're taking are very harmful to the community that we're talking about. So she goes on to say, quote, "Our Native American costumes, as well as many of our other costumes, derive from the beauty of the cultures' traditional dress. The costumes are influenced by powerful fashion elements derived from the culture and are intended to pay homage to the Native American community, not to mock or offend." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

So if you notice, here she is talking again about their intentions. And we talked about this specifically, in the very first episode that we did about cultural appropriation. It's called "How To Avoid Cultural Appropriation," and I will make sure to link it in the show notes. But basically, when a marginalized community tells you that what you're doing is appropriation, and that it is not paying homage or honoring us, then that's when you need to listen. But it doesn't stop there. The Chief Financial Officer, Jeff Watton, did an interview where he was asked about the company and the fact that they were making these costumes that were appropriation and that were contributing to violence against Indigenous peoples. And he said that they would not stop selling the costumes because they were super profitable. He explained that prior to all this happening, the appropriated line of Native American costumes made the company \$150,000—just the Native American costumes. \$150,000 off of those costumes alone. So you can imagine how many people were walking around in those costumes. And he said they wouldn't stop selling the costumes until it quote, "gets to the point where there is, I guess, significant demonstrations, or it gets to a point of contentiousness that maybe is along the lines of the Black Lives Matter movement, or you have major figures in the sports world going to a war of words with the president. Then it's become too hot of an issue." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

So he's saying all of the activists and protesters who are speaking out right now, it's not a big enough issue for us, and it's making us a lot of money, so we're not going to stop doing it. But here's the part of the story that adds insult to injury. So in 2018, the same year that this protest was getting a lot of attention from the press and began to heat up (Now remember, this isn't when the protest started. This is just when it finally came to light and everybody was paying attention to it), Yandy had made a costume that was a sexy Handmaid's Tale costume. You can only imagine what that looks like, right? And there were women, white women, who complained that by selling this costume, they were romanticizing rape culture, because that's what Handmaid's Tale is, right? And they asked the company to take the costume down. Well, guess what—the company did. They took the costume down pretty quickly. And not only that, they issued an extremely public apology to those women and said that it wasn't their intention to romanticize rape culture and all those things. So the Indigenous protesters were super angry. They were like, "Okay, you know how to take a costume down. And you know how to make an apology. You've proven that to be true. So why can't you do it for us as well, who are telling you that we are being harmed by your costumes."

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Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

So you're probably wondering how all of this was resolved. First, I went on Yandy's website to see if the costumes were still there. Now, I didn't find any of the Native American line that they were talking about, but they still had plenty of appropriated costumes. And all their costumes are pretty risque. So I have to tell you that I'm a little bit nervous about the ads that I'm gonna get on my computer after googling these costumes! But you know what? The things that I do in the name of research for all of us, right? So the appropriated costumes that they had: lots. They had dia de muertos, Day of the Dead costumes that were appropriated and very sexy. They had costumes that were appropriating African culture and Asian culture and lots of other ones too. So they definitely took the Native American costumes off of their website, but they still have a major issue with appropriation. And in my research, I found that they actually took the costumes off of their website in August of 2019. And this was after Amanda Blackhorse, who is a Diné woman—she's a social worker and an advocate for native issues—she tweeted that she was going to get a group together to go protest at their headquarters for the third year in a row. So she is one of the original protesters, and she had been going to their headquarters for three years. And after her tweet, a couple weeks after she tweeted, they had silently taken down the costumes, but they never actually issued an apology, or explained to the public why their actions were wrong, racist, and harmful.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 00:09

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. This week, we are talking about the ever-popular topic—cultural appropriation on Halloween. So I have gotten a million billion zillion questions from you all about Halloween costumes, and how to avoid cultural appropriation when you are choosing your Halloween costumes. And I think that there are a lot of you who might have missed that I actually talked about this specific topic in the very first episode of season three. It's called "Your Top Five Questions About Cultural Appropriation." I embedded this whole topic in that episode, so it was kind of hidden in there. And so what I wanted to do was pull out this topic specifically and make one episode where you can go to get all of your costume questions answered. So this is kind of a funky episode—it's a little different from what I've done in the past. But what we're gonna do is first talk about Indigenous appropriation on Halloween, and then talk about Halloween costumes in general.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 01:58

