

# 6.1 Racism is Built on a Big Fat Lie, Part 1

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## SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

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J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Six, Episode One: "Racism is Built On a Big Fat Lie, Part One" "The One Drop Rule and Blood Quantum."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:19

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 00:54

Hello, First Name Basis Fam! I am so glad you are here. And welcome to Season Six! Oh my gosh, can you even believe it? I say this every season, but how is it possible that we have made six seasons of the First Name Basis podcast? It's amazing.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:12

I'm actually really glad that this episode is finally here, because I've been thinking about it for a really long time. I was at a conference a few years ago, and somebody mentioned these two concepts of blood quantum and the one drop rule and how they completely contradict each other, and I was like, "Mind blown. I have to talk about this." So the idea for this episode has been in the works for a long time. And I'm glad that I finally have a minute to sit down and share it with you. Because I think you'll feel the same way like, "Oh my goodness; mind blown." I really wanted to call this episode "I Have a Force Field," but I thought that might be a little bit confusing, because I figured people would be like, "What in the heck are you talking about?"

But you know, when you're little and you're playing a game, maybe with your siblings or with your friend, and you're like about to win, like you're about to make this big power move, you're totally going to win the game, and then all of a sudden, the other person that you're playing with screams out, "I have a force field!" And you're like, "Well now that ruins everything. Now that means that you win. Now that means that I can't advance in the game." So they're basically changing and making up the rules all willy nilly in the middle of the game to make sure that they always win. And this is how racism works. And today, I'm going to give you two super obvious examples to show you that race is super made up and that racism is built on the lie of race. So this will be the first of a two part series. I'll share the second episode with you next week. And we have some really important conversations to get into today.

**J** Jasmine Bradshaw 02:54

But before we do, I have to give you a trigger warning, especially for my Black and indigenous people of color. We are talking about the violence and harm that was perpetuated and continues to be perpetuated against our communities. And we're going to be talking about sexual assault and rape. So I know that some of you allow your children to listen to First Name Basis alongside you. But for this episode, I would recommend that you listen to it on your own first, and then with your kiddo if you feel like it's appropriate, just so that you are prepared for the conversations and the questions that are going to come up, because this is deep, heavy history.

**J** Jasmine Bradshaw 03:33

Before I jump in to the episode, I have two exciting things to tell you about. The very first thing is our brand new program called Juneteenth Jubilee. I'm so excited. It is everything that you need to have a meaningful Juneteenth celebration dinner! So Juneteenth is always on June 19, and it is the oldest celebration of the commemoration of the ending of legal slavery here in the United States. And we have a whole episode about itâ€”I will link it in the show notesâ€”explaining the history of Juneteenth and why it's so important. And over the past couple of years, I have heard from so many of you that you want to celebrate Juneteenth in a really respectful and meaningful way. But you're just not sure how. And if you follow me on Instagram, you know that for my family, Juneteenth is all about the food and having a really special dinner on that day. And so what I've done is I have recruited my dad. And if you listened to "The Untold Story of Fried Chicken" episode, you know that my dad, he loves to cook. He's really good at it. I feel like it's one of those things that, it's just his gift, and cooking for people and sharing his food with people is his love language.

**J** Jasmine Bradshaw 04:44

So I recruited my dad, I got him to sit down and write down some secret family recipes. We put them into a cookbook, which, that was basically a miracle in and of itself, getting him to get these recipes on paper, because he doesn't cook like that. He just throws in a little bit of this and a little bit of that and it tastes amazing. But I was like, "Dad, the people need the recipes!" So we've got the recipes in a cookbook for you. And my dad and I filmed a cooking show

together! So we're giving you everything you need to plan your Juneteenth celebration dinner! We've got a meal planner, we've got a shopping list, we have the recipes, we've got the cooking show—it's gonna be so much fun.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:22

And one of the parts that I'm really, really excited about are the reflection questions. I've created two different sets of questions. So if you're a Black family, Juneteenth is going to be all about celebration and goal setting and celebrating the fact that your family is in existence, and how amazing that is. And if you're a white family, or if you're non-Black people of color, Juneteenth is going to be about reflection and you recommitting to being an anti-racist ally. So I developed two different sets of questions depending on what kind of family you are so that you can have a commemoration or a celebration that is most appropriate.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:00

So that will be coming out on Tuesday, May 31. And if you want to get on the waitlist, you just have to go to [firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth](https://firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth). That's [firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth](https://firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth). And we will let you know as soon as it's ready, and we will send you a coupon code, of course.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:19

