

7.10 The Scariest Costume: An Untold Story of Appropriation

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SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Seven, Episode 10, "The Scariest Costume: An Untold Story of Appropriation."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:16
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 competency you need to be a leader in your family and a change maker in your community. Together we will wrestle with hard questions and use the answers to create the world we want, a world that reflects our values of inclusion, compassion, and courage. I'm your host, Jasmine Bradshaw, and I am so excited to be on this journey with you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:51
Hello, First Name Basis, fam. I am so glad you are here. Oh, my goodness, y'all, we have an untold story episode for you! So when we were doing the research about Indigenous Peoples' Day, we found this story and it was like, is this real? Like is this actual real life history? I cannot believe it. I seriously can't wait to tell you all about it because it is wild and it will take you on twists and turns. Like for real buckle up.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:22
So if you've been here for a while, you know that we love to do untold story episodes where we do a deep dive into some event or some person from history and tell you all the things you never learned about them. And I will leave all of our other untold story episodes in the show

notes. We have Dr. Seuss, Martin Luther King, Jr. We've done Columbus and Thanksgiving. And most recently, we did an untold story of Indigenous resistance. And it was amazing. And for Indigenous Peoples' Day, we really wanted to focus specifically on a story that was talking about Indigenous values, Indigenous resistance, Indigenous strength. And so while we were doing the research for that episode, we found this absolutely wild story about appropriation and a lot of white guys like extremely appropriating Indigenous culture. And I was like, this story needs to be told, but maybe not this week. So the time has finally come for this story to be told, because, oh, my it really is wild, too wild not to share.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 02:28

So I have to start out with a trigger warning, There is a major appropriation of Indigenous culture, specifically by people who were violent against Indigenous peoples. So, I mean, take care of yourself, this stuff is really hard to hold on. I totally understand if you're not in the space to be hearing this right now, if you are someone who is a part of the Indigenous community.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 02:51

So before I jump into "The Scariest Costume: An Untold Story of Appropriation," I want to tell you about two free downloads that we have for you today. The first is, of course, because it's almost Halloween, and we're talking about the scariest costume, I have to tell you about our "Is My Halloween Costume Cultural Appropriation?" free download. So this is a decision tree. And it's super cool, because it has lots of questions that you can ask yourself to decide whether or not your costume is cultural appropriation, and then you can really figure out if it's a great costume idea, or if it's something that you should stay away from. So like one of the questions on the decision tree is, "Does it include elements with sacred, religious, or deep cultural significance?" And like, if the answer is "yes," obviously, that's not something you should be wearing. And if the answer is "no," it takes you to another question to ask yourself, just to be sure that you're having fun on Halloween and not making fun of or making light of anyone's culture. So that's the first free download, you can go to firstnamebasis.org/costumes, I'll have that link in the show notes. And it's called, "Is My Halloween Costume Cultural Appropriation?"

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 04:01

And then the other thing that I want to share with you today is our voting action plan. So way back in Season Two, if you can even believe it, I made an episode called "How to Become an Informed Voter," and this was right before the presidential election. And I talk a lot about understanding what it looks like to vote your values, and figuring out which candidates best align with your values so that you can vote for them. And so one of the things that I did was I put together a voting action plan so that you can have all the information in one place and take notes while you're reading in to the different candidates and what they stand for. So if that sounds like something that would be helpful to you, especially as you're early voting or doing your mail-in ballot, that's what we're doing over here. I just got mine in the mail and I need to sit down and really figure it out. And I was like, "Oh, I'm gonna get out my voting action plan." And then I thought, "Why haven't I told all of you about this?" So it is a voting action plan just

for you. Go to firstnamebasis.org/vote. It's totally free. And you can also find that link in the show notes. So either your voting action plan or your Halloween costume appropriation decision tree, go download both of those. And we are so excited to see you using them.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:10