So this first part about Indigenous appropriation is brand new information. I felt like I cannot talk about Halloween costumes and cultural appropriation without talking about Indigenous appropriation because it is such a big topic. And then the second part of the episode is

appropriation, because it is so bad this time of year. And then the second part of the episode will be two of the questions that I pulled from season three that explain Halloween costumes in general, and how you can avoid appropriation when you are choosing a Halloween costume. I hope the flow is feeling good to you and make sense, because I think this is going to be such a good, meaningful conversation that we are going to have today.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 02:38

First, of course, I have to give a trigger warning for all of my Indigenous brothers and sisters, and all the women out there. We're going to be talking about sexual abuse, and it is a really heavy topic. And when I was thinking about the trigger warning that I wanted to give, I actually just kept adding people to the list. I was like, Black, Indigenous, people of color, women...pretty much anyone from a marginalized community, this episode might be heavy for you. And I think that really illustrates the point of First Name Basis in general, that all of these issues are interconnected and affect all of us so deeply. So if you are a person who is a member of a marginalized community, please take care of yourself. As always, I totally understand if you need to step away and come back when you have the time, space, and emotional capacity. Or if you can't come back at all. That is of course fine, too.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 03:38

Before we jump into the episode, I have to tell you about our Race Talk Roadmap. There are hundreds of you who have already downloaded the Race Talk Roadmap, and I am so excited to see it in action in your homes. The Race Talk Roadmap is our absolutely free resource that we have made for you to begin the conversation about anti-racism with your kiddos in your home on your couch snuggled up together. We have two different Roadmaps—one is for younger children, and one is for older children, because this conversation is going to look different depending on your child's developmental stage. So the younger children start with talking about skin tone and melanin and creating an environment that's really inviting of conversation. And then with older children, we start by talking about the fact that race is not rooted in biology. And we talk about bias and all of these different things that they really need to understand in order to be anti-racist. You can download your free Race Talk Roadmap at firstnamebasis.org/racetalk. There's no space in between it. It's just firstnamebasis.org/racetalk, and I will put the link in the show notes. And I really want to encourage you to download the Roadmap even if you have started these conversations with your children, because it is so important we have these conversations over and over again. Did you know that it takes someone hearing a message or a concept seven times before they can really get it into their brain or into their heart into a place where it's going to stick? So if you are still on this journey of having the conversation over and over again, like we are in our home, the Race Talk Roadmap is the perfect resource to support you, whether you are just starting out, or you are continuing along the path.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:33

Okay, let's talk about cultural appropriation on Halloween. First, we are going to dive into Indigenous appropriation on Halloween. And as I mentioned a little bit earlier, I feel like this time of year is really like a one-two punch for the Indigenous community because first we have Columbus Day, which of course we recognize as Indigenous Peoples' Day. But there are still so

many people in our country that do not recognize it as Indigenous Peoples' Day and continue to celebrate Columbus Day. Then we have Halloween, in which people are constantly dressing up as Indigenous people and appropriating their culture. And then we have Thanksgiving. Yikes. We all know the harm that is perpetuated on Thanksgiving between the headdresses and the story of Pilgrims and all of those different things. So we need to be so careful. And we need to be so cognizant of the appropriation that is being leveled against the Indigenous community, especially during this time of year. And we need to be thinking about how can we be in solidarity with them, and be anti-racist as we are going about celebrating Halloween and Thanksgiving and all those different types of things.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:49

But if we're zooming in specifically on Halloween, I wanted to help you understand that violence against Indigenous people is really seen as a joke, especially on Halloween. Let me give you an example. So in my neighborhood last year, you might remember this because I shared it on my Insta story. But I was just on a walk with my children. And we walked by this house, and it really made me feel sick to my stomach; like it took my breath away in the worst way. I saw a tree, and against the tree was a skeleton, and the skeleton was tied up to the tree with rope. And this skeleton had feathers coming out of its skull, as if it was an Indigenous person. And in front of the tree, there was a campfire. And there were skeletons that were dressed up like cowboys. And it was just so disheartening to see this violence against the Indigenous community on display as a decoration. Like, what? Halloween is supposed to be fun. It's supposed to be light-hearted and celebratory and scary, but also exciting. Like all of these wonderful positive things. It is not supposed to be a time when we are laughing at violence against the Indigenous community. I mean, the history of this violence runs back to the founding, before the founding of our country, when people were and continued to dispossess the Indigenous peoples of their lands and commit genocide against them. So why would we be using something like that as a decoration on a holiday? It just...my mind was blown by the audacity. So I really hope that this gives you a picture, an example in your mind of how this violence is normalized and seen as a joke.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:44