Okay, this next project that I want to tell you about is something that I really need your help with. So Loving Day is on June 12. And if you haven't heard of it before, Loving Day is the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that made interracial marriage for straight couples legal in all 50 states. So it's amazing, the story of Richard and Mildred Loving Richard was white and Mildred was Black, and they wanted to get married because they were in love, but they lived in Virginia, where the laws were such that Black people and white people were not allowed to get married because of racism. So on June 12, we celebrate Loving Day, because that's the day that the Supreme Court made the decision saying that states could not make laws against interracial marriage.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:05

Now, we have to understand that this was specifically talking about straight couples, LGBT couples were left out of this decision. But we don't want LGBT couples to be left out of the celebration. So if you are in an interracial relationship, I am going to make an episode all about your love. And we did this last year, it was called "Your Loving Day Stories," and we're doing it again this year. And one of the things I heard from so many people was like, "Oh no! I missed being able to submit my story! I really want to submit it." So make sure that you submit the story of your love. And here is what you have to do. You have to record a voice memo on your phone, super simple, that says three things: the first is your name and the name of your partner; and then the second is where you're from; and the third is just answer the question, "What does Loving Day mean to you?" And I want to get everyone from interracial relationships. That means people who are straight, dating, married, LGBT, anyone who loves someone who has a different race than their own, please submit.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 08:15

And you can submit by emailing your voice memo to [hello@firstnamebasis.org](mailto:hello@firstnamebasis.org). And make sure to put Loving Day in the subject line. And be sure you're emailing [hello@firstnamebasis.org](mailto:hello@firstnamebasis.org). I've had a lot of people email me at dot com, and that just will get you nowhere. So [hello@firstnamebasis.org](mailto:hello@firstnamebasis.org), subject line Loving Day. Send a voice memo with your name, where you're from, and answer the question "What does Loving Day mean to you."

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 08:41

And last year, I heard a few people who were like, "I don't necessarily know if I should participate, because I'm not Black, and this was specifically about a couple with one person being Black and one person being white." And I'm not sure about the laws against other interracial couples, but the amazing thing about Loving Day and this celebration is that it set precedent, so the states cannot make laws saying that people cannot marry each other based on the color of their skin or based on their race. So even if you are not in a Black-white relationship, I really want to hear from you, because these stories are so amazing. I will link last year's episode in the show notes. It's called "Your Loving Day Stories," and seriously breakout your tissues, because it is so beautiful.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 09:27

So please, please submit your Loving Day story so that I can include you in this year's episode. Make a voice memo and email me with your name, where you're from, and answer the question "What does Loving Day mean to you?" Send the email to [hello@firstnamebasis.org](mailto:hello@firstnamebasis.org). And I would love it if you sent pictures as well. If you don't feel comfortable, I totally understand that, but I would love to share your pictures on the [firstnamebasis Instagram](#), whether it be on stories or in a reel. I'm just so excited to see your beautiful families and to celebrate your love. So make sure that you submit by Saturday, June 4. That is the last day we'll be taking submissions for the Loving Day episode. And I can't wait to put this together for you this year, it's going to be so fun.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 10:14

All right, "Racism is Built On a Big Fat Lie, Part One." So I want to start with a quote from Ta-Nehisi Coates. And this quote really changed my perspective on understanding race and racism. And he says, "Race is the child of racism, not the father." I feel like this is one of the most simple ways to help us understand that racism existed before race did. So racism existed, Europeans were already treating people of color badly. They were stealing their resources, they were stealing their land. Like in the case of Indigenous people, they were stealing, breaking up, enslaving, and torturing their families, like in the case of Africans. And so in order to say, "All of this stuff, all this horrible stuff that we're doing is okay, it's justified," in order to make themselves feel less guilty for the harm that they were doing, they made up race. So they were treating people of color badly and then they made up a ranking system to prove that it was okay for them to continue to do these terrible things. So that is like a twenty-second version of the story of how race was created. And this story is actually one of the lessons that we cover in

Ally Elementary. And it's one of those things that I really can't believe I didn't know or understand until I was an adult. And I truly believe that our kiddos need to understand that this unfair system is not at all based on science, but it's actually created out of greed and guilt.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:40

So I want to tell you that enrollment for Ally Elementary is currently closed, but you can get on the waitlist by visiting [firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary](http://firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary), and I'll be sure to leave that link in the show notes.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:52

