

6.3 Racism is Built on a Big Fat Lie, Part 2: "Uncle Tom" an...

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SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Six, Episode 3: "Racism is Built on a Big Fat Lie, Part Two: Uncle Tom and Other Myths."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:18
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 I'm so glad you're here for part two of this series, "Racism is Built on a Big Fat Lie."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:06
So we started with Episode One of Season Six talking about how racism is built on a big fat lie. And we talked about the "one drop" rule and blood quantum. So I will link that in the show notes if you haven't listened to it yet. And today, in part two, we are going to break down a couple of phrases that were born out of racism that are actually the opposite of the truth.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:30

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:28

The first phrase we're going to talk about is "Uncle Tom," and the second phrase we're going to talk about is "Indian giver." Now I want to remind you, as we talked about a couple of weeks ago, "Indian" is not a word that we should be saying if we are not Indigenous. So for the rest of the episode, I will say "'I' giver" instead of the actual word, because I don't feel like it's appropriate for me, as someone who's not Indigenous, to be saying that word. So when I'm talking about that phrase, I will just say "'I' giver" instead.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:28

So after we talk about Uncle Tom and "'I' giver" we will talk a little bit about Islamophobia. Now I have to give a trigger warning before we start. We're going to be talking about the harm that was perpetuated against Black and Indigenous people of color, specifically talking about enslavement and genocide against Indigenous peoples. So please take care of yourself if you need to, especially if you identify as a person who fits into one of those categories. I love you and I just want you to have the healing and the space that you need.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 02:32

Okay, I'm so stoked for this episode. Not because it's full of anything fun, necessarily, but I feel like it's kind of like an untold story. Episode I was able to dive into the history, and y'all know how much I love to make those, and I know how much you love to listen to them. So I think you will find this super, super informative and interesting.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 02:53

Before we start though, I have to tell you about "Juneteenth Jubilee," which is on sale today. Today is the first day that you can get your hands on our Juneteenth Jubilee program. So I've heard from tons of you over the past two years that we've been talking about Juneteenth and what you can do "â€" actually, I think I first shared about Juneteenth in 2019, before I even had a podcast. I was sharing about ways that you can celebrate Juneteenth when First Name Basis was just a blog. Can you even believe it? I wrote like three blog posts and was like, "Yeah, no. I'm better at talking." "â€" So anyway, Juneteenth Jubilee is everything that you need to plan a meaningful Juneteenth celebration dinner. So one of the biggest things that we do in my family to celebrate Juneteenth is cook a really special meal. We sit around the table, and we share our reflections from the year. We share the strength that we get from our ancestors, and we share how we want to change and progress moving forward. So this tradition is something that is really special and sacred to us, and we want to share it with you. And in order to do that, we have given you all the tools and all the resources that you need to plan this meaningful dinner in our Juneteenth Jubilee program.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:07

So we start you off with a cookbook full of our family recipes of some traditional Juneteenth food, and some not so traditional, but still fun, that we have in our meal. And then my dad and I were able to get together and film a cooking show, because my dad is an amazing cook. Like,

amazing. And I have asked him to teach me how to make these really special family recipes. So I was like, "You know what we should do? We should make this into a cooking show, so that everyone can learn alongside us." So you get your cookbook, you got the cooking show with me and my dad with three different episodes making three different pieces of the meal. And I was showing it to my husband, Carter, and he was like, "Your dad was created to be on a cooking show." I was like, "I know." Someone call Food Network "where are y'all at?" to give my dad this Cooking Show. We need it. Anyway, we've got the cookbook, the cooking show, and a meal planner, so you can plan out everything you need for this special dinner. We've got a shopping list that you can take with you to the store so you can plan this special event. And then one of my favorite parts is the stuff that we've created for your dinner table to make this extra reflective. So one of the things we have are our reflection questions, and we have two sets of questions: questions for Black families or families with Black children; and questions for white families and non-Black people of color, because Juneteenth is going to mean something different to you based on which of those categories you fit into. So we've got reflection questions, we have little place cards that you can use to gussy up your table and make it look super cute. Everyone can feel really special having their name on a place card. And we have a placemat, which is so adorable. It has activities on it. It's got a maze. It's got a word search. It's got a little coloring element. It's so fun. So really, there's something for everybody in your family in this Juneteenth Jubilee program, and it's on sale now.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 06:10