And it is just as bad when we are looking at costumes that are appropriating Indigenous culture. I know you can picture exactly what I'm talking about. These are the costumes with the fringe, the costumes with the faux fur, the costumes with the war bonnets or fake head dresses. It is just yucky. And as I was doing this research, one of the things that really stuck out to me was the fact that Indigenous women were explaining that when they are over sexualized and fantasized, this is actually super dangerous for them. That these costumes can be connected to the high rates of sexual abuse against Indigenous women and Indigenous people in general.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 09:30

So this is all just one example of one company that people had to spend three years protesting in order to get them to take down these harmful and appropriated costumes. Now this issue is far from over, you can google a sexy Indian costume or Pocahontas costume, and you'll

probably be sick to your stomach by what you find. It is just rampant. It's all over the place. So I'm going to challenge you to start thinking right now about what you would do or say if you saw someone wearing a costume like that, or if you knew someone who was planning to wear a costume like that. And I want to point you in the direction of Corinne Gray Cloud. They have been sharing on their Instagram information about appropriation of Indigenous peoples on Halloween. So I will link their profile in the show notes.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 22:04

I really hope that the examples that I just shared with you helped to make the connection between the violence against Indigenous peoples and the way that it is trivialized and laughed at and ignored by a lot of people. Okay, now we're going to go into the second part of the episode where I answer two specific questions about costumes and Halloween costumes and choosing a costume for your kiddo. And remember, this is the part of the episode that I swiped from a previous episode. So you might have heard it before. But I think that the information is so, so relevant. I was relistening to it and being like, "Oh, yeah, that's a good point." So what I did in that episode was, I took five questions about cultural appropriation, and I read the really long version of the question that was submitted to me. And then I paraphrased it into a more generic question. So that's what you'll hear is the question that was submitted to me. And then the question that I took, that could be more widely applied to everyone. So you're going to hear two of those questions from that other episode about cultural appropriation. And what I will do is link that episode in the show notes. It's season three, episode one—"Your Top Five Questions about Cultural Appropriation," just in case you're interested in hearing the other three questions that won't be covered here today.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 23:31

Okay, let's dive in. All right, so the next couple of questions are about costumes, and costumes are where things can get real ugly, real fast. So let's break this down. My rule of thumb is if I'm questioning it, and I feel uncomfortable, I would probably just go with something else. Someone DM'd me when I was sharing about costumes recently on Instagram, and I cracked up. She was like, "just be a dinosaur." Just be a dinosaur so you don't have to worry about really causing damage and causing people harm, and I love that. Just be a dinosaur. But what I usually do is ask myself, "Okay, would I feel comfortable if someone from that culture saw me or my child wearing this." If the answer is no, obviously don't wear it.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 24:20

So here's the question that I got. "My sister and I have been wondering about how cultural appropriation might apply to our white kiddos wearing costumes of specific characters. We live by Disneyland, so we're specifically thinking of dresses they have, or characters like Pocahontas, Moana, or Tiana." So I boiled that down into a more generic question, which is how do I avoid appropriating when it comes to children's costumes?

J Jasmine Bradshaw 24:45

Okay, so I want to start by talking a little bit about Moana, and then I will dive into general

Okay, so I want to start by talking a little bit about Moana, and then I will dive into general costumes of characters of color. Okay, so first, when it comes to Moana, I did what I just described, and I did a little bit of research, and then I asked a friend. I have a friend whose husband is Tongan. And so I was like, "Is it okay for children to wear Moana costumes? What's the deal with this? How do you feel?" And I asked her what was the response from the Polynesian community when Moana came out? She explained to me that Moana the movie is a compilation of a lot of different Polynesian cultures. So many of these cultures were intermingled throughout the movie. Moana actually means "ocean" in Samoan, and she explained that there's a lot of Tongan dancing in the movie. And the story of the mountain coming to life is a traditional Hawaiian story. So there are a lot of different Polynesian cultures that were blended together to make this movie. She explained that the community is really uncomfortable with Maui costumes, specifically, because Maui has those tattoos all over his arms and his chest. And she was telling me that these tattoos have really sacred meanings.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:04

