

OMAR: Hello, welcome to The Social Breakdown, the podcast where we break down our complex world one topic at a time using our sociological imagination. We're your hosts, Penn, Omar, and Ellen. Before we start, we want to briefly introduce ourselves.

PENN: So my name is Penn. I recently graduated my PhD in Sociology this past May, you can say I have a little bit of an identity crisis going on. I've always introduced myself as a grad student for the past seven years. So now I'm not a grad student anymore. I guess I'm a lecturer or a teacher or something, but it's not really an identity I've really come to, so but I'm interested in research on all things, the internet, anything about internet, social media, online communities, crowdfunding and crowdsourcing and collective intelligence. My dissertation was on mob justice, I looked at the Boston Bangkok bombing and the processes that led to the mob justice, how and why it happens. So I feel like it's really up and coming and I'm really excited for this podcast.

OMAR: My name is Omar Bird. I am a lowly graduate student. I am a PhD student in the Sociology department. And I studied medical sociology, racism, culture, and medicine. I also have an extensive background in criminology.

ELLEN: I'm Ellen. I'm also a lowly PhD student in sociology, and my interests are in social psychology and the sociology of emotions. I don't have much else to say other than I think in addition to all of our individual research interests, one of the big like, are the common denominator between the three of us is that they're we're all super into criminology, taking a few crim classes together. So we're hella into like deviance.

OMAR: Yeah, for sure. For sure communality, deviance, medical, sociology, online networks, all these topics come together and are woven together. And that's something that is really important for this podcast, because we have our we have separate departments, separate disciplines, separate research interests. But as we're all part of the social world, we need to understand that all of these topics and interests are interrelated.

PENN: Yeah. So hopefully, each week, we can cover a new topic, you know, whatever we're interested in at a time. And then we'll look at all different kinds of topics like class and race, death penalty, crowdfunding, so any sociological theories that are interesting homelessness, and why the hate Japanese porn is still blurred. We've actually had an extensive conversation. Yes.

ELLEN: Porn. But Penn. And I have talked for hours about why is genitalia blurred in Japanese porn. So that's...

PENN: Very specific censorship. So...

OMAR: Yeah, I'll be curious about this

ELLEN: Literally uncovering, yes.

ELLEN: in addition to all of that, we'll also be doing a few episodes that are dedicated to kind of the process of academia. So like, Penn likes to say a PhD or his guide to getting a PhD. So we're going to be talking about our experiences attending soc conferences, what it's like to teach sociology, in college, or in high school, or at the high school level. What is it like to get your PhD, navigating kind of your department?

PENN: Yeah, writing a dissertation. That's something that's well, I've gone through, and you guys are about to face that hellhole? Yeah.

OMAR: Yes. And also, um, how can other people be a part of sociology or how people can use sociology to make better sense of the things they see, better sense of what they consider what they know, how they how do people know what they know, and how to critically assess information that gets brought to you either through the media, through a newspaper from your family, and any other notions or ideas you might have about the world inside your own self. So, I think sociology in this way, is also a good reflective tool to also show you're reflective of your own thoughts, but then also your position within any strata that you find yourself in.

ELLEN: For sure. I'm reading for comps and everything. And one of the books that I recently read was by Murray Edelman, it's called *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. And one of the things that he says is like, meaning springs from interactions with others, not from inside an isolated individual's head. And so I think that that's part of like, our goal with this podcast is not only to, to kind of bring sociology out of the ivory towers and into, you know, the regular person's hands, but also for us to create meaning, like Omar said, about these topics within our own minds, because, you know, it helps to talk about things it helps to hear other people's thoughts and, and think critically about stuff like this.