So go to firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth and you can invest in a meaningful Juneteenth celebration for your family. Now I have to tell you Juneteenth of course is on June 19, but I want to encourage you to celebrate anytime you can. Celebrate June 18, June 16, after Juneteenth...we just want, as anti-racist parents, we want you to be able to help your children learn about Juneteenth and really honor this holiday. So go to firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth and check it out. We've got a little highlight reel that you can look at while you're there and get a sense for the cooking show. It's so fun. [Firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth](http://firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth). I will put that link in the show notes.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 06:55

All right, "Racism is Built on a Big Fat Lie, Part Two: Uncle Tom and Other Myths." So the first myth that we are going to be breaking down is Uncle Tom. And you've probably heard this phrase "Uncle Tom." It basically means a Black person who betrays other Black people, or a Black person who aligns themselves with white supremacy in order to gain power or favor with white people. So you've probably heard this phrase Uncle Tom used to describe people like Candace Owens or Clarence Thomas. And honestly, I was hesitant to name names, because, well, because of the fact that I'm about to explain how this entire phrase is built on a lie. And there really are some Black people who think that we shouldn't use this phrase at all. But I just really wanted to give you some examples so you can understand what this phrase means. I'm not sure, because I am Black-biracial, I'm really not sure how common it is, like, outside of the Black community. Like, is it something that you're hearing often? So I just wanted to be able to give you a couple of people "Candace Owens, Clarence Thomas" so that you can make that connection in your brain, because you've probably seen that somewhere before. But

basically, these are people, Black people, who have aligned themselves with white supremacy to gain power. And honestly, I think that Candace Owens and Clarence Thomas are two Black people who have done that. So yeah.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:13

Okay, let's break down this phrase, where it came from, and then we'll get into the history of it. And I'll help you see how this phrase is actually built on a big fat lie and contributes to racism. So this phrase Uncle Tom came from a book called "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which was written by the author Harriet Beecher Stowe. And what I'm going to do is give you a quick summary of the end of the book, just in case you never read it, because you need to understand the end of the story in order to understand the phrase Uncle Tom and why it is, like, a liar-liar-pants-on-fire level of a lie.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:50

One thing I do want you to know is that this is not a commentary of the book itself. That could really be its own episode. That could probably be its own series. There are tons of scholars who have studied this book specifically, and I do have to say that there is widespread criticism of the book from Black authors and scholars, including James Baldwin. So I want you to know that we're talking specifically about the phrase Uncle Tom and where it came from, and not about my views on the book, because that's a whole 'nother thing. Okay, so "Uncle Tom's Cabin" has a very involved plotline, but the ending is the part that you really need to know. So at the end of the book, the white man who enslaves Tom, his name is Simon Legree, and he demands to know where these two enslaved women are hiding. So Tom knows where these two enslaved women are. These enslaved women are trying to escape, obviously, slavery and sexual assault and rape. And so Legree is trying to capture them. And He demands that Tom tell him, like, "Tell me where these women are so that I can punish them for escaping and seeking freedom." I guess I should say "spoiler alert" before I tell you this next part, because it's literally the very ending of the book. But what happens is Tom does not tell Simon Legree where the women are hiding. And so because he refuses to betray these women, he is punished by Legree — Legree and one of the drivers, who are enslaved Black people, or usually men, whose assignment it was to enforce the rules and punish other enslaved people. Together the white enslaver Simon Legree and the driver kill Tom. And that's how the book ends, it's that he dies because he is being so loyal.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 10:31

