

# 7.12 Real Quick: Black Voting Power

Tue, Nov 01, 2022 6:27PM 15:40

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, black, dominant culture, race, voting, episode, louisiana, voters, power, article, called, indigenous people, counted, community, episodes, talked, considered, state officials, share, blood

## SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

---

**J** Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00  
You're listening to the First Name Basis Podcast, Season Seven, Episode 12, "Real Quick â€” Black Voting Power."

**J** Jasmine Bradshaw 00:07  
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 00:08  
Hello, First Name Basis Fam. I am so glad you are here. And welcome back to our Real Quick series. So if you didn't hear episode on Tuesday, we're starting a new series called Real Quick. And I'll just do these every once in a while, but sometimes I just have thoughts that I really want to share with you that aren't enough to make like a full-fledged weekly episode, and so I'm doing too mini episodes in one week. So on Tuesday, we released an episode called "Real Quick â€” Politicians Need Experience." So if you haven't listened to that one, after you're done with this, go back and listen to that. Because I mean, I just share my real thoughts and feelings about why I don't think that celebrities should go into the presidency without any other experience in government. And since we're right in the middle of the midterms, I wanted to share with you something that I've been learning recently, about Black voting power.

**J** Jasmine Bradshaw 00:56  
So if you remember back at the very beginning of Season Six, I made an episode called

"Racism is Built on a Big Fat Lie: Blood Quantum and The One Drop Rule. It was probably one of my favorite episodes I've ever made, because it was just one of those times when I feel like I put together these mind-blowing facts that helped me get a better sense of what's really going on in the system in our country. And I'll remind you more of the details of that episode a little bit later. But basically, race has always been manipulated to make sure that the people who were and are in power stay in power.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:03

So if you remember a while back, I did an episode called "What is Privilege and What Do I Do With It?" I'll link that in the show notes as well. But in that episode, we specifically break down the different areas of privilege. And one of the things we talk about is the dominant culture. And in her book, "This Book is Anti-Racist," author Tiffany Jewell defines the dominant culture as the group of people in society who hold the most power and are often, but not always, in the majority. So I just want to kind of have it fresh in your brain that the people who are in the dominant culture are people who are white, middle class, Christian, cisgender, and male. And just a reminder, cisgender means that you align with the gender that you were assigned at birth. So race was created and has always been manipulated to make sure that the people who are in the dominant culture, white people, can maintain power. And I just want to share with you an example today of how that is happening, right right now.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:01

So the article that I'll be referencing in this episode is called, "Who Counts as Black in Voting Maps? Some GOP State Officials Want That Narrowed." It's written by Hansi Lo Wang, and it's from NPR. So I will link that article in the show notes, because it's really, really eye opening. Now, in the episode about blood quantum, we talked about how in order for Indigenous people to qualify for the land and the resources that they are entitled to, they had to prove that they were Indigenous enough. So blood quantum is what the government uses to say, "Yes, you are Indigenous enough to be able to have access to the things that you should have access to." And it's basically looking at people's blood and breaking it down into different percentages, to say whether or not people qualify for membership in different Indigenous populations and tribes. And I do a much better job explaining all of that in the other episode. So listen to that one, if you haven't yet, or even if you have already, it's just really, really good. But basically, Indigenous people had to prove that they had enough Indigenous blood. And the opposite was true for Black people. So Black people were subjected to the "one drop" rule. And the one drop rule said that if you even had one drop of Black blood, then you were considered Black. And you were treated as Black, which meant that you didn't and still don't have access to the same opportunities and resources as the people who are in the dominant culture. So that's why I was saying race is based on a big fat lie, because it's just totally made up. The Indigenous people have to have a certain amount of blood, but Black people only have one drop, and then they're considered Black.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:48

Well, now, there are Republicans in Louisiana who are trying to change who counts as Black when it comes to voting and the Voting Rights Act. So in order to suppress Black voters, these Louisiana Republicans want to narrow the definition of who is considered Black. So in the Voting

Rights Act, it basically says that if anything is being done to suppress Black voters, there needs to be review and like an investigation into the protocols and the districting that is happening in that area. So as you can imagine, a lot of states that are in the south are often subjected to these reviews, to these investigations about what's going on with their voting protocols.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:34

Now, this is what I learned from that NPR article. So it talked about how there's this calculation that's used to measure Black voting power in a certain area. It's called the Black Voting Age Population. And in the article, it said, quote, "It's used to help test whether a map of election districts violates the Voting Rights Act by minimizing Black voting power." End quote. So they do this calculation, and they're saying, "Are you violating the Voting Rights Act? Or are you acting in good faith?" And this calculation was created in 2003 and it's been used ever since.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:09

But in 2020, there was a change to the census that I personally was a huge fan of. And people were able to check multiple boxes when it came to race, and they were able to specify their ethnicity. So for people who are multiracial, like me, it was so exciting to be able to share with the world like these are all the different parts of me that make up my identity. And we over on Instagram " I don't think I've ever really made a podcast episode about this " but on Instagram, we've had a lot of conversations about how frustrating it is when a form asks you to choose just one box, to check one box, and you just really feel like you're like choosing one piece of your identity over another piece. So because the census was changed in a way that made a lot of people feel seen and supported and celebrated, because of that change to the census, there are people in Louisiana, lawmakers and state officials, who are basically saying that this is changing things, and it's making it so that people are being counted as Black when they shouldn't be counted as Black.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 09:13