So white Europeans were treating Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color very badly. And so in order to make themselves feel better and justify that behavior, they created the racial ranking system. So in order to understand this ranking system, we have to know about the dominant culture. And people who are part of the dominant culture are the ones who have the most power and make the most decisions in our society. And here in the United States, and in Canada, and in Europe, these people are white, male, Christian, straight, heterosexual and cis-gender. Now these are all identities that hold privilege. And if you need a better understanding of white privilege, check out my episode from Season Two, Episode 14. It's called "What is Privilege and What Do I Do With It?" I'll link it in the show notes. It really is one of our most popular episodes. And it helps you understand why these identities hold so much power, and what you should do if you fit into one of those categories. There are so many, like so many, examples of how those in the dominant culture, aka white men, have created laws that logically conflict with one another in order to benefit themselves. And today, I'm going to give you two examples that might not seem like they're related to one another, but they so clearly are.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 13:10

So the first is the "One Drop" rule, and the second is blood quantum. And we're going to break down both of those. I want to start by giving you a little bit of background about how social status was determined historically. So before they used race to identify someone's place in society, they actually used religion. So they would separate people out into Christians and non-Christians. But the problem with that, from their perspective, is that people could just convert to Christianity, and then they could enjoy the same privileges of those in the dominant culture. So the success of the U.S. economy has always hinged on access to cheap, or completely free, labor. So during colonization, European Americans enslaved Black people and used that free labor to literally build the foundation of the United States. And in order to have free and cheap labor, you have to villainize and dehumanize the members of that group so that those in the dominant culture will go along with treating them terribly. And we can still see this today with the way that Black and brown immigrants who are seeking asylum, or who are migrants, are villainized and dehumanized.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 14:22

Unfortunately, there are so many examples to choose from of how administrations throughout

Unfortunately, there are so many examples to choose from of how administrations throughout the history of the United States have villainized and dehumanized immigrants, but especially our last administration, the Trump administration, has referred to immigrants as an "infestation." I was reading an article about family separation, and it said, quote, "Responding to criticism of a policy that has led to more than 2000 children being separated from their parents at the border, Trump tweeted that Democrats were to blame. He said quote, 'They don't care about crime and want illegal immigrants no matter how bad they may be. They pour into and infest our country like MS-13.'" End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 15:05

The thing that's really important for you to understand is that dehumanization is one of the steps on the road to genocide. It's one of the very first steps that leaders take in order to justify genocide and justify treating people horribly. And dehumanization is one of those things. Calling a group of people an infestation, as if they are bugs or animals, is a really key tactic that we see used by the Trump administration. And he goes on to refer to them as animals. He says, quote, "We have people coming into our country, or trying to come in, and we're stopping a lot of them. But we're taking people out of the country." He goes on to say, "You wouldn't believe how bad these people are. These aren't people, these are animals. And we're taking them out of the country at a level and at a rate that has never happened before." So he goes as far as saying they are not people, they are animals. So in order to have access to the cheap labor that supports a huge portion of the U.S. economy, one of the things that the dominant culture does is dehumanize the people who are doing that really important labor. And we saw it during enslavement, and we see it now with the immigrant community.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 16:20

So I was reading about how immigrants, both documented and undocumented, contribute to the economy so that I could be like, "Look at how awesome they are." But I actually found stuff that made me feel super gross, and totally further proves my point that our economy depends on treating immigrants badly. It was a report from the Center on Budget and Policy, and it was written in 2019. And it was written because the administration in power was trying to make it so that Homeland Security would reject applications from immigrants who might need public assistance sometime in the future. So people who might need access to food stamps, or health care, or any public programs, they're basically saying, "If immigrants are going to need this at some point in their life in America, then we should reject them, and they should not be welcome in the United States." And the report was trying to say that we should support immigrants, even if they might need public assistance, because they really contribute to the economy. But the reasons that the report gave for why we should welcome immigrants was just so cringe! It was, ugh, it was horrible. So in talking about why immigrants were so beneficial, the report said, quote, "Their geographic mobility helps local economies respond to worker shortages, smoothing out bumps that could otherwise weaken the economy." End quote. And I was sitting there thinking, "Wait a minute. It's not like immigrants have more geographic mobility than other families, it's that they move in order to survive. They have to follow the work, because their options are so limited. It's not like they're moving because they love it and they're just like, 'Yeah, we have so much geographic mobility!' No! They're moving a lot to stay employed, and that's not ideal for any family."