PENN: Yeah. And I know like sociology has a lot of jargon, like we love throwing out theories and like words that it's gotten to a point where I don't even recognize them as jargon. But people are still like, "what are you saying?" "What are those words?" So hopefully we can kind of cool materialism. Yeah, like, stop it. Right? So hopefully we can break that down, hence The Social Breakdown. So but so before we get off and talking all about dialectical materialism. We let's, we want to focus this topic today on what the heck sociology even is, right? So if you look it up in a dictionary, you'll find social, right? The sociology, social part is society and ologies study of anything, right? So like biology, and I don't know what other ologies are there? I'm blanking...geology. But sociology, I'm a doctor goddamnit. Sociology is the study of society. But what does that even really mean? So each of us has come up with a list of what sociology is, and what sociology isn't the kind of dispel some of the myths and rumors that surrounds sociology, and you know, some of the common misunderstandings that we've run into in studying sociology. So, Omar, you want to start us off?

OMAR: Yeah, sure. So yeah, I'll talk about what sociology is first. So to me, Sociology is a perspective that can critically evaluate all the social processes of the human condition and related outcomes, as well as a

specific science deeply concerned with human relations. That, to me, is the fundamental part of sociology, but also how people can use this perspective to understand that most of the information that we get has a bias to it, and it is one dimensional. And that doesn't necessarily mean that it's all wrong. That just means that we're getting information from different dimensions of society, and you have the media, your family, and let's say, expert professionals all have their own particular agendas in mind, and if you can't see how those institutions or departments or perspectives, either coexist, how they contradict one another, you're only going to get a very limited understanding of information that you get. Sociology can help break us out of seeing things in the way we usually tend to see them.

PENN: it helps you challenge your assumptions, right, a lot of people have gone through and been socialized into whatever state of their life and they just believe certain things without really recognizing why they believe that certain thing. So sociology, to me, is yes, the study of society, but it's also the study of society and the people in it and everything else in between. Right, it's about making the connections between the various concentric circles that make up our personal social networks with you as an individual in the middle, your social network surrounding you, larger society, media and institutions, and then just the whole world and you can break it down to be as broad or as narrow as you want. And sociology is all about making the connections between you and the world, you and society, you and your social networks. So in that sense, sociology, is a way of understanding your place as an individual in greater society, that you can affect society by the idea that oh, one vote doesn't count or one protester doesn't count, one letter doesn't count, right? That sociology doesn't believe in that you can affect society. And society can also affect you, right? Things that can happen in far, far regions of the world, like Arab Spring movement, right can actually open your mind and make you believe, like, hey, we can make a change, right? And sociology is all about recognizing that ability that humans have that creative and powerful ability that humans have that agency to make a difference. But it goes both ways. Right? You affect society, society affects you.

OMAR: Yeah, that's a that's a really good point as far as about your ones recognizing one's own capacity and ability to do certain things, especially I think, in the American context, it's important for people to understand that you do have a capacity to have an agency to engage in the world, whether that be at a very small minute step as far as like helping someone across the street or writing or, you know, someone says something inappropriate at the Thanksgiving dinner table, and you want to challenge that. I think sociology for me, like, definitely has a do a podcast. Yeah, exactly. Podcast, it really challenges your perspectives and what you think, you know,

PENN: Right? There's kind of the idea like that. If we question too many things, if we critique too many things, that that's a bad thing, right? Sometimes they're like, why can't you just accept that for the way it is? And but that's sociology won't do that. Right? You have to question everything. So Ellen, you want to tell us what sociology is or isn't?

ELLEN: Sociology to me is, oh, well, I wanted to touch on two things. The first one, which is what both of you have said, it's really just a way of making sense of the world and of the human condition others thing that I wanted to point out is sociology is performed through a scientific process. And with scientific

methods, which are we have qualitative methods, quantitative methods, just like all other sciences, and it's approved in peer reviewed journals. You know, there's this idea of like, the hard sciences versus soft sciences and things that are discovered via hard sciences are much more valid than the soft sciences. And, you know, I think we're probably biased here in saying that we don't agree with that, because, of course, we are a part of the "soft science." But I, I just want listeners to know that if you pick up a soc book, there is a lot of empirical evidence that goes into that, you know, if you're reading articles from the various sociology journals, they're all peer reviewed, you know, there's been a lot of work that has gone into each one of those articles. And so we should not just brush off things and say, "oh, its soft sciences, you know, it doesn't matter quite as much as, as for..."