And an article that was published by NPR called "Why African Americans Loathe Uncle Tom." Dr. Patricia Turner, who is a folklorist who specializes in Black literature said, quote, "The climax of the story really comes when Uncle Tom is asked to reveal where two slave women are hiding who had been sexually abused by their master, and he refuses. Knowing that he is going to be beaten to death, he refused to say where they are." End quote. So if this is the case, if Uncle Tom is super duper loyal to the point where he dies because he refuses to give up the whereabouts of these women who have escaped, then why does calling someone an Uncle Tom mean that they are a traitor, and mean that they are a Black person who is not loyal to other Black people? Like that is completely the opposite of what happened in the book.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:25

Wow, let me tell you the history of this. So it's important to know that this book was so popular, like so popular that they had to keep the printing presses on for 24 hours a day. And it's actually considered the very first best seller. It was the best selling book of the 19th century behind the Bible. And it really was the first American book to have such a widespread impact and such widespread popularity throughout the world, like internationally. So because the book was so popular, they decided to turn it into a play. And when they turned the book into a play, this is also when they transformed Uncle Tom the character into an "Uncle Tom," the caricature. Playwrights completely changed his character, and they changed the ending of the play.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 12:19

So there were many different versions of the play, but in some of the versions, they actually changed the ending so that Uncle Tom revealed where the other enslaved women were hiding so that he wouldn't be punished by Simon Legree, his enslaver, and the driver. So basically, they took the ending and they made it the exact opposite of what happened, and made sure that Uncle Tom actually gave up the whereabouts of these women. And so now, instead of being super valiant and loyal to the Black community, he was suddenly a traitor. Dr. Turner, the folklorist from the NPR article said, quote, "They grossly distort Uncle Tom into an older man than he is in the novel, a man whose English is poor, a man who will do quite the opposite, who will sell out any Black man if it will curry the favor of a white employer, a white master, or a white mistress." End quote. Like I mentioned a little bit earlier, these depictions of Uncle Tom turned him into a caricature that was used in other books and plays and movies. And historians and researchers call this the "Uncle Tom" caricature. I know, super creative. So in an article that was called "The Uncle Tom Caricature," it was published by Ferris University and the Jim Crow Museum, it says, quote, "The Tom is often old, physically weak, and psychologically dependent on whites for approval." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 13:48

So why did they completely change the ending of the play? Well, because of racism, of course. What other answer is there on this podcast? So Dr. Turner explains, quote, "The producers of the early stage shows didn't think they could attract an audience for the Uncle Tom as he was depicted by Stowe. They couldn't sell tickets to a theatrical production, the climax which would have been this man dying, rather than revealing the whereabouts of these women. They could sell tickets, as they had been successful, by showing Blacks in minstrel depictions, showing them liking to dance more than they like to work, showing their insensitivity to each other, showing their willingness to tell the master or mistress what he or she wanted to hear. That sold tickets. And so those were the shows that they produced, staged and circulated throughout the world." End quote. So basically, white people wanted to go and see this play, the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" play, but they did not want to see a Black person who was valiant and loyal, so they just changed the entire ending to be the opposite of what happened in the book.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 14:58

Jasmine Bradshaw 11:50

So let me share a little bit of the history behind how the Uncle Tom caricature was created for the stage. And this is the part that reminds me of an untold story episode. And a lot of the information that I gathered for this mini untold story comes from a journal article that was called "When Uncle Tom Didn't Die: The Anti-slavery Politics of HJ Conway's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'" that was written by Dr. Adena Spingarn. Now I have to tell you that I can't link this article because I actually paid for access to it, because I could tell by the title that it was going to have the information that I needed for this episode. Usually I just use things that I find online that are kind of open source and free, but this one was too good not to pay for. So I paid for it. But I will link a book that Dr. Spingarn wrote. It's called, "Uncle Tom: From Martyr to Traitor," and it's actually the same price as the article. So I wish I had just gotten the book, because it probably has the same information as the article plus even more. And I will say, I have not read this book, "Uncle Tom: From Martyr to Traitor." I haven't read it. So I'm not recommending it. And I'm really not sure that I agree with the conclusion that Dr. Spingarn made in the article that I read. So I want to make it clear that this article was really helpful in painting the picture of what happened historically, but I don't know if Dr. Spingarn and I are on the same page. So I'm not recommending this book. I'm just telling you that it's out there if it's something that you're interested in.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 16:23