Okay, so our episode today is about something that you've probably heard of before, but maybe you don't really know that much about it. Or you're like, "What are you saying? What is that word? I've never even heard of this." It's called the Tammany Society. Have you heard of that? They actually have a few different names. They call themselves the Tammany Society, Tammany Hall, or the Columbian Order, which, Colombian...hello. We will come back to that part later. But the Tammany society was basically a group of white men who were very influential in the politics of New York. They started out in New York and then brought into lots of different states. But they were created in order to kind of be an influential force in the community, specifically in politics.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:56

One of their main goals, and one of the things that they talked about amongst themselves and shared with others is that they wanted to show that they were a political club for quote, unquote, "pure Americans," and that they were the quote unquote, "true Americans." So this was something that they were like, "We are the real Americans. This is what America is all about. If you look at us, you see America, blah, blah, blah." You know, not super great stuff, considering it was an entirely white male group. And they originally were not nice to immigrants either. So they would keep immigrants out of their group, especially Irish and German immigrants. But then later on down the line, they decided to let immigrants into their group. And I mean, there's like a whole second half of the history that has a lot to do with like mob bosses and political corruption. That's not the part that we're going to be talking about today. Because if you can believe it, there's something even more wild than that, that they've done.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:55

But the Tammany Society is this political group in New York in the era right after the Revolutionary War. Right after George Washington is inaugurated, this society comes to be, so yes. They really do have three different names "the Tammany Society, Tammany Hall, and the Columbian Order. And I was reading an article about it, and they said, "Society of St. Tammany or Columbian Order, which traces its origin back to colonial days, but which is more commonly known as Tammany Hall." End quote. So you've probably heard of one of those names, but they can really go by all three.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:30

And really, what is it a name? Well, what's in this name is cultural appropriation. Their very first act of appropriation, not their last but their very first, was their name. So Tammany is a corruption of the name "Tamanend," who was a legendary chief of the Lanepe people in

Delaware. So they're starting this group, and they're looking for a name, and they learn about Tamanend, and they're like, "Wow, he's really cool. We're basically going to take his name, and put it on our group of entirely white men and not let any Indigenous people into our group, but we'll name ourselves after them." So they named themselves after the chief of the Lanepe people, and then they set off to influence politics in New York. And one of the most notable members of the Tammany Society was Aaron Burr, sir. Yep. Aaron Burr was in the Tammany Society. But in order to understand why the Tammany Society existed, there's another society, another all white male group that you need to know about. I was telling Carter while I was doing this research, I'm like, "How much time do people have to just be going to these boys' clubs?" Like, they spent a lot of time doing this, in these clubs in these secret boys' groups. I guess it wasn't a secret, but feels secretive to people who weren't allowed to be in it.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:51

Okay, so another society that's going on at the exact same time is the Society of the Cincinnati. Now this Society of the Cincinnati is really the oldest patriotic society in the United States. And the first president of the Society was George Washington. And the reason why George Washington was in the Society of the Cincinnati and president of the Society of the Cincinnati is because the group was comprised of people who were high ranking officers from the Revolutionary War. Now, you're probably wondering where they got their name. So the Society of the Cincinnati was named after a Roman senator and land owner from the fifth century. So basically, it's this guy who was a farmer and a senator. And the country was going to a few different battles, and they really needed a leader for the troops. And so this farmer, this senator-farmer guy, he drops everything that he's doing and he decides to go into battle and lead the troops, and they do really well. And he's like, "You know, this is super important to me to serve my country." And then after the battles are won, he basically just goes back to farming. And they're like, "You should have an award. You should have accolades for all these things you did for us. We're so happy!" And he's like, "No, I don't need an award. I'm just going to be a farmer and a senator." So the group of men who started this Society of the Cincinnati thought that it was really valiant that he did that. And so they named their group after him, because his last name was Cincinnatus. So the Society of the Cincinnati is named after a man whose last name was Cincinnatus. Now, you might be wondering, like I was, what is this society for? Why was the Society of the Cincinnati created? What do they do? Well their goals have really shifted over time.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 10:39