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 18:08

There was also a graph in the report that showed industries where immigrants made up a large share of the workforce. And some of the industries included farming, fishing, and cleaning, maintenance, hotels, food, manufacturing, and construction. And this was really important to me to see all of these different workforce areas laid out next to each other, because it showed that immigrants really are the people who do the hard labor that our country needs but no one wants to do. And if you look at the conditions of these positions, you can clearly see why no one wants to do them, because the conditions are so terrible. And all of this really reminded me of the foundational work that enslaved people were doing to build the country. And now we have immigrants doing those jobs for very little pay.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 18:58

So one of the ways that the system ensures this labor is cheap is in the way that we talk about these jobs. The report that I read quoted another report that was published by the National Academy of Sciences in 2015. And it said that, quote, "The high employment levels for the least-educated immigrants indicate that employer demand for low-skilled labor remains high." End quote. And I was just so frustrated reading that because I'm like, "These jobs are not low skill." I mean, do you know how to farm? Do you know how to efficiently clean a hotel room and make it perfect for the people who are coming in? Like there is a lot of skill and specialty that goes into the work that many immigrants are doing, and we have to stop devaluing their contributions. But if we start valuing their contribution, then we have to pay them for their labor. And that would be really hard on the United States economy, because we are built on the cheap-slash-free labor of the people who are being dehumanized and oppressed. The irony here is that the report was really trying to say that immigrants are a super important part of the economy. And it seemed like their conclusion was, "Yeah, they're super important because they do the jobs that no one else wants to do. But they have to because they're so quote unquote, 'low skill.' And we really need them because they're cheap, and they can move at a moment's notice." Like, yucky. So yucky.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 20:20

I do want to point out that they did talk about how hard immigrants work and how they are upwardly mobile, so I left the article feeling torn, because I'm like, "Obviously, you are not valuing the real contribution of the immigrant community, and you're saying that their only value to us is the cheap labor and their ability to move at a moment's notice, to fill in gaps in the economy that American citizens don't want to take on themselves." So can you see the parallels now? Can you see the parallel between what it takes to maintain the United States, and the fact that our economy relies on extremely cheap labor to do that work, and the fact that when the country was brand new, there was so much that needed to be done to build the foundation of our country that relied on free labor to do it. And it's important that we understand that there was so much work to be done. And that work was critical to making the United States a success. So they chose Africans specifically, they chose Africans for a reason, because Africans had so many useful skills.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 21:27

There is a Jim Crow Museum in Michigan, and it shares information about the history of enslavement and segregation. And on the topic of Africa before slavery, they wrote, quote, "Art, learning, and technology flourished. And Africans were especially skilled with medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. In addition to domestic goods, they made fine luxury items in bronze, ivory, gold, and terracotta, both for local use and for trade." End quote. So to me, this is proof that people from all over Africa were resourceful and they were quick learners. I mean, the landscape of Africa is so very diverse. And Africans knew how to handle lots of different crops and all different types of growing conditions. So they really were a brilliant group of people. And that is why they were chosen to be enslaved and do all of the important work to build the country. The white Europeans did not choose Africans because they were stupid and only good for manual labor. They chose them because of the many skills that they had. And then the Europeans told the lie that they were dumb and lazy. But how could a group of dumb lazy people literally build the foundation of the United States? If you ever drive around the East Coast, you will see tons of beautiful historic buildings that were all built using enslaved people. And I'm sorry, but stupid people couldn't do that. It is just a ridiculous lie. But that's not even the lie that I came here to tell you about. That is just a bonus lie.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 23:03

Okay, so to recap, the colonizers decided to steal land from indigenous people and build an entirely new country. And out of greed, they chose to enslave people to do the work for free, which was and is the basis of the U.S. economy. So like I said a little earlier, the first way that they separated out the people who are going to be doing that hard manual labor for free was through indentured servitude and religion. But there are two main issues with this system of oppression that made it really difficult to maintain. First of all, you can't tell someone's religion just by looking at them; and second of all, people could convert to make it so that they could be treated better. So it's really important that you know the story of John Punch. And John Punch is an African man who was an indentured servant. And he works alongside Victor, who is a Dutch man, and James, who is a Scottish man. And they're all indentured servants. Together, they work together, and they're living in such harsh conditions that the three of them decide to run away and try to escape indentured servitude together. Well they get caught, and they have to go to court in order to be sentenced for running away. And even though all three of them committed the same, quote, unquote, "crime," they did not all receive the same sentences. So each of them received a whipping, which was part of their sentence. But Victor and James's sentences were much different than John Punch's sentence. So the other two men, Victor and James, they got an extra year of indentured servitude as part of their sentence. And they got an extra three years of indentured servitude to the entire colony. So basically, they had to serve one year with the person they were working for at the beginning and then three years for the colony. And so altogether obviously, that is four years, three plus one. So the two white men get four extra years of service while John Punch, the Black man is sentenced to serve indentured servitude or enslavement for the rest of his life. So he has to serve the enslaver for ever, where the other two men got four years of service. They all committed the same quote unquote, "crime," but they were given different sentences based on race.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 25:26