So after they turned Uncle Tom's Cabin into a play in 1852, they basically continued to do this performance non-stop until 1930. And like I said, there are lots of different versions, but one of the very first versions was done at the Boston Museum. So the Boston Museum had a 500-seat auditorium, and when they started performing "Uncle Tom's Cabin," it was sold out every single night. The manager of the Boston Museum, his name was Moses Kimball. And he was actually apprehensive about how political the play was. And he didn't like how anti-slavery it was. He was really worried that he wouldn't be able to sell tickets. He was worried about how it would be received by the audience, but they seriously loved it. And after the first week of shows, he wrote in his journal about how much money they made. He said that they made over \$3,000 in one week, which, I looked up the inflation, and from 1852 to now, \$3,000 would be over \$111,000 today. In one week, he made over \$100,000 on this play. He wrote, quote, "This has been the greatest week ever known in the Boston Museum. The piece is certainly done gloriously. I hardly need write my utter detestation of its political bearing." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 17:50

In this journal article that I read by Dr. Spingarn, it talked about how historians believe that so much exposure to the story of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" might have shifted Moses Kimball's stance on enslavement. So before this play came to the Boston Museum, he was known for being in support of compromise when it came to slavery. Now, I don't know how that even works, like how can you compromise on literally the most basic human rights? I don't know what a compromise would look like, but okay, Moses Kimball. But Dr. Spingarn writes that after he had seen the play so many times, quote, "In 1854, he recorded his deep disapproval of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which opened the door for the spread of slavery into the nation's new territories. Moses Kimball writes, quote, 'The infamous Nebraska bill passed the Senate 34 to 14. Shameful.'" End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 18:50

So the historians really think that seeing this story over and over had an effect on his views of slavery and what the nation should be doing about it. The version of the play that was performed in the Boston Museum was written by a man named HJ Conway, and the ending of the book was changed for this version of the play. And it was softened, like really softened, from the book, but the enslavers and people who were pro-slavery, they still were not happy with this ending. They criticized the play, and in the article, it says, quote, "A pro-slavery spectator also recognized the power of the Boston Museum's production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to turn audiences against slavery. He condemned it as quote, 'Treason,' and wrote that it was, quote, 'An over-color description of the evils of slavery. It conveys wrongful impressions of life at the South and is a slander upon the slaveholding community.'" End quote. So even though he softened the ending, these pro-slavery people were not having it.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 19:53

Okay, so this is the part of the story where you're going to be like, "Oh, my goodness." So people noticed that this play was doing so well, and they saw an opportunity for profit, obviously. And one of those people was the greatest showman himself, PT Barnum. Historians know that PT Barnum was into women's rights. He was into Black civil rights, and he was actually pro-abolition. But they also say that he cared more about making money than any of those things. And one of his good friends was a man named Moses Kimball, the manager of the Boston Museum. And PT Barnum saw that Kimball was doing so well with Uncle Tom's Cabin that he decided to bring it to New York. If you know anything about PT Barnum, you probably know that he had a museum in New York called the American Museum, and he would do plays at the American Museum, and this is where he did "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 20:52

Now, it's important to know that there was another showing of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" right down the street from Barnum's American Museum, and this play used a different adaptation. So there were two dueling plays right down the street from each other, but they were using different versions of the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" play. So the historians think that since PT Barnum was such good friends with Moses Kimball that he probably just used the same version that Moses Kimball used, the version that was written by HJ Conway. And after Barnum premiered the play, there were multiple anti-slavery and abolitionist newspapers that said that Barnum's play, quote, "Obscured the anti-slavery message, destroyed the point and moral of the story, and turned the book into a play which no apologist for slavery could object." End quote. So there were a handful of reasons why they had so much criticism about PT Barnum's version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but the main issue was "the ending, the ending of the play was completely different from the book."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 21:59

So in the book, like I said, Uncle Tom refuses to give up the whereabouts of his fellow enslaved people who tried to escape freedom, and he's killed for it. But at the end of the play that PT Barnum was putting on, Dr. Spingarn writes, quote, "In the Conway script's final act, Lagree,"

