



## Transcript for Briggs v. Elliot

**P.A. Bennett:** They were apart of a history making event. Their parents took a stand. A stand that would mean better education for African Americans throughout this country.

**Joseph A. Delaine, Jr.:** We are not the children that desegregated the schools. We are the children of those people who initiated the case. Now the people who initiated the case never benefited from integration. That came many years later. Schools were not integrated here until 1965. The era that we are talking about here is 1947 until 1955. Uh, and Briggs case was really the first case. People think of Brown now because that was the way it was named in the Supreme Court. But now Briggs was the case upon which all the other cases were patterned. That was the first case.

**P.A. Bennett:** This first case took its toil on those brave families.

**Beatrice Rivers:** It was really very bad. People lost their jobs. Everybody involved. Everybody who signed the petition eventually lost their jobs. Eventually many families had to leave the area because they could not earn a living. I was one of the fortunate ones. My father didn't lose his job up until 1955 because he worked as a custodian at the white school. And apparently they felt he was invaluable, that they couldn't let him go because he did so many things for the school other than just being a janitor ... doing the janitorial work. So he didn't lose his job until '55 and by that time I had graduated from high school and left town. But most of the families moved form the area. They went to New York, went to Detroit, New Jersey, they went everywhere because they couldn't find work here.

**P.A. Bennett:** How did it affect your family emotionally and otherwise? You talked about ... but their must have been an emotional toil.

**Beatrice Rivers:** Oh yes it was. Very much so because one of the things that had people on guard because you never knew what was going to happen because people were so angry that people had the nerve to stand up for what they believed in. They wanted something better for their children and they put their lives and their livelihood online in order to get that.



**Joseph A. Delaine, Jr.:** With my family, our house was burned in 1950. In 1955 he was still pasturing in a different town but still connected with the case. The church was destroyed by fire because of this. He was given ten days to leave town or die. He did not leave town and when the lynching party came he returned the fire. As a consequence he fled the state and uh a warrant was out for his arrest until last year which was 26 years after his death. So he was never able to return to South Carolina during his life time.

**P.A. Bennett:** Mr. Delaine and several others don't want South Carolina or the nation for the matter to forget what happened in Clarendon County.

**Joseph A. Delaine, Jr.:** South Carolina has never gotten the credit that is should have for that effort that came out of Clarendon County. And if South Carolina didn't get that credit than Clarendon County didn't. Now everything focuses on Briggs...uh Brown and Kansas City and people think that is where the case came from, its not .What we want to do is to begin to get some national attention to show that these were people from South Carolina and Clarendon Count, excuse my expression, who had the guts to stand up to say we want it, we want our rights.

**Beatrice Rivers:** I would like them to know what courage these people had, how brave they were. Here these people who were mostly uneducated people, who had families to raise and who wanted something better for their children than they had for themselves. And they were willing to put their life no the line to get it. Our people need to know about that.

**Brumit Delaine:** I would like for the country to know that, and I'm not saying this in a sour grapes tone, that Brown has gotten all of credit for the desegregation, but the major part of the fight occurred in Summerton. The first case was filed there and that was probably the stronger case out of the five that were heard. But also like the young people who are reaping the benefits of the sacrifices of those from Clarendon County as well as the other four areas to know that the opportunities that they get now are directly related to the efforts and sacrifices of our parents and parents like ours made in order to achieve that. And I would like all of America to be aware of what prejudice ways and discrimination does and if it could happen to one person, it could happen to anyone.



*End of Video.*