PENN: Sure. Yeah. I think sociology runs into that, that, trying to convince people like, No, we're real science, right? We have all these like steps that we have to go through anything, what people don't realize is, it's so hard to study people, because people are, like, super messed up sometimes, or they're not consistent. You know, it's not like you can recreate the same experiment or same survey or interview results, because things change, society changes, people change, right? But I mean, that's what sociology is trying to capture. And I think, for those in the natural sciences, what was that Neil deGrasse Tyson, quote, you got Omar, that was a great quote.

OMAR: In science, when human behavior enters the equation, things go nonlinear. That's why physics is easy. And sociology is hard. And I was, when I was at a Sociology conference last year in Seattle, a guy named Dr. Mark Byrd wrote a textbook, the *700 Laws of Sociology*. And he recently came up with another book called *800 Laws of Sociology*. But in the first chapter, he has a description of pretty much the general difference between physics and sociology. And in this chart, he was saying how things like theories in physics are way more stable. And they can last a much longer period of time, because things like the laws of gravity or the laws of motion or inertia, though there are theories, they don't change as often because they're the actual subject of science for us as humans, which can change from day to day. We can have a totally new revamped healthcare policy in two months. And that could change the course of immigration. How? Exactly.

ELLEN: I think that's what makes it so interesting. Anything involving humans is interesting, just like the craziest things happen in nonfiction books, they're just as insane as in fiction books, you know, like we can't, it's hard to even think of what things that my behavior sometimes. And that's why it's so interesting. That's why sociology is so interesting is because we're studying subjects that are so varied. And by subjects, I mean, people like people that are so varied, and we're trying to come up with theories to make sense of their behavior, and to maybe be able to predict behavior. But like Neil deGrasse Tyson says, It's not yeah, it's hard. We can come up with these theories, but that's what makes it interesting.

PENN: I think the other thing people don't realize too, is that sociology is handled really long history, with so many theorists coming in and out of the field life. Um, well, Auguste Comte was the first who developed the word sociology, actually, and that was he lived during the 17, 1800s. Right? So as we've had a long history, and in each decade or each century, like society has gone through so many changes, and so the theories have changed so drastically too. And whatever the sociological theory comes up, will

match that moment in time. Right? So that's why doing sociology is also hard when you do a lit review yet to read all these theories, you have to recognize, okay, they're speaking to a specific moment in human history, that may not may or may not still apply.

OMAR: On that same note, with all these historical and individual levels of variation, there are still massive patterns that people process through that that we can predict. And though certain elements of society may be different from today than yesterday, large this is just an example large groups of let's say low income or low status. Individuals in a society routinely vote against their self-interest. And these are patterns that we can trace from the 1600s, 1700s, all the way up to the present day regardless of all the changes has happened within that time period and that's the kind of stuff that sociology is also interested in is like these, these massive patterns of behavior and fluctuation in through and across time.

PENN: Yeah, if it happens in society sociology is interested so if you want to study sociology, become a sociology student, whatever you're interested in will likely be game like, you can comment me like, I want to study Japanese pornography. That's just like in my head right? Back to do that. No one's going to stop.

ELLEN: You may publish hella books on Japanese pornography.

PENN: You could be the Japanese pornographer expert. Anyway. So so that's that's our stuff on what sociology is.

OMAR: What is sociology? Not?

ELLEN: Yes, that's a big thing is what is it not? Okay, I'll go first. The first thing is sociology is not social work.

PENN: So you can insert a swear word and like, a little.

ELLEN: Because no offense to social work, because the people seriously get their MSW's, their master's in social work, and go into the various fields within social work. Like I applaud you to the max, like that is so hard. And you have to have so much patience and heart and just kindness.

PENN: and you have to have people skills, okay? Sociologists don't really have people skills

ELEEN: By going to school for sociology is very different from going to school for Social Work when you get a degree in sociology that that does not translate into you becoming a Social Worker.