So at the beginning, their goals were to, quote, "Preserve the rights so dearly won, to promote the continuing union of the United States; and to assist members in need, their widows and their orphans." End quote. So when they're talking about preserving the rights so dearly won, they're talking specifically about the Revolutionary War, because like I said, the people who were in the Society of the Cincinnati were the high-ranking officers from the Revolutionary War. Now the Society of the Cincinnati is still in existence, and I was lurking around on their home page, and deep into their website. And their mission is a little bit different today, but very similar to what it was before. It says, quote, "Its mission is to promote knowledge and appreciation of the achievement of American independence, and foster fellowship among its members." Unquote.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 11:31

So you've probably noticed that I mentioned membership a couple times already, because I think it's absolutely ridiculous that the only people who can be members of this Society of Cincinnati are male, and a lot of them are white males, because in order to be a member, and this is still the same today, you have to be a descendant of one of the original members. So the original members were white men who were high-ranking officers in the Revolutionary War. And so in order to be a member, you have to be a son, or, you know, grandson, or great-great-great whatever, of one of those people. And they did open it up a little bit. So in the 1800s, they were like, "Okay, maybe you don't have to be a descendant of one of the original members of this society, but you do have to be a descendant of a ranking officer from the Revolutionary War." So and it even has that on their website today. It says, quote, "Hereditary members of the Society of the Cincinnati are qualified male descendants of commissioned officers who served in the Continental Army or Navy, or of officers of the French royal forces who served in America during the Revolutionary War. Each member is admitted to one of the 14 constituent societies (representing the original thirteen states and France) established in 1783." End quote.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 12:55

So that got me thinking, if everyone in this society is a hereditary member, of someone from the Revolutionary War, like, do they have Black people in it? Black men, I should say. In this society? And the answer is not really. So I was reading an article from 2001. Now granted, that was 20 years ago. But it said Minor Myers, a historian of the society, said that the Cincinnati had not yet been able to identify descendants of a Black officer who might qualify for membership. He said, quote, "We've looked into it very carefully, and we're continuing to look. It would be a wonderful thing to find such a family." End quote. And I mean, maybe there are Black members, probably if someone was married to, I'm thinking of like, my own family, like if a white guy was married to a Black woman, and then they had a son. Like, maybe he could be in the society. But at the same time, I'm like, we have to think about what Black people were doing at that time. During the Revolutionary War, Black people were enslaved. So obviously, they're not going to have like a direct linkage to the society. It's just, yeah, there are other groups of Black veterans from that time period. But the thing is, this group was specifically made up of officers, high-ranking officers. So even though there are Black veterans from that time period, they were not allowed to be high-ranking people, so they were not allowed to be in this society, the Cincinnati. I mean, yeah, you know, you know, this whole podcast about racism? More racism? Surprise, surprise.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 14:41

Okay, so we have established that this Society of the Cincinnati is still in existence, and that they still only have male members in their society, which is like, how is that even possible in 2022? But that is the case. The reason why it's possible is because they say that you can be an associate if you don't qualify for membership. So it says anyone, whether they qualify for society membership or not, can join us as an associate of the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati. What a mouthful. It says, "The associates share our enthusiasm and contribute to our cause to perpetuate the memory of the people and events that secured our national independence, created our national identity, and articulated our highest ideals by

supporting scholarly inquiry, good teaching, and popular understanding of the importance and legacy of the American Revolution." End quote. So no women allowed except if you want to be an associate, which is like not the same, like I imagine them saying a "separate but equal" type of thing here, but obviously not the same thing as being a full-fledged member, but you can be an associate.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 15:51

All right, here's the first moment where you're going to be like, "Oh my gosh, this story is top notch." Okay, so I told you that Aaron Burr was a notable figure in the Tammany Society. Well, guess who was in the Society of the Cincinnati? I mean, you guessed it, right? Alexander Hamilton? Yes, Alexander Hamilton was in the rival society. So he's in the Society of the Cincinnati, and I was reading specifically about his involvement. And this is what it said, quote, "After the war, Hamilton became an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati. He believed that the society, one of the few national organizations in the young country, was a valuable force for securing the future of the American republic. Hamilton led the society as its second president general, an office first held by Washington, until his untimely death in 1804." We all know all about his untimely death, right? So Alexander Hamilton is one of the presidents of the Society of the Cincinnati after George Washington serves in that role.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 17:00