“ that was Tom's enslaver ” “Lagree strikes Tom with a whip and the stage directions call for the removal of Tom's jacket, quote, 'showing the audience his back very bloody.' But at the end of the play, Lagree is dead, killed by supernatural forces, and Tom, his wife, and his children are alive and free. Rather than dying and ascending to heaven with Little Eva, Tom receives a gift of money for quote, 'a lot of good land down east, in New England,' that will, quote 'be honored by having erected on it Uncle Tom's Cabin.' There he and his family will live in freedom.” End quote. So at the end of the play, Tom is punished but he's not killed. And the enslaver kind of gets what's coming to him, because he ends up the one who is dead. So the anti-slavery people and the abolitionists were like, "You completely changed the ending, and this does not have the same effect that the ending of the book has on people." So they publish this in the newspaper. And of course, Barnum has a response. And he publishes an ad in the newspaper defending himself, and he says that his play quote, "Does not foolishly and unjustly elevate the Negro above the white man in intellect or morals. It exhibits a true picture of Negro life in the south, instead of absurdly representing the ignorant slave as possessed of all the polish of the drawing room and the refinement of the educated whites." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 23:48

Now you have to know that the play down the street, the dueling play was much more close to the story. So the abolitionist and the anti-slavery people were not writing criticisms about the play down the street from PT Barnum, they were just writing criticisms about his because the ending was so different. So basically, Barnum is saying that by aligning closely with the story, the play that was going on down the street was elevating enslaved Black people above white people, and that was wrong in his eyes, in his racist eyes. So we have to give him a little bit of credit, because after he continued to receive that critical feedback and critical reviews, he revised the play to be a little bit more faithful to the original story, but he still didn't change the ending to match the book.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 24:36

Because these Uncle Tom plays were doing so well in such prominent cities like Boston and New York, they began to grow even more. And then other adaptations started to be written about Uncle Tom so that they could use them in different places. Dr. Spingarn wrote, quote, "The Uncle Tom plays rapidly degraded, becoming more harmful than helpful to African Americans. The plays are also frequently be blamed for turning Uncle Tom, the heroic Christian martyr of Stowe's novel, into the submissive race traitor his name connotes today." End quote. So as you can imagine, when the plays spread to the south, this is when the ending completely changed and became unrecognizable as compared to the book. They got really bad. And John Frick, who is a theater historian from the University of Virginia, was quoted in an article and said, quote, "Other productions quickly went in the opposite direction and became racist. By the end of the 19th century, the 'anti-Tom's,' as they were known, erased any abolitionist sentiment, and were anti-Black productions that reflected the antebellum society in the south." End quote. But do you want to know the cherry on top? The play was actually much more popular than the book. Dr. Spingarn wrote, quote, "Thomas Gossett has estimated that as many as 50 Americans attended stage versions of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' for every one who read the novel." So for every person who read the book, there were 50 other people who went and saw the play. So of course, if all these people are seeing the play instead of reading the book, then the idea of Uncle Tom being a traitor is going to be deeply ingrained in the cultural

narrative. And people are going to start thinking that that's actually the original version, when the original version is the literal opposite of the ending of the play that they're seeing right in front of them.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:27

So are you starting to see why I say that racism is built on a big fat lie? Because this is just a big fat lie. Like the most annoying part to me is that they weren't even creative. They changed the ending to be the opposite of what it actually was. Originally, Uncle Tom was so loyal and courageous, and then because of racism, he's distorted into a traitor. So now you know the real and untold story of the phrase, "Uncle Tom" and where it came from.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:57

All right, let's move on to "I" giver. Did you ever hear that phrase growing up? Like, you're an "I" giver? I have this really distinct memory of getting this frilly, personalized umbrella from Disneyland. It had my name on it. It was, like, hand-painted, and you go up to the little kiosk, and you tell them your name, you pick out the color "mine was purple, of course" I loved it so much. And you, they tell you, "Okay, come back in, like 30 minutes, and we'll have it done for you." And when you come back, it is the most gorgeous thing. They do it in this beautiful script, and they paint flowers on it. It was so cute. And I loved it so much, like seriously so much, that a few years later, when I went back to Disneyland, I got a miniature version for my dolls, because you know, my dolls cannot be getting wet in the rain. I still have the mini version, and I'll post a picture on my Insta story this week over @firstname.basis.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 27:52

