

PORTRAITS- Loving with Sheryll Cashin

Suggested Intro:

Welcome to Portraits, a podcast from the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery where art and history... biography and identity... collide. I'm Kim Sajet.

Here at the Gallery, we have a Congressional mandate to feature people who have made a national impact. That means you'll find a lot of impressive people here-- Ben Franklin, John F. Kennedy/ Helen Keller, Steve Jobs..

But it's a personal mission of mine to make sure we also re-balance our ideas around who makes the cut. Because for much of our history, portraiture has been heavily weighted towards... well, privileged white men.

There are some notable exceptions in the gallery, and one of them is a photograph we're going to talk about today. It portrays a solidly middle class bricklayer and his wife, a couple striving for a simple life. But they did something truly exceptional. They got married.. Right here in Washington DC in fact.

I'm referring to Mildred and Richard Loving-- he was white and she was a woman of color. And when they traveled back home, to Virginia, their interracial marriage landed them in jail. Then it got them banned from their hometown for 25 years.

Their fight to move back home took them on a nine-year legal battle, and right to the steps of the Supreme Court. And their landmark case would reverse a ban on interracial marriage in 1967.

It would also inspire my guest, Sheryll Cashin, to write a book. Sheryll is a law professor at Georgetown University who focuses on Civil Rights and Social Justice.

We spoke with Sheryll here at the offices of the National Portrait Gallery.

First Segment Outro:

I'm speaking with author Sheryll Cashin. When we come back, the story within the story-- how Mildred Loving was portrayed as black in the media, but self-identified as something else. And we'll also have a bonus. We asked Sheryll to pick a favorite portrait here in the gallery and describe it.. The painting she chose might surprise you. Stay with us.

Second Segment Intro:

My guest is Sheryll Cashin-- law professor, author, artist, (and a former commissioner here at the National Portrait Gallery.) We invited her on the podcast to talk about an extraordinary couple featured in our collection-- the Lovings. You may have seen the movie about how they fought to overturn the ban on interracial marriage.

Let's get back to our conversation.

"Sheryll, when I look at this picture, as you mention, there's this bi-racial couple.."

Credits:

Sheryll's book about the Lovings is called, "Loving: Interracial Intimacy in America and the Threat to White Supremacy."

And you can find the portraits we talked about-- of the Lovings and Alice Neel-- on our website: [npg dot .si dot.edu slash](http://npg.dot.si.edu/slash) podcast.

(funder mention)

Our podcast team includes Ruth Morris, Jason or-FAN-nin, Deborah Sisum and Rebecca Kasemeyer.

Our theme music is by Joe Kye. Tarek Fouda is our engineer.

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In our next episode we talk to illustrator and New York Times contributor Wendy MacNaughton, about what happens when portraiture and journalism cross paths.

Until then, I'm your host, Kim Sajet.