So now, are you getting a sense of why I had to tell you all about the Society of the Cincinnati? Because you need to understand who they are in order to understand why the Tammany Society was created. Because the Tammany society was created like weeks after George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States. So Washington is in this group, Hamilton, all of their comrades are in this group together. And then Washington is inaugurated. And a couple weeks later, William Mooney, who is a pollster in New York, decides to start the Tammany Society. And when I was doing the research about it, I read this article that talked about the rivalry, it said, quote, "To many, the purpose of the Cincinnati clearly seem to be to establish a hereditary aristocracy in America." End quote. So basically, this is it, the Cincinnati has all these high-ranking officers, and then one of them gets elected to be the President of the United States, George Washington. And one of the reasons that William Mooney was like, "We need to create this other rival counter society," was because the aristocrats in New York were not necessarily members of the Society of the Cincinnati, but they were very influential. And between those Aristocrats and Cats. Gosh, I have said that so many times in doing this research. I not even going to take it out because it makes me laugh so much and those aristocrats in New York, between them, and the Society of the Cincinnati, they were able to make it so that only land-owning white men were able to vote. And so a lot of other people did not own land, but they wanted to have an influence. And so William Mooney is like, "We're going to make this other society that shows the true Americans, and we can counteract those Aristocrats."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 19:00

So another article that I was reading said specifically that William Mooney created the Tammany Society, quote, "As a counter to more elitist organizations, like the Society of the Cincinnati." End quote. When talking about the purpose of the Tammany society, it said, quote,

"Initially a fraternal order dedicated to the preservation of the art and natural history of the United States and the commemoration of the country's history, this society came to see itself as a bulwark of republicanism and democracy against aristocracy. Modest initiation fees and annual dues ensured a broad membership. Artisans and mechanics made up the bulk of the members by the mid 1790s. But the organization also included lawyers and merchants." End quote. So whereas the Society of the Cincinnati is only very elite people who served in the Revolutionary War and were high-ranking officers, the Tammany Society is kind of a more every man's. I shouldn't say that. Because obviously, it's not every man. Every white man who has the money and wants to be in it can be in it. Unless you're an immigrant, you know. But you know, also every man.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 20:17

Do you see why this is so wild? Do you see why they contradict themselves? Like, you can't say you're for everybody but then leave a huge chunk of people out. And you can't call yourselves the "real true Americans" when your group only includes white men.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 20:34

Okay, so I told you about the appropriation that is in the name, the Tammany Society's name, but the appropriation actually gets much, much, much worse. So basically, in order to prove that they are the "true" or "pure" Americans, they majorly appropriated Indigenous culture. And I think it's interesting because it indicates to me that they understood whose land they were really on. And they were very aware of the rights that Indigenous people should have but were part of denying Indigenous Peoples those rights. So some of the things that they did, were using titles that were commonly used by Native Americans. So they use titles like "Sachem," and "Sagamore," or "Grand Sachem." And these were titles that meant "leaders," like revered and respected people in Indigenous culture, they would have the title of "Sachem." And so the leaders of the Tammany Society used these titles to refer to themselves. So they actually would call the President of the United States, starting with Washington and ending with Jackson, they would call that person the "Great Grand Sachem of Tammany," and then they also had "grand sachem" within their actual group. But the President was always considered the Great Grand Sachem, which is interesting when you think about George Washington, because he was in the Society of the Cincinnati, the group that they were specifically rivals with, but they're like, "No, we actually want you in our group too. So we're gonna call you this Great Grand Sachem." So they appropriated Indigenous titles for themselves and for the leaders of their group.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 22:18