And one of the biggest reasons why they gave John Punch such a harsh punishment was to discourage allyship between white people and Black people. So the wealthy white people saw that the white people and the Black people were teaming up, and they were like, "Oh, no, no,



no. This is dangerous, because if they team up against us, then they're going to overpower us." So what the wealthy white people had to do was convince the impoverished white people that they had the potential of being rich, that they had the potential of getting the resources, of getting the power that the rich white people enjoyed. And they have to tell them that in order for you to have this status that we have, those Black people and those brown people are bad, and you need to stay away from them, because they can bring down your status. So this is when we see things change from your religion identifying your social status, to your race identifying your social status, because it is so much easier to just look at someone and see the color of their skin and then assign them a status based on that. You can't look at someone and see "Oh, are you a Christian or not?" Like, that's something that you actually have to talk to somebody about, right? But looking and seeing that someone is Black, or looking and seeing that someone is brown automatically gives your brain a message telling you, "Okay, this is what their social status is" just by looking at them. So I know that was a lot of background knowledge. But I think it's really important that you understand that leading into our conversation about the One Drop Rule.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:56

So what is the One Drop Rule? The One Drop Rule is this idea that if you have one drop, quote, unquote, "one drop of Black blood in you," then you are considered Black. But here's the thing: the One Drop rule wasn't actually made law until 1924, but there were many other laws and cultural understandings that show that this is the way that the United States worked. For example, it wasn't exactly called the One Drop Rule, but in 1705, in Virginia, they made a law that banned interracial marriage. And in this law, it stated that someone was Black if they were the child, grandchild, or great grandchild of a Black person, or if they were 1/8 Black. Now, this is ridiculous, because you can't be one eighth of something. You are all of the things that make up your identity. And if this is something that you are kind of wondering about and want to learn more about, maybe you are multiracial or mixed race or you're in a mixed race marriage or have a mixed race family, listen to Season Five, Episode Five. I interviewed Dr. Jenn Noble, and she specializes in multiracial identity development. That episode is called "Raising Multiracial Children," and I will link that in the show notes.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 28:12

Now in preparing for this episode, I read an amazing article called, "How the One Drop Rule Became a Tool of White Supremacy" by Dr. Yaba Blay. And Dr. Blay is an activist, a researcher, and a public speaker. And in the article, she says, quote, 'The U.S. Census reveals much about the country's perspective on race. It counts people according to how the nation identifies people. And historically, those people counted as Black have been those people with any known Black ancestry. Black people are defined by the One Drop rule. No other racial or ethnic group is defined in this way. Nor does any other nation rely upon this formula. The One Drop rule is definitively Black and characteristically American.' End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 28:59

Okay, so remember how this episode is called racism is built on a big fat lie? Well, here's the part that I want you to pay attention to. Here's the part where the white ruling class screamed out, "I have a force field!" and completely change the rules so that they would win the game.

So in European tradition, a person's social status was determined by their father, by their dad. Think *Bridgerton* or like any other old-timey movie that there ever was. Your social status was directly connected to your dad and how much money and how much land he had, right? So during slavery, they changed the law and determined that a child's social standing was actually based on their mother. Why? Why do you think that is? Well, the reason is because white enslavers were raping Black enslaved women, and those women were getting pregnant. So now you have white enslavers who are having biracial children with Black enslaved women, and there are two reasons why they wanted to make sure that they inherited the enslaved status of their mother and not the free status of their father. The first reason is because the white men did not want to claim be responsible for or take care of these children. They had no desire to be a dad to these Black-biracial kiddos. And they often had white wives at home who would be super angry if they found out that they were fathering biracial children. So that's the first reason they wanted no claim to these kids. The second reason is because these children were actually helpful to the bottom line of the enslavers. So enslaved people obviously were treated as property. So the biracial children that they had were contributing to their wealth. There was actually an incentive for these white enslavers to rape Black women, because it meant that they would produce more Black people who are automatically enslaved, which meant that they were building their bottom line. They were building up their wealth and their "property," quote, unquote, by having more children.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 31:05