So on the one rainy day of the year here in Arizona, I brought my umbrella to school, and one of my white friends in my class, she loved it. And we loved playing together. So I let her see it, and I told her that we could play with it. And she was playing with it, and when I asked her for it back, she said, "Don't be an 'I' giver." And I was like, "Are you kidding me? Like, this is literally mine. I never said you can have it. What are you talking about? I'm not being an 'I' giver." And a few years ago, I was cleaning up and I saw this umbrella and this memory instantly came back to me and I was reminded of this term. And I was like, "Wait a minute, this term actually makes no sense. Because Indigenous people didn't give this stuff to the colonizers, they just took it. So how could they say that Indigenous people are trying to take stuff back that they were never actually given in the first place?" So then I was like, "Okay, what is the story behind this phrase? Where does it come from?" And I feel like Indigenous people probably relate to that thought of like, "It was literally mine, and I never said you could have it." It really means the exact opposite of the truth.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 29:03

So I started by just looking up the term in the dictionary. In the dictionary, "I" giver says it's a noun and it's a person who gives a gift and then takes it back, and under the word it says, "sometimes offensive." I was like, "Yeah, you think? 'Sometimes offensive?' all the time

offensive." All the time.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 29:24

Okay, so where does this phrase come from? I read an article by Code Wwitch, and it was called "The History Behind the Phrase 'Don't Be an 'I' Giver'" by Lakshmi Gandhi. In the article, it says, quote, "The concept of an 'I' gift or an 'I' giver traces its roots back to at least the 1700s. In his 1765 history of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, a white colonizer named Thomas Hutchinson defines an 'I' gift as a present, quote, 'for which an equivalent return is expected'" End quote. So Europeans, when they came to the Americas, they didn't trade anymore. They were already using money to trade for goods. So when Indigenous people began to offer them things, they were, the Indigenous people thought that they were, trading, when the Europeans thought that they were being given a gift. So obviously, the Europeans weren't given a gift, the Indigenous people were like, "Here, this is what we have to share with you. What do you have to share with us?" And the Europeans wouldn't give them anything. So the Indigenous people would be like, "Okay, well, then give me back the stuff I gave you, because you're not giving me anything for it. You're not trading me." So that's where the term "I" giver came from, because Europeans thought that they were getting a gift, and then the indigenous people were asking for it back. But really, the Indigenous people were just saying, "No, I was trying to trade but you don't have anything to trade. So give it back."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 30:48

So in 1848, John Russell Bartlett writes the dictionary of Americanisms, and this term "I" giver is included in this dictionary. And you can really see the way that this narrative painted Indigenous people as the ones who were in the wrong, so this means that settlers can really shrug off the violence and the genocide, claiming that Indigenous peoples gave them the land and the resources that they were actually stealing.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 31:17

So if we fast forward to the early 1900s, the phrase was being used a lot in reporting on people who are going through messy divorces. So basically, when people were splitting up, and they wanted to keep the gifts that they had given to the other person while they were married, the person that they were splitting up with would call them an "I" giver. And in 1969, which is not all that long ago, there was a male pop band called The 1910 Fruit Gum Co. They wrote a song called "'I' giver." And in the song they sing about how someone gave them love, and then took it away. And this song actually shot up on the Billboard charts and hit number five and stayed there for a while.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 31:58

So after exploring the historical context a little bit I really wanted to understand an Indigenous perspective on this phrase "I" giver, and so I turned to the Native Appropriations Blog, which is written by Dr. Adrienne Keene, and she is of the Cherokee Nation. And she's actually one of the hosts of the All My Relations podcast. And if you remember from the first episode in this series,