I read an article by a woman named Emmaline Matagi, she's an Indigenous Fijian, and she talks about how the tattoos have such a deep cultural significance. She said, quote, "these too have deep cultural significance and are not up for grabs in the world of costume. Tattoo has specific meanings dependent on specific patterns, and these dates back 1000s of years to when our ancestors didn't have a written language, but had tattoo and oral traditions. It is not okay to use something that our ancestors created as your entertainment." End quote. So I would say, steer clear of Maui costumes.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:45

As I was doing my research for this episode, I came across an article called "Please Don't Tell Your Kids They Can't Dress as Moana This Halloween" by Preethi Varathan. And she said something that really resonated with me that I 100% agree with. She talked about how children oftentimes want to dress up as their heroes. And she explained that it's really important for children to have people of color as a part of that list of heroes that they look up to. So when our children want to dress up as Moana, it's because they see her as brave and confident and courageous and all of the really strong, powerful things that she represents in the movie. So yeah, I think it's great for our little ones to dress up as movie characters that they look up to. Preethi is actually the one who pointed me in the direction of Emmaline Matagi, the woman that I referenced earlier, and she wrote an article about how non-Polynesian girls can dress as Moana. She says that it's okay to do it, you just have to know what guidelines to follow, and she outlines really specific guidelines in her article. And one of the most important ones that stuck out to me was the idea that if you're going to dress as Moana, or if you're going to dress as Maui, you need to have something in your costume that represents that character really specifically. So as you know, Moana has this shell that she wears in a necklace around her neck. And so if you're going to dress as her you need to have the shell to show that you are trying to be Moana and you're not just trying to be a Polynesian woman, because that's when things can turn into a caricature. She emphasizes that you want to stay away from a vague generalization of Polynesian culture. So she talks about how that makes it totally okay to grab those prepackaged costumes that are made by Disney, because it makes it super clear that you're trying to be Moana. She said, if the prepackaged costumes have skin sleeves, or like sleeves that have tattoos on them, then ditch those, but you can wear the rest. What is not okay is wearing anything that is traditional Polynesian garb or trying to recreate Polynesian

designs. Make sure that you clearly look like Moana and not just a generic Polynesian woman. And I love the way that she explained this. I love the guidelines that she gave because I feel like these can be widely applied. I know that we're talking about Moana right now, but I think you can apply this to Mulan or Tiana, lots of different characters.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 29:29

That being said, I want to give you my opinion on the issue, and my opinion is that we should absolutely dress up as characters of color. And there are two reasons that I think it's important that we do so. But before I dive into those two reasons, I want to make sure that I emphasize that I don't think you should ever ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever paint your skin. Please don't do Blackface, Brownface any of those things. At this point we should all understand that. That is never ever okay.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 30:01

All right. So the two reasons that I think it is absolutely amazing for children to dress up as characters of color: The first reason is, if we don't let white children wear the costumes of princesses or superheroes who are characters of color, then they will only wear costumes of white characters. And I feel like this is a big contributing factor to how children get the ideas in their heads that only certain people can be princesses and superheroes. There is a scenario that plays out on playgrounds all across the nation I'm sure each and every day and that is children telling one another that you can't be a princess because you have curly hair, or you can't be Snow White, because you have brown skin. So like we've talked about in the past, representation is so important. And if your child really looks up to a character who's a person of color, I say, go for it.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 30:58

The second reason that I think it is really important for children to dress up as characters of color is because of capitalism. Companies use sales to measure what we value and what we want, right? If you've ever taken a basic econ class, supply and demand, that's how companies decide what they're going to make. So if the demand for characters of color is high, then they will continue to make those costumes. But if the Moana costumes or the Black Panther costumes aren't selling, because we're telling our children not to wear them, then they won't make those costumes anymore. And they won't think that those characters are as popular as the white characters. I mean, as much as I love Disney, I know that they're a company who is focused on profits. So when they're looking out across all of their movies, and they're thinking about what they want to make sequels of, or if they want to make more movies with characters of color, it's important that we patronize those movies. We need to watch the movie. We need to buy the costume and all of the little trinkets that come along with it, as much as we can't stand having those around our house. It is so important because it shows that company that we value those characters. This same thing happens with publishing companies. So authors of color have reported that they have a really hard time getting published, because the publishers don't think that their books are going to sell because they don't think that people want to read

books about children of color, or books that are written by people of color. So if we continue to buy these things, it's showing the companies we really value this and we want you to continue to make it.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 32:35