Now, I was diving a little bit into the term "sachem," because I was wondering more about where it came from. And it said that it referred to the chief of a Native American tribe in the 1620s, specifically from the Narragansett people. And it said in the definition that it means "chief" or "ruler," but then as I was reading on it said, that it was quote, "Applied in jocular use to a prominent member of any society from the 1680s." End quote, so then I was like, "Well, what is jocular?" This is what I love about untold story episodes, because you really are coming on the journey with me. You can see my train of thought as I'm talking. So I looked that up. And it said that means when something is used in jest, so it's used kind of as a joke. So basically,

white people used the word as a joke until the Tammany Society full-on appropriated it and used it to refer to their leaders. So it was a joke until it wasn't a joke. And then they wanted it to be taken really seriously. So this is where it starts to spiral into a black hole of terrifying appropriation. I'm laughing because it's so ridiculous, not because I actually think it's funny.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 23:37

But the historians of the Tammany Society said that the reason why they were using all these Indigenous terms and named their group after an Indigenous leader was because they wanted to, quote, "Caricature the foreign manners of the Cincinnati, and their aristocratic pretensions." End quote. So basically, they're saying, "The Cincinnati, they're aristocratic, that is not American, they're, quote unquote, 'foreign,' and so in order for us to prove that we are the true pure Americans, we are going to full-on appropriate Indigenous culture. Because we understand at our core that those really are the people whose land we're living on. Those really are the people who are the original stewards of this land and the people who deserve rights, but we're not going to give them those rights. We're just going to pretend to be them and act like we're the true Americans." Yeah, y'all. If you can believe it gets worse. It really does.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 24:38

Okay, so they use the term "sachem," "grand sachem," and then they decided to organize themselves into tribes. And this is where they elected a board of directors that was made up of 13 sachems. And then those 13 men would select a grand sachem. And 13 of course because of the original 13 colonies and all of that. And then from there they broke into tribes. And they held these monthly meetings, and you're never gonna guess what their meeting house was called. Just take a wild guess. Yeah, it was called a wigwam. So they hold their tribal meetings with their sachems in their wigwams, these white men who won't let anybody else into their group.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 25:31

So are you prepared to go deeper into the black hole with me? Because this is, this is this is the bottom of the bottom, really. So then after they're holding their meetings "and what they did in their meetings is they had dinner drinks and then they talked about charities that they wanted to support. And they talked about current events. The other thing that they were known for was celebrating different holidays. I mean, "celebrating" is kind of an air quotes, because yikes. But one of the holidays they're most known for celebrating, because they were actually the first group to officially celebrate this holiday, was Columbus Day. Yes, a group who is appropriating Indigenous culture is actually the first group to celebrate Columbus Day. So Columbus Day is one of the things that they celebrate, they also celebrate Fourth of July. And they were one of the very first groups to celebrate George Washington's birthday, which is so funny, because he was in the Society of the Cincinnati. For them being rival groups, they really, really wanted George Washington to like them.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:35

So they're the first group to celebrate George Washington's birthday. And then they also on

So they're the first group to celebrate George Washington's birthday. And then they also on May 12, celebrated the anniversary of when their group was created. So you're probably wondering, Well, what did these celebrations look like? So in 1792, they start as the very first group to celebrate Columbus Day. And one of the ways that they commemorate all of these different celebrations that they have is by dressing up as Braves. Let me read you a few different quotes so that you can get a mental picture of what a brave actually looks like.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 27:12

Now, I do have to say that in these quotes, the word "Indian" is used, and I want to point out that that is not a word that I ever use in my everyday life. I recognize that this is a word that should be reserved for the Indigenous community. The only reason I'm saying it is because I am quoting. So quote, "Tammany Braves publicly paraded in their own version of Indian costume." End quote. So their celebrations usually included a parade where they would dress up as Indigenous people. Let me read you another quote it says, quote, "In their frequent parades, members walked through the streets of New York in Indian file. Many of them were dressed with their faces painted, and they carried bows, arrows, and tomahawks." End quote. Now let me read you a quote from an article that is describing an eyewitness account of one of their celebrations, one of their parades. It says, quote, "Members of New York City's Tammany Society, carrying arrows, bows, and tomahawks, proudly proclaiming themselves sachems and braves, marched Indian style from their grand wigwams, as they call their clubhouse." End quote. Can you...like are you hearing? Are you hearing this right now? Like, picture all these white guy New Yorkers dressed up like this parading down the street to their "Wigwam" celebrating Christopher Columbus. Do you see why I had to make this episode? Because it's so absolutely bonkers.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 28:54

