

## **Transcript: 30 Brave Minutes Podcast**

Episode 60

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### **Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Welcome to 30 Brave Minutes, a podcast of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. In 30 Brave Minutes, we'll give you something interesting to think about. This is Richard Gay, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. And with me is Dr. Joanna Hersey, Associate Dean of Student Success and Curriculum. Today we're going to be speaking with Assistant Professor Tracy Vargas from the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. Now get ready for 30 Brave Minutes. Hi, Tracy. Tell us a bit about yourself.

### **Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Hi, everyone. It's great to be here with each one of you. I'm an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice here at UNC Pembroke. I received my Ph.D. from Syracuse University in 2018. I teach a range of in-person and online sociology courses on the topics of theory, poverty, technology, gender, and writing. And my primary areas of research are the sociology of work and labor studies.

### **Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Wow, you're covering a lot of bases there. It's an impressive list of topics. What does a sociologist study?

### **Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, sociologists study human interactions. It's actually the study of social groups, which sounds like a broad definition, which means you can really study anything of interest to you as long as it's focused on social groups interacting. And so, when I teach sociological theory, that's how I define sociology as a discipline. But really, sociology is made up with many topical subfields such as, mine's the sociology of work. But in our department, we have researchers and teachers interested in racism, gender, medical sociology, and even the class Death and Dying. Social inequalities and intersectionality, which brings together race, gender, class, ability and disability, and more, is sort of a thread that ties our courses together in this department.

### **Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Clearly, you have a lot of different interests, and as you say, sociologists can study many different topics. So why don't you tell us a little bit about your current research?

### **Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, my current research is actually a continuation of my dissertation research from Syracuse University. This was the first sociological study of dollar stores, I'm excited to say. So, I'm interested in understanding how the organization of work at dollar stores; the different rules, policies, and technologies, that corporate leadership implements, impact both low-wage workers in the stores and their customers on the service floor. And so, for example, last year, my student research assistant, Kayla Thompson and I conducted ethnographic research, visiting dollar stores regularly in the local region, and we identified specific safety hazards and operational issues commonly occurring in these stores. So, this coming year, my student research assistant is Aaliyah Valdez, and we'll be examining the differences between dollar stores based on geographic location,

neighborhood income, and racial demographics in particular. We're interested in the high incidence of violence that occurs in and around dollar stores. And I'm currently conducting interviews with dollar store employees to learn more about the everyday risks and fears that workers experience while on the job.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

So, I have a question about how does one define a dollar store? Are we talking about a specific type of store, or is this the name of the store?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, my research focuses on the major dollar store chains, the Big Three, which are Dollar General, Family Dollar, and Dollar Tree. And actually, Dollar Tree and Family Dollar are now one combined conglomerate because they merged several years ago. So those are the main three I focus on. There's also something called Five Below, which is a dollar store more so geared towards young people, teens, and youth that have fun accessories based on their age range.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

And can you give us an idea of how many there are in your studies? Like, I'm curious about how many there are nationally, if you're focusing your study very specifically on a region or state or how you're defining your parameters.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, nationally, I believe there's over 18,000 to 20,000 dollar stores. There's more Dollar stores in the United States than Starbucks, McDonald's and Walmart's combined. So, there's many across the country. In the past, they've focused on building around urban areas and suburban areas. But more recently, Dollar General in particular has focused on its rural initiative and strategically planning stores in rural landscapes. They map the pathways of traffic movement, and they will put a dollar store in between residential areas and a Walmart center or a grocery center to sort of stop shoppers on the way. My current research, the ethnographic research, has focused on North Carolina so far, but I'd like to expand that into more areas of the south, which is where dollar stores are concentrated.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

That's so interesting. I would be curious to see if there's a significant difference between urban dollar stores and these more rural types. So, I think that would be something really interesting to see some research on.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Absolutely.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

And you're the one to do it?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

I am. I'm the first and hopefully not the last, trying to inspire others to look at them more carefully and the influence they've had since they're so prolific on the landscape of America, what's their influence been? And what does it say that dollar stores are so incredibly popular while other big-name stores have gone bankrupt and closed?