Let me read you a quote so that it makes a little more sense. It says quote, "But in a filing to the Supreme Court, Republican state officials in Louisiana are now calling the definition of Black a, quote, 'independent legal error.' The Louisiana Republicans argued that Black should only include people who check off either just the Black box or both Black and white, and do not identify as Latino, which the federal government sees as an ethnicity that can be of any race." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 09:44

So these state officials in Louisiana are saying, "Okay, because of the change in the census there are a lot of people now who are considered Black, who might not have been considered Black in the past." Like they might have had to choose between different boxes and maybe Black was in a box that they would have chose then, but now they have this option and so they're choosing Black. So now they're being counted as Black, but we don't want them to be counted as Black. Do you see how this doesn't make any sense and how race is being

manipulated in order for them to hoard power? Because in the past, it was, "Okay, if you have one drop of Black blood, then you are definitely Black." You're counted as Black or treating you like you're Black, which means that you're systemically disadvantaged in multiple ways. And now they're saying, "Well, we don't want all of these voters to be counted as Black. So even though they're checking Black, they shouldn't actually be Black. Like, let's narrow that definition of who gets to be Black."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 10:40

And the thing that's frustrating to me is that for such a long time, I mean, for from the beginning, right, like, white people have decided who gets to be in different racial categories, and it hasn't really been up to the oppressed group. We have never really gotten to choose which category we get to be in. And it's just a perpetuation of that, right? Like, they're saying, "Okay, these people are Black and these people aren't." Well, I think we can all see that it's wrong, that they're trying to suppress Black voting power.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:12

In the NPR article, they talked about the racial history in the south, I mean, in our entire country, but in the south specifically. And they talked about a lower court judge and what they had to say, it said, quote, "A lower court judge cited that history in rejecting a narrower definition of Black. The judge wrote that it would be quote, 'paradoxical, to say the least, to ignore Louisiana's long and well documented expansive view of Blackness, which once included the one drop rule to define a Black person as anyone with ancestors who are considered Black." End quote.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:46

I mean, it's no secret that the browning of our country has made people in the dominant culture very, very anxious. And I think that this is just another example of that. You can read lots of articles and studies about how the presence of multiracial people like me and the growing presence of people like me is making it so that people of color are going to be the majority in the United States. I mean, people of color are already in the majority worldwide, just not yet in the United States, and it's going to be that way very soon. And that's making people who benefit from white privilege, really, really anxious.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 12:24

One of the other people quoted in the article was a professor at Marquette University. And I thought that what he had to say was really interesting. I'll read it to you, and then I'll share kind of my thoughts on it. It's a professor named Atiba Ellis, and he is a professor at the Marquette University Law School and specializes in voting rights law. He said, quote, "For some, I think there's a moral concern, and they want to push towards a colorblind society. I think that there are political forces that want to erase considering race from our politics, despite the long history and even the de facto problems that we see ongoing today." End quote. So I think he makes a really good point. I think a lot of these people don't necessarily see themselves as

trying to suppress Black voters, even though that usually is the outcome that we see. I think they think, "Oh, my gosh, race shouldn't matter. We shouldn't have to see race, we shouldn't have to consider race. Race shouldn't matter." I mean, we see the same thing happening with affirmative action, right? It shouldn't matter. But it does matter. And the people in the dominant culture, who decided a really long time ago to put this system in place, decided that it did matter. And so racism and the racial outcomes that we are seeing, the negative racial outcomes that we are seeing is a huge deal. And it's super matters. And as much as all of us want it to not matter, it does. So I understand that they probably see it as their charge to move into this post-racial society where we don't consider race and we're quote, unquote, "colorblind," which is also an ableist thing to say, right? Like, it's just frustrating to me, because being Black and being a voter, being a Black voter, is a really important piece of my identity. So when there are people who are trying to narrow down who gets to be a Black voter, it's really unfortunate. And we can see how this could easily lead to them saying, "Oh, well, there aren't that many Black voters in this certain area, so their opinion should not be considered as heavily," and things like that.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 14:28

So anyway, I just wanted to share this example with you of how racism is built on a big fat lie. Once again, we go from blood quantum to the one drop rule to now restricting who gets to count as Black. It's just, quite frankly, very exhausting to keep up with but we need to keep up with it in order to understand what's really going on and to make sure that we are fighting against the oppression and maintaining the rights that we deserve.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 14:54

So all that is to say, vote, my friends. Please vote in this midterm election. And you might have heard in the past couple of episodes, I've been mentioning our Voting Action Plan. Go to [firstnamebasis.org/vote](https://firstnamebasis.org/vote) to download it totally for free. We just want to support you in your voting journey and make sure that you're voting for people who are supporting the freedom, rights and liberation of the Black community.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 15:18

All right, y'all. I hope you have enjoyed these Real Quick episodes as much as I have. It's been so fun to be able to just share these things that I'm reading in real time and, I don't know, it's just feels like, I don't know, it feels like we're friends. Like this is what I've talked about with my friends. So thanks for being on this journey, my friend.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 15:37

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