So I would say yes, go for it. Dress your children up like their favorite characters no matter what color they are. But the only thing that I would steer clear of, and this is just something that we do in our household, is "Pocahontas." "Pocahontas" is not representative of Indigenous people. And I mean, just think about the songs in the movie, "savages, savages, barely even human." It's heartbreaking. And I just...that movie is just a no-go in our house. So if you're going to dress up as a character of color, I would recommend doing one that is a little bit more recent, because the recent movies that they've been making, they have been consulting people from the culture, they have been using people from the culture to voice the characters. I mean, if you look at "Coco," they did such an amazing job of representing Dia de los Muertos. So definitely embrace those characters of color, but steer clear of the ones that have really bad stereotypes and caricatures. And I would put Pocahontas in that category.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 33:37

I did want to say that not everyone agrees with me on this topic. There are some people who think that you should not be dressing up as characters of color. And I'm going to link a couple of these articles in the show notes if you're interested in reading them. One is a white mom with Black adopted children, and the other is a Black Canadian woman. So you can read those and decide for yourself based on what I've been saying and what they've been saying and what feels best for your family. As I said, cultural appropriation is not black and white. And that's what makes it so hard.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 34:08

Okay, what about dressing up as someone that you admire, like Malcolm X or Frida Kahlo? I think same thing—don't paint your skin, and make sure it's obvious that you are that person instead of just a person from the culture. But do it! You can totally dress up as Malcolm X without doing Blackface. It's possible, and it's inspiring when we see children really embracing those people that they look up to.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 34:36

All right, question number three. "Can you speak to the line between wearing a kimono you got or were gifted while living in Japan, for example, and say, painting your face to be a geisha for Halloween? Obviously the latter is wrong. What are your thoughts on the former ever being right?" I boiled that question down to, "When is it acceptable to wear authentic cultural artifacts?" I did some research and I found a general consensus. So when it comes to cultural clothing that has a great deal of significance, you should only wear it when you're participating in an event in which this clothing is traditionally worn. So let me give you an example: one of my sister's college roommates was from India. And every year, the Unified Society of South

Asians put on an Indian formal called Garba. And everyone who attends Garba wears a langa or a sari, which is traditional Indian clothing. And my sister's roommate invited her and all of her roommates to attend. So because her roommate invited her and all of her friends, they all wore langas, because that was the dress code. So even though my sister is not Indian, it was okay, and it was encouraged for her to wear a langa to the Garba. But it would not be appropriate for her to wear her langa outside of this formal Indian event, or some other formal Indian event, especially not Halloween. So even though we love these gorgeous designs, and the meaning behind this cultural garb, Halloween is not the place to be doing this. Culture is not a costume. Halloween is a night of scary and funny, and we never want to represent someone else's culture as something that's to be afraid of, or something that is to be laughed at.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:30

Here's another example that some of you might identify with. So in my religion, we have sacred clothing that we wear during religious ceremonies in the temple. And it would be really disturbing for me if I was in the grocery store, and I saw someone not of my faith, just bopping around town in it, wearing it, buying some peanut butter checking out at the self checkout. I would just be like, "What are you? What are you doing? You don't even understand the significance of that, and it's really upsetting for me and people like me." So I hope that kind of paints a picture of what it might look like to someone else if you are wearing a really special cultural item of clothing outside of the appropriate venue.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 37:14

I follow a blog that's called "Little Koto's Closet." It's written by a person named Emi Ito, and they wrote about the significance of the kimono in Japanese culture and the problem with widespread appropriation. So they talk about how in the fashion industry, they call things kimonos all the time that aren't actually kimonos, and they explain what kimonos are traditionally worn for and when it would be appropriate to wear one. So I will link that in the show notes for anyone who is curious about kimonos specifically,

J Jasmine Bradshaw 37:49

Okay, my friends, I hope that it was helpful to go on this journey together and talk all about Halloween costumes, from the appropriation of Indigenous people all the way down to dressing like a dinosaur. I love you all so much. I trust that you're going to make great decisions when it comes to your own Halloween costumes. And I trust that you're going to be in solidarity with communities of color, when you see people appropriating this Halloween. And I want to remind you, of course, don't forget to download your copy of the Race Talk Roadmap at firstnamebasis.org/racetalk. I'm so excited for you to begin these conversations with your family if you haven't had them yet, or continue on your anti-racist journey. I love you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for being here each and every week. I really really, really do love you

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:40

My friends, thank you for being here. I hope you can feel how much I believe in you, and how

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 a real change in our community. Any of the books or 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. 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](#). 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.