**Speaker 3: Dr. Joanna Hersey**

You talked about how one of the areas you're looking at is things like worker safety and then also issues of violent activity around the store. And is this because the stores are in a more wide variety of locations than some other stores? Are there aspects of this store that causes those numbers to be different than other stores?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Well, yes. In terms of staffing, dollar stores are understaffed, meaning that they tend to only have a few employees operating the whole store. So maybe you'll see a cashier in the front and a manager in the back or somebody stocking shelves. So, the staff is really limited in these stores, and that makes dollar store workers vulnerable to things like robbery and other types of incidents because they can't keep their eyes on customers all the time. Also, there's usually no security because they're standalone stores. They're rarely located in a shopping complex, so there's no security. Their security is really just to call for help if there's an incidence of theft or violence. So, from what I've learned from talking with Dollar Store workers so far, they've used quotes like they feel like it's the wild, wild west or that they're sitting ducks, particularly in poorer neighborhoods that already have incidents of crime and violence in the local areas. And so, they're hoping to get more protection for themselves because dollar stores are vulnerable. They're one of the only viable businesses sometimes in poor neighborhoods.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

And I assume that's because they provide an inexpensive product that's accessible to all demographics. Is that the thought behind it?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Yes. Dollar stores will be one of the only stores located in poorer neighborhoods because they are sometimes food deserts, meaning that residents there don't have access to food besides maybe a corner store. There's no grocery stores, there's not a lot of shops. But dollar stores are willing to go into these communities and provide services for the communities, which is great, but if they're being responsible, they should also take care of their workers to help them feel a bit safe. For example, when I did my ethnographic research on Dollar stores, I actually worked at a dollar store for six months undercover and I was in the worst location in the city, and we didn't have a parking lot and we had halfway houses around the area. There was a higher incidence of theft. There was also a methadone clinic right around the corner from that area. So, these different factors combined made it an unsafe working environment sometimes because there would be disputes between customers or angry customers at the workers. And so, we did have some pretty scary times that happened where we had to call authorities regularly to the point where the authorities, the cops would be like, "Oh, okay, yeah, it's the Dollar store calling for us again. Just hold on, wait 30 minutes and we'll be there."

**Speaker 3: Dr. Joanna Hersey**

One of the aspects of this and because I know I'm a penny pincher, sometimes, maybe there's a sense that it's not actually the cheapest for certain products.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Yes, absolutely. So, in one of my classes, The Sociology of Poverty, I have a particular assignment that I assign students. I ask students to do a bit of ethnographic investigation themselves by first going to a dollar store in the local area and choosing several name-brand products and recording the volume and the price of those products. And then I ask them to go to a local grocery store chain like Food Lion or Walmart Supercenter and locate those