PENN: Vice versa. And that's not just a misunderstanding, like, in common, like every day's like conversation, that's like a government understanding is I when I graduated my PhD, and I, you know, talk to the whatever various departments, they're like, "oh, you have a degree in sociology come work for social, our social work department." And it's like, no, it's not the same thing.

ELLEN: Very different, both very valid and very good fields to get into, but very different. My second thing that sociology is not profitable. And in that, I mean that there's this notion that once you graduate with a PhD, from whatever university or college you're going to that you're going to automatically get into like a tenure track position, and you're going to get a job that you can never be fired, and I cushy lifestyle, and a lie, a lie. It's not true. And you know, we had a speaker come in this professor, a previous professor called Dr. Karen Kelsky to come and speak at our university.

PENN: Yeah, she runs TheProfessorIsIn.com

ELLEN: Yeah, very interesting website. And just like, she's a really nice person. I enjoyed her and I enjoyed her talk. Her voice sounds like Ellen DeGeneres. Yeah, she has the voice of Ellen DeGeneres and the knowledge of a fabulous professor. And one of the things she talked about was just how there is a huge decrease in the number of tenure track positions available now. And how nowadays, most of the higher ed institutions are going towards adjunct positions. An adjunct is contract work. Yeah. And it's just it's not a profitable thing to get in.

PENN: But there's been an increase in PhDs. Right. So there's a decrease in like, secure tenure track work, but an increase in PhDs.

ELLEN: Yeah, so supply and demand kind of gone wonky. What I mean by sociology is not profitable is that a lot of the people who are graduating with soc degrees and PhDs, they're not going to, I mean, unless you're coming out of a huge Ivy League, top tier school, and you're, you know, a great student, odds are, you're not going to be able to get one of those tenure track positions. But that also means that those of us who know that and still continue to go on to get our degrees. We're doing this because we genuinely find this stuff interesting. Like, I know that probably the five or six years that I'm putting into this degree won't translate to me being a millionaire by any means.

PENN: Unless this podcast takes off. Unless this pod, get your word out.

ELLEN: Exactly, unless you're this, but I just want to say we're not making a ton. We're not going to make a ton of money. But we still find it a totally valid and totally interesting thing to put ourselves into and want to continue to put ourselves into

PENN: Definitely, I think there definitely is still at a very slow moving trend towards recognizing the importance of sociologists in like government or tech companies, like, I know companies like Facebook or Google or Twitter are trying to hire a sociologist because they need to understand people, they need to understand their user base. The problem is sociology is bad at training people to get into those jobs, right? Sociology trains, this is the call of academia, right? We train people to be academics, rather than to be like an analyst or any or anything else, basically, like literally any Yeah, so in that sense, even if the opportunities are there, outside of academia, sociologists don't know how to get there.

ELLEN: Omar, did you want to talk about what your idea of what sociology is not?

OMAR: Yeah, um, I guess just a comment on both of you just said they were definitely conditioned to be an academic. And it puts a lot of emphasis on the individual student to look at opportunities or the possibility of a world other than the stereotypical research one professorship, though I understand that that's damaging, because as, as graduate students, not everyone might not have the, the wherewithal or the work ethic to go the extra mile to see what else is possible, a lot of times, people will just fold in on themselves. I know this, this whole entire thing isn't for me, and so I'm going to do something else. And I really hope like this podcast and sociology moving forward can show how important it is. Because when you talk to sociologists, other sociologists and ask them, what is it that sociology needs to do? Across the board, they will all say, you know, it needs to be more public, we needed to be interdisciplinary, or we need to, you know, the public needs to know, all these things that sociology can be really equipped, well equipped to do, but our guiding hands, so to speak, aren't putting that path in front of us. But yeah, so what is sociology? Not, sociology is not easy. And what I mean by that is like, so I tutor and mentor a lot of student athletes at the university that I go to, and there'll be, they'll get pushed into disciplines like sociology, or anything in the quote, unquote, soft sciences, because it is easy. I mean, I had a student once who told me that he wanted to be a Chemistry major, but his advisor said, you know, that's going to be too much on practicing. Why don't you do something like sociology, all you got to do is just read and write all the time. That's much easier, much easier to do.