In the article, Dr. Blay wrote, "In fact, on some plantations, a select number of enslaved women are reserved specifically for breeding with white men. Since mixed-race quote, unquote 'slaves' were bought at higher prices at market. End quote. She also wrote, quote, "The idea that children born to enslaved mothers would take the status of their mother reflected a significant break with traditional English common law that held that children take the status of the father. However, as we will continue to see, laws change frequently to maintain white supremacy. Essentially, if a white man were to impregnate a Black woman, the law took him off the hook. He did not have to support or even claim that child. At best, if the mother of the child was his 'property,' he gained not a child, but additional property and another source of labor and income. Thus, the law inadvertently sanctioned the sexual abuse of enslaved women." End quote. So do you see what I mean when I say that racism is built on a big fat lie? Like race is just totally and completely made up by the people in charge to make sure that they maintain as much power as possible, but it doesn't stop there.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 32:19

So biracial children born to Black enslaved women were automatically enslaved, but biracial children born to white women were also automatically enslaved. And you're like, "Wait a minute, Jasmine. You just said the children took on the status of their mother." Well, once again, they screamed out, "I have a force field!" when it came to deciding what would happen with Black-biracial children whose moms had consensual sex with enslaved Black men. Dr. Blaze says, quote, "The punishment for white women who had consensual sex with Black men was much more severe than the penalties given to white men who raped Black women. The responsibility of maintaining purity of the white race lay in the hands and wombs of its women, the literal bearers of the next generation. Conveniently, traditional English common law was upheld in these cases, and Black-descended children born to white women took the status of

their Black fathers. In both cases racially-mixed persons would be assigned to the status of the lower group. Thus the term 'hypodescent,' hypo meaning 'under, defective, or inadequate.'" End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 33:28

So did you hear that word "hypodescent?" Another name for the One Drop Rule is the Hypodescent Rule. So "hypo," meaning "under, defective, or inadequate." So I read an article that was published by Vassar College, and I'll link it. It was called "Hypodescent: The One Drop Rule." And I'm going to quote from the article, but I want to say before I do you know that I use the word "enslaved" instead of "slave" because I learned that from Nikole Hannah-Jones of the "1619 Project." And it's really important that we talk about people as full human beings. Enslavement was their status, it was not their entire identity. These were people with hopes, dreams, families, lives—all outside of their status of being enslaved. And it's also important to note that the article uses the term "Negro" because that is the term that was previously used to describe the Black community, but that's not a term that we should be using today. It's completely outdated and not something that we say. Okay, so in this article, it said, quote, "The hypodescent rule meant that any degree of African ancestry was sufficient to classify a person as Negro or Black. During slavery in particular, it had the practical benefit of maximizing the number of useful slaves and minimizing the number of citizens entitled to economic benefits and legal protections." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 33:31

Now, you might be thinking, "Okay, well, this was a long time ago." I always hear people say, "Well, slavery is in the past. That was forever ago," but we really are still feeling the effects of enslavement today. We're still feeling the effects of these laws. And Black communities do not have access to the same economic benefits and legal protections as white communities do. I mean, it is just a statement of fact. We can see that across the board. And seriously, it wasn't that long ago that these laws were used to inform what people were and weren't allowed to do. There was an article written for the Harvard Gazette by Steve Bratt. And it said, quote, "The legal notion of hypodescent has been upheld as recently as 1985, when a Louisiana court ruled that a woman with a Black great, great, great, great grandmother could not identify herself as white on her passport." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 34:50

Okay, so now you see that the white Europeans who had power screamed out, "I have a force field!" and completely changed the way that social status was determined. They went from determining it by your father and his status—which is also bad, I should say!—to determining it by your mother and her status, because they were raping enslaved women.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 35:18