same products and record the volume and price on those products. And then we compare the data as a classroom. And as you said, as we anticipate, for most name-brand products the students select, the cost is more expensive at the dollar store, by volume, than it is in grocery stores and even Walmart. And so, for example, customers might think they're getting a deal because the cost of a bag of Tide Pods is lower on the price tag at a dollar store than at a Food Lion. But when you actually look at the volume by weight, it's actually more expensive because you're getting less product for more money. So that's an important thing to learn about dollar stores. I've had students say that really stuck with them. That experiential learning about the price differences and how you might think you're getting a deal, you're actually paying more money for less product.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Tracy, can you tell us how you became interested in this topic? It's interesting that you're one of the few people to study this. How did you come to this topic?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Sure, I have a story about that my mother, Barbara Peter Check, she was a low-wage retail service worker when I was a child growing up, and she would come home and tell me her stories about her day, her work stories. Some were wild stories about unfair experiences she had on the job with customers, and management. And she also kept a notebook that she would write down this information about each workday so that she kind of had her own evidence if she was ever asked questions by her bosses. And her collection of stories really had a lasting impact on me and inspired me. I didn't understand, of course, why my mom's job experience couldn't be better because I thought she was such a nice person and worked so hard. So, once I got to college, as a first-generation college student at Syracuse University in the Ph.D. program, I had a wonderful mentor named Gretchen Purser. And Gretchen helped me realize that my working-class roots were actually a strength for my ethnographic research and that I didn't have to hide my identity as a first-generation college student. And so, she helped me decide to design an ethnographic research project on low-wage retail work. And I selected dollar stores as my field site because I noticed they were spreading so rapidly across the US landscape. But most of the literature was preoccupied with larger stores, especially Walmart and fast-food chains like McDonald's. And so, I'm really happy that I selected dollar stores as my field site because they've continued to thrive and expand and multiply since I made that decision back in 2014. And there's more than ever, and they've thrived in times of economic crisis, during the COVID epidemic, survived the retail apocalypse, like I said, where many brick and mortar stores, standalone stores have been closing the dollar stores just keep expanding. For example, Dollar General's Strategic Growth Plan is to open approximately 1,000 dollar stores, new ones, every year. And they've done that since 2015.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Wow, that's an impressive business model there.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

A student told me that they have a new brand called pOpshelf that has just started recently in the southern region of the US. And pOpshelf is like the trendy branding of Dollar General I suppose. You wouldn't even think that the store pOpshelf and Dollar General were related. They also have something they call Dollar General Markets, which is more food-based aspect of Dollar store. So, it seems like they're piloting and trying different re-brandings to open up the market even more for themselves.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

So, can you tell us a bit more about the research that your students are doing with you? It sounds like your students are doing some very interesting projects as a group within the class, could you talk a little bit about how you engage your students in research in this area?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Sure. The REACH program has been incredibly helpful linking student researchers with my project for students who are interested in working with me in dollar stores, like Kayla Thompson, for example, who is my REACH student. Last year, she expressed interest in the articles that I had written and published. And so, after that, I led her in a study of ethnography, educating her on the research methodologies of ethnography. And then I trained her to be an ethnographer herself and visit dollar stores in the area, take field notes, photographs as a customer, and record all of her data and code it to find her own research conclusions. And she presented her poster at the REACH Symposium last year. And so upcoming for my next REACH mentee who is Alia Valdez, she's interested in race relations. She told me she was interested in my dollar store research, but for herself, she wants to go to grad school and be a professor. And she knows that her area of study wants to be race, and she said she just wants to do something with race, but she's not exactly sure what. So, my next phase of my project focusing on the violence in and around Dollar stores. Part of my hypothesis is there's an interaction between class and race. Meaning that if we overlay census tract data with dollar store locations, I believe that dollar store locations in wealthier and whiter neighborhoods are going to see less incidents of violence and crime than dollar stores in poorer neighborhoods of color. And so, Leah is going to help me with that research, and she's going to be a really valuable research participant and research assistant because of her social positioning as a black woman, she's going to be able to, through her lived experiences, gather data and reach population in a way that I just can't. And so, I'm really excited to work with her on this project, doing ethnographic research and designing an online survey.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

That absolutely sounds fascinating. And the wonderful thing about it is that you both are advancing your interests, right? She's exploring an aspect of race that she's very interested in, and it happens to dovetail with your interests as well. And it's wonderful that you are both leveraging your lived experiences to produce your scholarship. So, kudos to you.

**Speaker 4: Dr. Gary Robin Cummings**

*This is Chancellor Robin Cummings and I want to thank you for listening to 30 Brave Minutes. Our faculty and students provide expertise, energy, and passion driving our region forward. Our commitment to southeastern North Carolina has never been stronger through our teaching, our research, and our community outreach. I want to encourage you to consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. With your help, we will continue our impact for generations to come. You can donate online at [www.uncp.edu/give](http://www.uncp.edu/give). Thanks again for listening. Now back for more 30 Brave Minutes.*

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, the REACH program at UNCP is an excellent program where it pairs undergraduate students interested in research and who want to pursue a career in the professoriate, with a researcher, a professor, who has shared interests in the project. And this one-year research partnership is designed to get students experienced more with research and conducting their own project, presenting and preparing them for graduate school. And so, it

provides research funds for their project, as well as travel funds if they want to present their project at conferences. Also, it has money available to apply for graduate schools. And we are excited to report that we've had numerous students accepted into graduate school programs because of the REACH program. So, it's excellent.