ELLEN: Our whole football team is sociology majors.

PENN: Baseball team or volleyball team.

OMAR: Right. Exactly. Exactly. And I just find that ironic. Reading and writing is so easy, but that's the one skill that most people do not know how to do.

ELLEN: To do well, it's really hard to do it real.

OMAR: Yes. To do it. Well, yes. Yeah, yeah. And with that in mind, I do think a lot of sociology is the sociology the obvious because it is right out there in front of you. But something that is obvious, this should not be confused with something that is simple. I think something obvious can also be significantly complex. And no common sense is not common. And that's something that I think most people take also take for granted. And to be able to see and grasp these things with clarity and to apply that perspective with assurance is also difficult.

PENN: I agree. Yeah. The idea that what even if it's obvious, isn't always simple. Yeah, I think that's a really great point. Because a lot of people can see like, yeah, like, income inequality is bad, you know, or gender inequality is bad, but they don't really recognize like, what are the larger social context that is made that is making it happen, right, historically, or ideologically? And sociology is really good at bringing that up. Yes. Breaking it down. Yeah, breaking it down. So my two points on what sociology is not the first one, kind of going off of what you said, Omar, is that sociology is not the answer to every problem in

society. I think a lot of people who know me will be like, hey, so you're a sociologist, can you solve X and Y? And it's like, no, I wish I could

ELLEN: Japanese porn.

PENN: But we will find out. If you give me one year to watch Japanese porn, I'll figure that out. But so while sociology may not have the answer to every problem in society, it can definitely help improve it like you said, Omar because we know what works and what doesn't, you know, or we can do research to find out what works and what doesn't. And it is good at pointing out the bigger picture that people tend to miss when they see their personal problems, or they see problems that their friends are going through, like, "oh, I just feel really fat" or "I'm not feeling healthy" and blah, blah. And yeah, that's a very personal problem. But there's actually a bigger social context that that is influencing your thinking about that, like mass media or celebrities, you know, or like the health, the health and fitness or Yogi's out, you know, like nuts out there.

ELLEN: Yeah, I think this is where all the isms come in.

PENN: Right? And I think what, why? Because what you have to recognize is that, like we were talking about earlier, like, there are patterns, right? There's not just one poor person in the whole world, right? It's not their fault that they're poor. I mean, they may have individual attributes, right, that's what psychology or something else would be interested in. Right? But that there are like systemic patterns in our, like social, in our society in the way like Capitalism in our economy set up that creates the haves and the have nots, like creates the poor and the rich, right, and creates this inability for the poor, to get past that point, and to break through that barrier and like, achieve a better life. So anyway, like, I think sociology is really good at pointing that stuff out. But again, it's not the answer to everything, because you can't dismiss the individual also, right? If you just think about larger society, we can dismiss the psychology of the individual to so having both, you know, and as well as like Anthropology and all these other ologies, right to give us a historical background on things I think sociology is another piece of the human puzzle. So my second point about what socialism is that sociology is not good at talking to the public, right? So this is something that's come up is that sociology, when you study it, as an as like a grad student, you know, going into academia, they don't really talk about policy, they're only talking about how, how can we make this better? So yes, we know that XYZ is happening, but how can we fix that, right? Sociology is not good at really thinking about applied sociology, right? Applied sociology is not really done, we like to theorize, and we like to write it up, and then go through this six-month peer review process. And then just like publishing this obscure journal that the rest of the world never sees, like, sociology is not good at talking to the public, and not good at getting our findings of public. And even if we do, we're so full of jargon. And like, all these roundabout ways of saying stuff that to make sense of what we say, yeah, like people can't make sense of it. People can't Okay, like, tell me the gist of it. Tell me what your 140-character tweet is about how to fix this problem. And I think sociology needs to be get better at talking to public. That's one of the hopes for a podcast and get better at trying to actually apply our research and making the world a better place.

ELLEN: I think that that leads us to our next kind of big topic, which is what exactly is public Sociology? Because that's its own field, talking to the public is called public sociology, I guess, is that what you're describing?