So now let's talk about how they change the rules again so that they could steal land from Indigenous peoples. Now, I really want to preface this section of our discussion by saying that I am not Indigenous, and I am going to share a lot of quotes from people who are and not a

am not Indigenous, and I am going to share a lot of quotes from people who are and not a whole lot of commentary from myself, because this is not the community that I belong to. And I really don't want anything to be misrepresented. I can't speak from personal experience on this issue like I can to being Black, and so I think it's really important to center Indigenous voices instead of my own. So I want you to see the way that people in the dominant culture use laws to maintain their power and status, but I want you to be able to see it through the eyes of the Indigenous community, and not just from me.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:57

Okay, so let's wrap up our conversation about how race is totally made up and how the laws are designed by people in the dominant culture screaming, "I have a force field!" by breaking down blood quantum.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 37:09

Now there was this amazing podcast episode on Code Switch called, "So What Exactly is Blood Quantum?" And of course, I will link that in the show notes. And it is an episode where they interview Elizabeth Rule, and she was a doctoral candidate at Brown University. Now the episode was recorded in 2018, so I'm hoping that by now she has her PhD and she's Dr. Rule, but I'm not sure. She specializes in Native American studies and she's also a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. So I'm going to use the word "Indian" when quoting Elizabeth Rule, but just like when I was explaining the word "Negro," this is not a word that should be used by people who aren't Indigenous. It's a very outdated word, but Elizabeth uses it and it is used in the Indigenous community. But it's not something that we should be saying, so I will only say it when I'm quoting Elizabeth. So when they asked Elizabeth Rule to describe blood quantum, she said, quote, "Blood quantum simply is the amount of quote unquote, 'Indian blood' that an individual possesses. The federal government, and specifically the Department of the Interior issues what is called a 'Certified Degree of Indian Blood,' and this is a card that is similar to an ID card. So the way that blood quantum is calculated is by using tribal documents. And usually it's a tribal official or a government official that calculates it. But really, it's a mathematical equation. So the quantum is a fraction of blood that is derived going back to the original enrollees of a tribe who were counted on census rolls and then their blood quantum was documented. And usually, those original enrollees had a full blood quantum typically." End quote. I know that was really wordy, but basically she's explaining that blood quantum is quote, unquote, "the percentage of Indigenous blood that someone has in their ancestry."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 39:03

So the thing is, this is totally made up again, super duper made up. You cannot take a person's blood and separate it out into different parts. I am Black-biracial, so my mom is white and my dad is Black. You cannot separate my blood. If you took a vial of my blood, there would be no way for you to separate it out into the blood I get from my mom and the blood I get from my dad. It's all the same blood. There's no way to separate your blood into percentages or fractions. But that is what blood quantum tries to do to the Indigenous community. So Elizabeth Rule goes on to say, quote, "Blood quantum was initially a system that the federal government placed onto tribes in an effort to limit their citizenship. And many Native nations, including the Navajo nation, still use it as part of their citizenship requirements." End quote.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 39:51

So I want you to think for a minute, why do you think that Elizabeth and other scholars teach us that blood quantum is a tool that was put in place by the government to limit tribal membership? Take a second and think about that. Why would the federal government want to limit tribal membership? It's because tribal membership comes with specific benefits! Tribal membership comes with access to resources and to land and to the treaties that were put in place between the United States government and the government of the tribes. So if they restrict the membership, then they reduce the amount of people who are Indigenous, and then the government can justify taking the very little land that Indigenous people have access to. They can justify taking that land away from them. So all of these rules, all the times that they scream out, "I have a force field!" are so that they can maintain white supremacy and hoard land and power. And it's really important for us to understand that just because a parent is a member of a tribe does not mean that their child will be able to enroll. So Elizabeth Rule said, quote, "Blood quantum minimums really restrict who can be a citizen of a tribe. If you've got 25% of Navajo blood according to that tribe's quantum standards, and you have children with someone who has a lower blood quantum, those kids won't be able to enroll." End quote. And I listened to this really amazing episode of a podcast called All My Relations. It's a really great podcast, I highly recommend it. The episode that I want to point you to, is called "Love in the Time of Blood Quantum," and it talks about how Indigenous people have to decide if they're going to be with someone even though they know that that person is either from a different tribe or that person is from a different ethnicity or race altogether, which could mean that their children would not be able to enroll in the tribe that they belong to, based on their blood quantum. So if someone is, like Elizabeth Rule was saying, if someone is Navajo, and they fall in love with someone who is Black, or someone who is outside of their tribe, and they have children with that person, their children might not have enough quote unquote, "Indigenous blood" to enroll in the tribe that they belong to. So when someone is choosing who to be with and who to fall in love with, and who to make a family with, who to make a life with, they have all these extra things they have to consider, because of course they want their children to be able to share in the cultural heritage that they love.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 42:27