**Speaker 3: Dr. Joanna Hersey**

That's so wonderful, Tracy. We're so proud of our students and faculty working together as REACH students and mentors. This is a Mellon-funded program that UNCP has had in place now for several years, and that leads us really well into the next question that we had, which was, what types of careers do our students go into after graduation?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, I'm incredibly proud of our department's graduates. Some students apply to graduate school, as I said, to receive their master's or Ph.D. For example, Madison Bathke, our Sociology Club President, will be starting at UNC Greensboro this fall. I'm really excited for her. Another of our sociology graduates from last year, Angel Rivera, is already a master's student there. And Hunter Levy, who was my REACH student this year, he's a Criminal Justice major and Sociology minor. His REACH project was on police officers and mental health, and after graduation, he'll be getting his MBA here at UNCP. Kayla, my REACH student from last year, who I mentored, will be getting her MSW here at UNCP as well. And students after completing an internship, an internship is a great way to connect themselves in their field of interest and get hands-on experience. For example, our Criminal Justice major, Shantay McKinley, completed a North Carolina Department of Public Safety internship, and she was able to get a paid position there. And our Criminal Justice students, they're really competitive candidates on the job market because of this hands-on experience, and they've acquired positions in probation, parole, policing, and the juvenile justice system. We also have many nontraditional students who are enrolled in our fully online Sociology bachelor's degree program, which is really exciting. And many of these students already have families and full-time employment, but they're seeking more advanced opportunities, management positions, or promotions in their field, which is often in Human Services. And some recent examples of employment positions that are in-person and online graduates have acquired in Sociology are Child Behavioral Specialist, Housing Navigator for the Homeless, Community College Instructor, Juvenile Justice Counselor, and Foster Care Guidance Counselor. So, they're doing a lot of amazing work and getting really great jobs after our program.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

That's excellent. And it's so exciting to see the impact that our students, your students, are having on the community. So, it's really great work by your department. I'll also add that Sociology and Criminal Justice has the most majors of any department in the College of Arts and Sciences. I believe you have about 850 majors at this time.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Yes, that's correct. We have a lot of majors, but we also have a large staff of over 20 professors. So, the student-to-professor ratio still remains really great. You can still have a personal education and get to know your professors well. Even though we have so many majors, we have a lot of great professors that are happy to work with these students and get them their degree and move on to wonderful careers.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

I know that the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice works with students in a variety of ways, like you've been describing already. Could you tell us a bit about the clubs in the department?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Yeah, we do have two really amazing clubs. One is the Sociology Club and the other is the Criminal Justice Club. I am actually the advisor to the Sociology Club, and we have in-person meetings that are held each week. We also broadcast them on Zoom, thinking about the online, fully online Sociology majors who can't physically be there with us in the classroom because some of them are in Chicago or New Jersey. So, this year, student leaders organized a faculty speaker series. So, each week, a faculty member in our department presented on their sociological research to club members. And then after each faculty presentation, students could ask questions to the professor and engage in a more casual, open dialogue about the research topic. And the Criminal Justice Club faculty advisor is Jesse McQueen, and he's organized some really engaging, exciting club meetings and events this year. Students have benefited from hearing law enforcement officers discuss their work experiences and share about information about local crime. They're also learning skills, they did demonstrations like how to dust for fingerprints and even an off-campus firearms simulator so you can follow both of our department's clubs on Instagram. And I think there's going to be some really exciting things to come for next year.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