PENN: I guess so. See, we're so bad that we had to create a separate field. Because we're like, oh, there's this thing that we have to talk to other people like that's, that's called that's called a sociology. We can sociologists can't like subs or people but not interact with people.

ELLEN; Yes. Amen to that.

OMAR: And that's, that's hugely, hugely, hugely problematic. I mean, at the most recent national conference in Montreal,

PENN: this was the American Sociological Association Conference.

OMAR: They had a huge forum on you know, what is public sociology,

PENN: but the thing is, is a lot of the public sociology panels at like, these conferences are really poorly attended.

OMAR: Yes. And they're not that good at also talking like you, I realized, like, at these conferences, like their, their work can be so amazing. But when they're up there actually presenting it, and I'm not reading it. I'm like, oh, my God, like, get off the stage. I don't want to listen anymore. You're not even a good public speaker. So I don't even, there's a lot of a lot of barriers.

ELLEN: Yeah, all right. So shall we? Should we read out like the OG definition of what public sociology is?

PENN: Sure. Why don't you do it? Okay.

ELLEN: So public sociology is a term coined by Herbert Jay Ganz, who is a big sociologist and he was even one of the American Sociological Association presidents at one point in time and at one of his addresses, which was in 1988. He came up with this term public sociology

PENN: Okay, wait, I'm just going to I want to interject real quick to make you guys realize this term is as old as I am. And like I said earlier that's sociology has had like a three 400-year history. Yeah. And it's only now they're like, oh, let's have this thing called public sociology that is only like 30 years old, you know 28, by the way, anyway, go on.

ELLEN: But anyways, okay so can. A couple of years ago in 2015 defined it as read this quote out, and the sociological writing or other product created by sociologist, that obtains the attention of some of the public's that make up the general public. the writing can be a book, an article or even a few paragraphs or putting a new idea or finding, and then he goes on to even say a podcast lecture, and even a summary

of the lecture, may already reach more of the public than anything we write. So it's really, any kind of sociological product in writing it. You know, like an oral presentation, whatever that can get to the general public, and convey some kind of information, which I think it's like such a broad category of things you know like anything can fit that that those criteria, but yet we have such a hard time, achieving public sociology like the fact that we can't seem to obtain the attention of the general public, on a regular basis, that's like, it's kind of upsetting because all of this stuff is so interesting that we read yet, it's not getting anywhere other than, you know, the few students that are at a university, you know,

PENN: So there's a lot of various have access right so one thing is that the stuff that people publish go into these peer reviewed journals that you need to have like an institutional subscription in order to access like there's not going to be one mom sitting somewhere, you know, with an act with subscriptions and new media society which is like the top tier journal on social media and Internet Society. It's like hundreds and hundreds of dollars.

OMAR: yeah or like one article can cost like \$70.

PENN: Crazy. And, and if you try and bring that out and try to write about it a blog post, there's all these I copyright issues that you go into is that the journals are like no, we, we own that that work. You can't publish it anywhere else. And that even if we go into writing, like, a popular book right that is also heavily looked down upon right so if you're a tenure track professor, trying to publish. They don't count podcast episodes, they don't count blog posts, they don't count journal articles they like news articles I mean right they only look at your peer reviewed publications from an Academic Press to like count towards your tenureship...

ELLEN: And that's what is approved, and what is not approved within academia and public sociology, unfortunately, many forms of it, or it's not very approved of nor is it really encouraged.

PENN: Yeah, and there's a lot of vulnerability right if you are a minority or you're a woman or you are, you have some status that could harm you and you go off and to the public and say these things, universities can dismiss you by universities can cannot support you or your research right you can maybe not get funding for your research, so there's not really not a lot of incentives for people to do public sociology.

OMAR: Right and that kind of like, it's so ironic because a lot of that runs this whole idea of public sociology within our own discipline runs counter to what I think sociologists even use for if sociality is a particular perspective or sociological imagination per se I don't, then who then who is it for efficient to be locked in an academic vault somewhere.