Okay, so continuing on this topic of children being restricted from access to the tribe that their parents are enrolled in, I want you to think about how the laws worked when in slavers raped enslaved Black women and then their children were automatically enslaved. Well the dominant culture, like I said, they're like, "I have a forcefield." And they made rules that are literally the exact opposite of each other. So the white colonizers were also raping Indigenous women, and when they had children, did the government follow up on their rule that they made for enslaved people that the children had to be the same status as their mother? No, no, they just made up a whole different rule. And this rule was the exact opposite, saying that the child's access to their tribal identity would be limited so that they would not have the tribal benefits that they deserve. It's literally the One Drop Rule in reverse. Like, what? What?!

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 43:20

Elizabeth Rule spoke directly to this contrast. In the Code Switch episode she said, quote, "And

again, I think it's helpful to understand the way that blood quantum works through another example that people may be more familiar with. And that's the One Drop Rule. The One Drop Rule measured the amount of quote unquote "Black blood" that Black people had in society, and that ensured that every person who had at least one drop would be considered Black and would be covered under these discriminatory laws and even in the earlier days, enslaved. Blood quantum emerged as a way to measure Indian-ness through a construct of race so that over time, Indians would literally breed themselves out and rid the federal government of their legal duties to uphold treaty obligations. End quote. So what I want you to understand, what I really want you to take away from this, is that blood quantum was made up by the government. It was made up by the white colonizers who are raping Indigenous women to oppress Indigenous peoples. But quantum is not how Indigenous peoples originally determined tribal affiliation.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 44:27

In an article that I read called "The One Drop Rule in America: A Story," it said, quote, "Prior to colonization, and still in traditional communities, the idea of determining belonging by the degree of quote unquote 'blood' was and is unheard of. Native American tribes did not use blood quantum law until the government introduced the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, instead, determining tribal status on the basis of kinship, lineage, and family ties." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 44:59

And thisâ€”this!â€”is why understanding Critical Race Theory is so important. You didn't think I was going to be able to sneak CRT in there, did you? But I am, because it is. We have to look at the way that these laws are affecting different racial groups. And when we do, we realize that they are designed so that white people, specifically white men, can hoard wealth and power. And of course, you guessed it: I have an episode for that. It's called "Critical Race Theory in Schools." And I will link it in the show notes. But this is why I say that racism is built on a big fat lie, because they created race to justify the oppression and the racism that they were already perpetuating. And then they made up tons of rules so that they could hoard power. So if this was about logic, they would look at the rules and the laws and they would say, "Okay, which is it? Is it one drop? Or is it blood quantum, because these laws directly conflict with one another." But they haven't done that, because that's not the purpose of the laws. The purpose of the laws is so the white ruling class can continue to hoard power.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 46:08

Now, please understand that I am not saying that the effects of racism aren't real. I'm not saying that the effects of racism are a lie. If you've listened to this show for any amount of time, you know that it's literally all about how terrible racism is. But race is something that was created to justify enslavement and to justify stealing land from Indigenous peoples. And blood quantum and the One Drop Rule being completely in contrast with one anotherâ€”that is just like the tip of the iceberg. If you really start looking into it, you will be horrified by how much it doesn't make sense because it's completely made up and built on a big fat lie.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 46:47

So I have a part two, because I have more to say about this. Next week we'll be doing "Racism is Built On a Big Fat Lie, Part Two," and we'll be talking about a couple of common phrases that you've probably heard that perpetuate stereotypes and horrible things about people of color. So tune in next week for part two.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 47:07

And please do not forget to send in your Loving Day stories. Make a voice memo with your names and where you're from and what Loving Day means to you. Email it to me at [hello@firstnamebasis.org](mailto:hello@firstnamebasis.org) with "Loving Day" in the subject line. Be sure to send that by Saturday, June 4 so that I can share it with you on Loving Day which is June 12. And sign up for our Juneteenth Jubilee waitlist so you can celebrate Juneteenth with us. That link is [firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth](http://firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth). Everything will be linked in the show notes, and I mean everything, because I used so many resources to help me put together this episode. I'm so grateful that you're listening. I'm so excited for Season Six; we have a lot of important work to do, so let's do it together.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 47:54

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](mailto:hello@firstnamebasis.org). All right, have a great week my friends, and I will talk to you again soon.