I want to join. It sounds like so much fun. As you were talking about the faculty sharing their research interests, I was thinking that I would really enjoy participating in that sometime just to learn more about the variety of things that our faculty are doing.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Yeah, it's a great low-stakes way for any student across campus interested in Criminal Justice or Sociology to see what this department is all about without the formal structure of a class or being pressured in terms of grading. They can just sort of come, listen to different speakers, talk with other students interested in Sociology or Criminal Justice. And we even have treats sometimes like pizza and donuts. So come for the free food, if nothing else.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

That's excellent, Tracy, I really admire your enthusiasm for your work with the students. We're recording this in late April, and I believe you're about to go to a conference about data and the gathering of data related to employment. And so, this episode is going to air after you go to this conference. But could you tell us about the conference and what your role will be?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Yes. So, I was really honored to be an invited speaker to this conference. It's the California Labor Lab Conference. It's their second annual virtual conference at UC Berkeley, and this event gathers a group of people together, including journalists, academics, labor market analysts, policymakers, and occupational health and safety workers together. Each invited presenter will share their expertise on the use of technologies in the workplace and how technologies are used and what for and what the impacts are on workers and their firms. So, some presenters will be taking a more critical approach and communicating the adverse effects of excessive technology and monitoring in the workplace, while other presenters will be talking more about the positive

sides of technology in the workplace and how it can help make the workplace safer and more creative. And so, my own research on dollar stores is more so on the critical side. And my research presentation argues and demonstrates that low-wage workers are often viewed and treated as a serious threat to the corporate profit margin and that dollar store employees are monitored with an intense web of work policies and technological apparatuses. Basically, these things called CC television cameras that you think would be positioned on the customers watching for customer theft, are actually positioned on the dollar store workers themselves, watching the dollar store workers. And so, my presentation outlines this process of what I call employee criminalization, which I theorize is a process that transforms workers that are just hired, into perceived criminals through insufficient training, low payroll, excessive rules and policies, and intense technological surveillance.

And the way I came about this theorization is through my own experience working at dollar stores. For example, when I started, CC television cameras were watching me and positioned on me as I was a cashier. And my manager got a phone call one day from loss prevention, telling him that he suspected that I was sliding merchandise. And sliding merchandise is when you give items to a customer without paying. So, what I was actually doing is doing price checks. I was scanning items and giving them to customers, and I did a lot of price checks. And because I did so many, loss prevention had flagged me as suspicious because they saw on the cameras me scanning items and giving them to the customers without paying and also hitting the price check button on the register. That was kind of an unwritten rule that you weren't supposed to do that and flagged me as suspicious. Thankfully, my manager liked me and wanted to keep me, so he said, no way, she's not stealing or sliding merchandise. But still, because of the technological apparatuses of the workplace there, every time you hit the price check button, it would ding you, a red mark. And the more price checks you did, the more suspicious you were. So, my manager actually ended up taking a butter knife and prying the price check button off the register so that we couldn't do price checks because we were getting in trouble so much with loss prevention. So, it seems like a silly story, but this is just one example of how data monitoring is used to track employees at dollar stores and low-wage service jobs in general. And these types of incidents occurred quite often between conflicts with loss prevention, who was watching the cameras, who I never met, and workers in the store.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

So, loss prevention was in a remote location, and do you know if it was done with artificial intelligence or was there a person actually watching your work?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, I believe loss prevention were people subcontracted to watch all the video recordings in the stores, and their job is basically to watch the videos and any suspicious behavior, to log it, and report it, and then managers are contacted to follow up on that. And they don't just work with dollar stores. They watch camera footage from all different types of retailers. They can be operating from anywhere in the country. It's a remote job. So, my field site was in a location in Northeastern United States. They've been operating from out west or in California or Texas, and so they're kind of a nebulous group. It'd be interesting to see more research on loss prevention and who these people really are and all the different types of subcontracts they have.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Yeah, it would, I'm curious how effective that is. Well, I hope to hear more about your conference when you get back. I hope it's as exciting as it certainly sounds.