ELLEN: We are saying that there's no, there's a real lack of public sociology, out there. But I do want to also point out a few really great examples of successful public sociologists out there are doing amazing work, because it is happening, it's just not happening quite as much as I think the three of us were, and if and if it's, yeah.

PENN: And if it's happening you may not even realize it's sociology.

ELLEN: Yes, exactly like do you like Freakonomics, yes, right. That's it, That's it guys.

Did you read a seat on Anziz Ansari's book on *Model Enrollment*. You work with the sociologists in that. Yeah.

PENN: Actually all comedians are sociologists, in a way, observing all the stuff that's happening and be like, why is that happening.

OMAR: Yes, yes, absolutely.

PENN: Oh. This American Life. I really wanted the most popular a pair of podcasts Ira Glass and his team just American life one the public sociology Award, a few years ago from the American Sociological Association I was there in was in New York when he got the award and he was like, I didn't even know we were doing sociology. Yes, that's what he said and a sociology going for it. But it was awesome because he was doing it, and not even realizing it because you don't have to be like a PhD in sociology to do public sociology, you just have to care about society and talk about it.

OMAR: Yeah, it's funny because my class I literally on day one I was like, look, we are all sociologists, the only difference between you and me is that I know how to punch numbers and statistical software, and you don't. And I said, and also my head isn't as far as I understand we have a perspective, and I haven't touched that to you now pull your head.

PENN: Anyway, go on and tell us a little, little the listeners some resources on public sociology.

ELLEN: Okay, some examples that I think are fabulous public sociology books are: Matthew Desmond's *Evicted* which is online, New York Times bestsellers list. That's a great sociological work. Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*, also on the best sellers list, that's Sociology.

PENN: There's also Ta-Nahesi Coates *Between the World and Me*, right, really popular really powerful writing. that's sociology.

ELLEN: Also so much and it's like, it's, those are great examples of sociology done, well done and they're just like, really well written, like those are good writers and that's why when people say, like, earlier we were talking about how the coaches are telling the teams at our University to take sociology because all you do is read and write and that's easy to write really well and powerfully and convey a message, as well as like to explain these really broad concepts that are...

PENN: ...to be able to reach an audience, outside of your immediate interest.

ELLEN: And I think Desmond, and Michelle Alexander and Ta-Nahesi Coates, like they do a great, and there's I mean, these are just three examples of like hundreds and hundreds of authors of Sociologists who are doing really good work.

PENN: Yeah, so there's this weekly radio show called radio show called the *Measure of Everyday Life* on WCU so Ellen and I actually saw the host talking at ESA, the Sociology conference in Montreal, and he's such a great speaker, but really those only like five people in the audience, including one, one kid there was like the son of one of the people.

ELLEN: Yeah, yeah, that was really interesting

PENN: It's really great and it's a really short half hour show, and that's actually on the radio.

OMAR: Alrighty, that sounds signals the end of this week's show, we end our show with a little game called quick breaks where I choose a couple random topics current and newsworthy and I will throw them at the other two. And you must do a personal breakdown topic, and five words or less, incredibly sociological man, so I'm going to start this. A new article came out on artificial intelligence being able to accurately to a 90% accuracy, to determine if someone is gay or not.

PENN: Oh, wait. It's like five words or less. Sexuality is a social construct.

ELLEN: Very sociological.

OMAR: I like it, I like it, I like it. Ellen, Silicon Valley,

ELLEN: I don't like HBO'S show. HBO has a show called Silicon Valley. I have not been able to get into it. I'm like the Insecure, Game of Thrones, Big Little Lies, anything that is on HBO (except Silicon Valley).

OMAR: Thanks for listening to The Social Breakdown. We really appreciate your interest in public sociology and would like to get a bit more info on the works we cited today you can check out our website, thesocialbreakdown.com, that's the social breakdown.com list all of the articles, scholars, and books discussed in today's episode, define some of the sociological jargon we used as well as provide links to other relevant materials.

You can also find us on Facebook or Twitter and send in your questions or comments @socbreakdown again that's @socbreakdown. Be sure to tune in next week.