

when they SEE US VOICE



EPISODE 4 TOOLKIT & RESOURCE PACKAGE

“The Politics of Representation”





About #WTSUV

At a critical time in American history with a tumultuous census, a national election and an atmosphere of both heightened activism and racist backlash, *When They See Us Vote* is a limited series talk that seeks to engage and educate the many people who are becoming politically conscious and active in this moment with an analysis of how we build resilience and Black political power at the voting booth and beyond. The show is co-hosted by Bree Newsome Bass and Ajamu Dillahunt. The accompanying toolkit can be used to deepen individual understanding around the issues discussed and serve as a guide for hosting conversations and study groups.

EPIISODE SYNOPSIS

- Bree speaks with Rashad Robinson, President of Color of Change
- They discuss the power of Black representation in media, politics and business as well as its limitations when it comes to building power
- They also examine the role of protest in leveraging power and what needs to happen beyond voting to bring about systemic changes

QUESTIONS:

- What are some ways we can hold officials accountable to our communities after they've been elected to office?
- What is an example of Black representation in media, politics or business that you've found empowering? What is an example of Black representation in media, politics or business that you've found problematic?
- Why are protests and other ways of applying public pressure an important part of exercising political power?

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, just 51 percent of Americans polled believed racism is a big problem in the US. Today, that number is 76 percent.

• NOTES

KEY QUOTE

“Diversity and inclusion is a piece of the puzzle. It is not the whole puzzle... When we mistake presence for power, we think we’ve gotten some place we haven’t actually gotten”

- Rashad Robinson

“Oftentimes what uprisings do is they allow us to dream bigger... They allow us to set a new course for what’s possible... for a new set of demands.”

- Rashad Robinson

KEY TERMS

- **Diversity and Inclusion** - initiatives undertaken by organizations, institutions and businesses to create environments that are welcoming to people who have traditionally been excluded
- **Political Accountability** - when a politician makes choices on behalf of the people and the people have the ability to reward or sanction the politician
- **Abolition (of the Prison Industrial Complex)** - a political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment. Source: CriticalResistance.org
- **Uprising** - an act of resistance or rebellion; a revolt.
- **“Divest and Invest” aka “Defunding”** - decreasing public spending on policing and prisons while increasing public spending to provide services for underserved communities
- **Neoliberalism** - the dominant political ideology of the past 40 years which favors investing public tax dollars into the development of private industries while reducing government regulation and slashing spending on public services

NEXT STEPS

- Read **The Case Against Tokenism** by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Read **Putting a Black Face on Police Agendas** by Bree Newsome Bass
- Read **The False Promise of Black Political Representation** by Nicholas Stephanopoulos
- Read **These Protests Feel Different Because They're Shifting Public Opinion** by Fabiola Cineas
- Read **Riots Are Destructive, Dangerous and Scary--But Can Lead to Serious Social Reforms** by German Lopez
- Listen to and discuss **Neoliberal Civil Rights**
- **Research the policy stances and voting records of your current state and local officials**



Rashad Robinson

EPISODE 4 - GUEST

Rashad Robinson is an American civil rights leader. He attended Marymount University where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science. Currently, Robinson is the president of Color of Change. His work with the organization is centered around strengthening political and cultural power within Black communities across America. Under Robinson's leadership, the Color of Change organization is responsible for several initiatives such as defunding the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), protecting the principle of net neutrality, and exposing deceptive practices within the criminal justice system that negatively impact black people. In continuation of his activist work, Rashad Robinson regularly appears on various media outlets like BET, NPR and MSNBC in efforts to spread knowledge about the many causes he works to support.

THE #WTSUV TEAM



BREE NEWSOME BASS

is an award-winning activist and artist best known for her historic act of civil disobedience in 2015 when she scaled a 30-ft flagpole at the statehouse grounds in South Carolina to lower its confederate flag in protest following the racially-motivated shootings at Emanuel AME church in Charleston. Bree currently resides in North Carolina where she works as an artist while organizing for housing justice. She is a nationally-recognized public speaker on topics of racial and economic justice as well as the intersection of art and activism.



AJAMU DILLAHUNT

is the Outreach Coordinator at the North Carolina Justice Center in Raleigh, N.C. Before joining the Justice Center in 2004, Ajamu served as President of the Raleigh Area Local of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) for 18 years, where he was also Director of Research and Education for the North Carolina Council of the APWU.



NATALIE BULLOCK BROWN

is an award-winning and Emmy-nominated producer, a Teaching Assistant Professor in Interdisciplinary Studies at North Carolina State University, and a producer on award-winning filmmaker Byron Hurt's upcoming PBS documentary, *Hazing*.

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