**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

It is. I was honored to be invited. I saw names from Harvard, Berkeley. The Shift Project is a project at Harvard University, and they gather research information and data on low-wage workers. So, I've already presented for the Shift Project last year, but I think as a follow-up to that presentation, they really were excited about my research. And so that's why I got involved in this labor conference coming up at Berkeley.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Well, I know researchers like yourself are often doing multiple projects at the same time or planning the next project. What do you think your next project is going to be on?

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

This fall I'm excited about my Gender and Society course that's coming up. It's going to be a service-learning course, and it's the second time that I'm partnering with the Rape Crisis Center of Robeson County. Myself and the organization's amazing executive director, Virginia Locklear, are going to be working together. And Virginia is actually a UNCP Criminal Justice alumni. She got her bachelor's degree years ago. And so, we're going to join forces once again, like we did last year, to engage students in this class learning about issues of domestic violence, homelessness, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's movement. And so last year, we co-organized an MMIW walk on the UNCP campus with Alpha Phi Omega, and they're the country's oldest Indigenous Greek letter organization. And we had a really great turnout, a mixture of community members, Lumbee Tribe, and students, all collaborating together and walking for justice for these Missing and Murdered Indigenous women. And so, our plans for the fall are still in the works of what exactly we're going to do. But I think this class, as it was last year, is going to be a powerful learning experience for students. So, I hope students sign up for this class are excited to do round two with Virginia.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

That's really important work that you and Virginia are doing in the community. So, I thank you both for that, and hopefully, I'll be able to join in.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

Of course. Yeah. Actually, Joanna was there last year, and it was a really beautiful evening. We took photos and recordings.

**Speaker 3: Dr. Joanna Hersey**

It was. Yeah, super special. Very wonderful.

**Speaker 2: Dr. Tracy Vargas**

So, beyond the research activities I've already discussed, I've recently formed a partnership with a grassroots worker organization called Step Up Louisiana. And Step Up Louisiana is a self-described multiracial, multigenerational community-based organization, and they are engaged in multiple campaigns and strategies to empower workers and claim economic justice, particularly in the south and with a strong racial justice component. And so, part of their efforts has been a Dollar Store Workers Justice campaign, which is really exciting. I'm always looking for dollar store worker campaigns and news about how dollar store workers are organizing and what they're doing and how they're responding to the jobs they experience. So, I've designed a collaborative research project. And what we'd like to do is to better understand how workers at Dollar stores attempt to build and sustain worker power, voice, and representation, particularly in retail. Because retail is so

transient, there's high turnover, and so organizing probably looks a lot different than it would for a traditional type of union organizing.

So, this research design that I have would answer three core research questions. The first would be how do dollar store workers transform their individual grievances and complaints, like I shared with you, into sustainable collective organizing? Second research question I'm interested in is what organizational strategies and tactics do dollar store workers use in order to amplify their worker voice? And third, as a marginalized group, as I said, according to class and race and gender tend to be poor, tend to be people of color, and tend to be female. About 60% to 70% of dollar store workers are female. So how do dollar store workers build power, voice, and representation for themselves and their communities? And so, I'm in the process of applying for external research grants to help fund this new project. I recently applied for a Work Rise grant for \$250,000. So please keep your fingers crossed that this research project works out, because it would be an amazing opportunity to work with Step Up Louisiana in this way and answer some really great research questions. I think that would help a lot of retail workers out there.

**Speaker 1: Dr. Richard Gay**

Tracy, thank you so much for sharing your work with us, and I feel like I've learned so much and we're all going to be sending positive vibes that your grant will get funded, and if it doesn't, then I'm sure you'll be applying again. And I can see a real passion that you have for your topic and also for working with your students as well. So, I really appreciate you sharing both of those passions with us today, and I can't wait to learn more about what you discover about your work on dollar stores.

Thank you so much, Richard and Joanna for having me as a guest here. It's really exciting to share information about the Sociology and Criminal Justice Department, our wonderful students and professors, who are so passionate about the work that they do.

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