I talked about one of my favorite episodes of All My Relations. It's called "Love in the Time of Blood Quantum." She is a co-host of that podcast. So Dr. Kane writes on her blog about how Kris Jenner used the term "I" giver on national television. I never expected to be able to talk about pop culture on this podcast, but we've got PT Barnum, we've got Kris Jenner, I mean, who else is gonna come up during this episode? So let me give you the background.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 32:51

In 2011 Kim Kardashian was married to Kris Humphries, who was a basketball player, and they were only married for 72 days before Kim filed for divorce. And during the divorce, Kris "oh my gosh, here's the other thing: Kris Humphries spells his name K-R-I-S, which is the same way that Kris Jenner spells her name, so it can get really confusing. They have the same name down to the spelling " So during the divorce, Kris Humphries expected Kim to give back the engagement ring that he gave her. It was \$2 million. And when Kris Jenner was on Good Morning America, she was talking about the situation and how he was asking for the ring back and she said, quote, "I hate an "I" giver. It's a gift, you know?" End quote. So when talking about this on her blog, Dr. Kane writes, quote "'I' giver derives from the alleged practice of American Indians of taking back gifts from white settlers. It is more likely that the settlers wrongly interpreted the Indians' loans to them as gifts. This term, which is certainly American, may have been coined to denigrate the native race. Historians would now agree that where deceit is concerned, it was the settlers who were the front runners. It isn't uncommon, and it could be argued that it is customary for the conquering race to attempt to justify their invasion by dismissing the conquered as dishonest and stupid." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 34:18

I mean, where else have we heard that people are dishonest and stupid? Can you say slavery? So we can see the pattern of white supremacy. Here we can see the pattern of the dominant culture, making sure that the people **who** are being oppressed are the ones who are painted as disingenuous, dishonest, stupid, lazy, not trustworthy, all of those things. So in her post, Dr. Keen references Thomas Hutchinson, and how long the phrase has been around, and then she goes on to explain how it's basically a big fat lie. She says, quote, "I think we can all agree that it's probably not the best term to use to describe a negative act considering it stereotypes, Indians as deceitful and ungenerous, which, if you've ever been in a native community is about the farthest thing from the truth." End quote. So I hope you know that I used the term "Indians" when I was quoting Dr. King because I wanted to be really faithful to what she wrote on her blog. And obviously, I would not say that word if I were just having a conversation with someone. I would use the term "Indigenous peoples."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 35:29

So like I said, one of the most annoying parts to me is that these people just didn't even try that hard to make up this lie. Like, I was telling my husband Carter during the 2020 election, when we were talking about misinformation and disinformation that was going around, I was like, "This is driving me bonkers. They're not even trying. Their lies are just so bad. It's just the

opposite of the truth. It's not even that hard to see that the truth is the opposite of what they're saying." But you know, what is even more annoying is that people believe it. Like, people buy into this stuff, and they totally believe it.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:07

So now that we know that the phrase "Uncle Tom" is based on a big fat lie, and the phrase "'I' giver" is based on a big fat lie, I want to talk to you a little bit about Islamophobia. And I feel like this really does align with racism. So this one doesn't have a long history that goes with it or an untold story, but it was something that I learned while I was interviewing Felicity LeFevre at the end of last season. We did an episode together called "Teaching Children About Ramadan and Islamophobia." It's Season Five, Episode 17. And I will link that in the show notes. During the episode, Felicity taught me the true meaning of Islam and the translation of the word Muslim. She told me that "ma" means person. And "salam" means peace. So "Muslim" translates to "a person of peace." And then she said, quote, "A Muslim is a person who practices Islam. Islam is "The Path of Peace." So it's just quite ironic that people think that people who are Muslim are these dangerous, treacherous terrorists, when really, the whole pathway is supposed to be guided on the path of peace." End quote. So I felt like this totally went along with the episode today, because I was like, this is such a common misconception. People think that Islam is this violent religion, but in reality, it really focuses on peace and the pathway to peace. And just like any religion, Muslims come from lots of different backgrounds, but because there are a large percentage of Muslims who are brown, I feel like it fits really well into our conversation about how racism is the big fat lie, because there is definitely a racist piece to this.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 37:50