I read another article that was talking about the celebration of Fourth of July that they had it said quote, "The Braves of Tammany Hall who have been celebrating the nation's birthday since 1776 turned out in force today for the traditional observance, which also marked the dedication of the new wigwam in Union Square. There was a galaxy of notables in the wigwam today, none other than Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt." End quote, which we know he goes on to be the President of the United States. So President Roosevelt "well, Governor Roosevelt at the time" he goes to their "wigwam" to give a speech about how important it is to separate business from government and how if he was the president, he would continue to do that. So when I think a lot of times when we're thinking about this kind of thing, we imagine these people who are just kind of on the fringes of society and are doing ridiculous things. But I think you need to understand that lots of people were involved. I mean, Aaron Burr was involved in it and President Roosevelt was giving speeches there, so these are not people who don't have any influence or power.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 30:02

You're probably tired of me telling you how wild this story is. But when you hear this next part, you're going to understand why I'm just like, "What?" So you know that baseball team, the Atlanta Braves? Yeah. Is that clicking for you? So here's what you need to understand. Baseball teams used to be named after their owner. So before the Braves were in Atlanta, they were

actually in Boston. And in 1907, the owners of the baseball team in Boston were two men named George and John Dovey. And so the baseball team was called the Boston Doves after their owner. And then in 1910, William Russell bought the baseball team. So instead of the Boston Doves, they were now called the Boston Rustlers. So then, after William Russell owns the team, he sells the team to a man named James E. Gaffney. And instead of calling the team "The Gaffes," because, I mean, that's kind of an embarrassing name for a baseball team. They decided to call them the "Braves." Now the reason why they chose the name "Braves" is because James E. Gaffney was a sachem in the Tammany Society. He was actually one of the grand sachems. So he was one of the "braves" who would dress up in literally the scariest costume — an untold story of Indigenous appropriation — he would dress up as an Indigenous person and do his parades on Columbus Day and on the Fourth of July and on George Washington's birthday, and he was really high up in the Tammany Society. He was a brave, he was a grand sachem. So instead of calling them by his last name, they called him by another way that people identified him, which was the Braves.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 30:50

So I found this ancient news article specifically talking about when James E. Gaffney bought the Braves, and I wanted to read it to you. So this is a quote from John M. Ward, who was the president and part-owner of the Boston Braves. He said, quote, "As considerable has been said about a new name for the club, I would like to suggest Boston Braves. You see, James E. Gaffney is one of the grand sachems of Tammany in New York, and is known as one of the Braves. Therefore, Boston Braves would have the true fighting ring that fans would take to." End quote. So that is how the Boston Doves and the Boston Rustlers ended up being the Boston Braves that we now know today as the Atlanta Braves, like the Atlanta Braves baseball team. This is where their name came from. Now, in that same article, the author of the article, T.H. Murnane added their commentary and said, quote, "All right, John, Boston Braves it is. The Doves, Rustlers, and other names applied to the South End club after its presidents brought little in the way of inspiration to the players. But a brave can look good even in defeat." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 33:16

So this is why it's so wild to me, because I've heard so many people say that the Atlanta Braves is actually a mascot that honors Indigenous Peoples, that it's named after Indigenous Peoples and how courageous and brave they are. But in reality, it is actually named after white men who would dress up and paint their faces and have arrows and tomahawks and I'm sure make really offensive noises during their Columbus Day parades. So please, like, explain to me how that would in any way honor an Indigenous person, like at all. The other thing is that I'm sure you've seen the tomahawk chop, which is something that they do during the Atlanta Braves games. And it's something that's super racist that a lot of Indigenous activists and Indigenous people at large have asked them to stop doing but they have not stopped doing it. And there are very powerful high up people in this country, a.k.a. the former president of the United States, who have been on tape doing the tomahawk chop.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 34:24