So do you see what I'm saying? This stuff is really, truly just the opposite of the truth, in all three of these examples. And if there is someone who's doing something violent in the name of Islam, then they're disrespecting the religion and not following its tenets. Just like in the Christian religion, the colonizers and enslavers, they did all of these things in the name of Christianity, and they were disrespecting Christianity as a whole and not living the tenants of the religion by doing these horrible things to Black people, to Indigenous people, and other people of color. And it's important to understand that Christians today continue to do the same thing that they've been doing for centuries.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:34

So thus concludes our discussion about how racism is built on a big fat lie. These are just a few of the examples, but these ones I thought were really interesting to deep dive and would really give you a good picture of how this stuff is just baked into the language that we use all the time. I hope that you will try to avoid using these phrases. Obviously, don't avoid using "Islam," just understand the true meaning of the word. But "'I' giver" and "Uncle Tom," like, those are things that we can let go of. And if you missed episode one of the series, go back and listen to it. I will link it in the show notes. Season Six, Episode One: "Racism is Built on a Big Fat Lie, Part One," and we talk about blood quantum and the one drop rule.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 39:16

Now, don't forget to get your hands on Juneteenth Jubilee. You've gotta get it now because you need to plan for your amazing Juneteenth celebration, and at least go to firstnamebasis.org/juneteenth and watch the intro video. It is so fun. The production company that we worked with, Paradox Universe, Joe, he is amazing. Best videographer if you're in Arizona or surrounding. I know he travels; you should use him.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 39:42

And the last thing I have to tell you about is Loving Day. So Loving Day is on June 12, and if you are an interracial couple then I need your help. We are making the second annual episode about your Loving Day stories. So if you're not sure, Loving Day is the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that made it so that states could not make laws against interracial marriage. Now, I do have to point out that this was only applying to hetero-couples at the time, and LGBT couples did not get to enjoy the same human rights and civil rights as straight couples until 2015 with the "Obergefell" decision. So Richard and Mildred Loving were this interracial couple, Richard is white, and Mildred is Black. And they loved each other. And they lived in Virginia. And in Virginia, they had a law saying that white people and Black people were not allowed to be married because of racism. And they were like, "Nope, we're gonna fight this." They actually didn't want to "I have a whole Bite-Sized Black History episode about this" but they didn't want to fight this battle. They were just people who were in love. Like, we just want to have a family; leave us alone. But they loved each other so much that they decided to go up against the State of Virginia, go all the way to the Supreme Court, and they won.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 41:01

So on June 12, which is the day that the decision was made, we celebrate Loving Day, and we celebrate all interracial couples here at First Name Basis, all interracial couples who want to celebrate, we want to celebrate you. So what we do is we are making an episode with your Loving Day stories. And so what you have to do in order to be included is record a voice memo on your phone, and you need to include three things: number one is your name and the name of your partner; number two is where you are from; and number three, just answered the question, "What does Loving Day mean to you?" Last year, we got so many amazing answers, and it was so interesting to hear what Loving Day meant to everybody. And please know that if you are not in an interracial couple that includes a Black person, I still want you to submit, because I think that this decision is so important because it set the precedent that people who were in interracial relationships, even if they didn't include Black people, or white people, that there couldn't be laws made against your love. So send your voice memo to hello@firstnamebasis.org. And make sure to put Loving Day in the subject line. Tell me where you're from, your name and the name of your partner, and answer the question "What does Loving Day mean to you?" and you can be included in our Loving Day stories episode. I will link last year's episode in the show notes. And make sure that you send in your submission by Saturday, June 4. That is this Saturday! So send your submission and tell us all about your love. I'm so excited. I want to celebrate you, whether you are LGBT, straight dating, married "anyone who loves someone who is a different race than their own. Please send in a submission.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 42:45

All right, y'all. I love you. This has been a really interesting Deep Dive. It's hard to look into this history, but for me, it's also really healing because I'm like, it is so validating to uncover these lies and share them with you. So I hope that you'll share the podcast with someone you love. Someone who you think would be interested in this and someone who is committed to anti-racism. And I will talk to you very soon.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 43:11

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.