So was that a wild ride or what? Like are you even wrapping your mind around all of this? These

white guys were mad at other white guys for being too elite, so they made their own club in which they call themselves the "true" Americans and then dress up like Indigenous Peoples, appropriated their culture in many different ways — including the name of their club, the titles that the leaders were holding, the stuff that they wore, the way that they talked, the way that they dressed — and then they just decided to do parades honoring the person who was the principal instigator of the genocide against Indigenous Peoples, Christopher Columbus, all while keeping Indigenous Peoples out of this group. And then when one of their "grand sachems," one of their high up leaders buys a baseball team, they decide to name the baseball team after the scariest costume.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 35:33

Yes, this has been a really wild, untold story of appropriation. But all you have to say is, "Enough. Enough with the appropriation already." Like, can we change the name of this baseball team? This is why it's so important that we understand history, because we can see how these things are directly connected to the things that are affecting our lives today. These decisions that were made way back during the founding of our country, we are still feeling the effects of the oppression, we're still feeling the effects of the appropriation. And this is just one example of how that is happening.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:12

So Kiersten is one of the members of the team here at First Name Basis. And she was actually the one who found this story about Tammany Hall. And I want to first of all, give her a major shout out because I'm so grateful that she found this story. It was really eye opening to me and I feel like I learned so much and I'm so grateful that I got to share it with you. But I also want to read you what she wrote to me. So oftentimes she and I will work together on doing the research for an episode. She'll start it and then I'll kind of pick it up where she's left off and do more research and put it all together into an episode. And this is the note that she left for me about the Tammany society. She said, quote, "The whole Tammany Hall thing is bonkers to me. It started out as an anti-immigrant group, appropriating Indigenous culture, names, and imagery in an effort to establish themselves (white, male, Anglo-Saxon Protestants from England) as quote "true Americans." But they were simultaneously calling themselves the Columbian Order and celebrating Columbus Day, valorizing the person who committed genocide against the people they were appropriating. It's just so much. One of the articles I read talked about how Indigenous people became totems to the early American colonists. It said that when they were appropriating them, it was subconsciously a way to try to exercise their guilt for what they done to the Indigenous people.: End quote. I feel like Kiersten's commentary is the perfect way to end this episode, because she takes you on that journey of how it started and why. She zeroes in on the most important piece that we all need to understand, and that is that the reason why a lot of people who hold privilege do these racist things, is so that they can make themselves feel less guilty about the privilege that they have.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:08

So thank you for coming on this journey with me. And really, I hope if you haven't yet listened to the episode that we did about Indigenous Peoples' Day, — it's called "Alcatraz: An Untold Story of Indigenous Resistance" — if you haven't listened to that episode, please do listen to

story of indigenous resistance. So if you haven't listened to that episode, please go listen to that one, because I am really grateful for the opportunity to center Indigenous stories. These stories of racism are very important to bring to light, but I also want us to take time to really focus on the power of the Indigenous resistance and those stories as well.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:39

And don't forget your two free downloads, "Is This Halloween Costume Cultural Appropriation?" and your voting action plan. Make sure to find the links to those in the show notes and vote. Please, please, please vote. I know it's the midterms and a lot of people check out, but we need your voice. We need your vote. It's so so important. If you need a little encouragement, please send me a DM @firstname.basis. Send me a picture of your voting action plan when you finish it. I will definitely be posting a photo of mine. I love you. I love you all. I love doing this work together. I'm so grateful, so grateful that you listen to me as we go on these wild rides together. This episode was definitely a journey. But let's change the name of the Atlanta Braves. Right? Let's do it. That's something we can do together, I think.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 39:30

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 @firstname.basis. If you're interested in partnering with First Nare 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.