

## **Transcript of Interview with Ashley Pierce by Scott Adams**

**Interviewee:** Ashley Pierce

**Interviewer:** Scott Adams

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**Location (Interviewee):** Avondale, Arizona

**Location (Interviewer):** Camarillo, California

**Transcriber:** Scott Adams

### **Abstract:**

Ashley Pierce, a graduate student at Arizona State University, lives in Avondale, Arizona. In this interview, she reflects on the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has affected her life. She highlights the effects the pandemic and quarantine has had an affect on her family life and work at the Sheriff's detention center. She describes how it has affected her work personally with the passing of co-workers due to the virus. She also touches on the division caused by COVID-19, politics, and the politicization of the pandemic by both sides politically. Ashley also describes the precautions taken by her and her family and friends to avoid catching the virus, and how the quarantine and the current political divide has affected their relationships.

**SA 0:00**

All right. So I am Scott Adams. I am an intern for history 580 for the aim forgot journal of the plague year. Yeah, my brain is mush.

**SA 0:23**

**So, um, we'll go ahead and get started, I'll first ask you the background questions, and then we'll go on from there. Okay. What is the date and time?**

**AP 0:35**

And today is the 11th of October, and it is 12:26pm.

**SA 0:45**

**Right? What is your name? And what are your primary? What are the primary things you do on a day to day basis.**

AP 0:52

And my name is Ashley Pierce. I work for the sheriff's office. I'm a detention officer. So most of the week, I do that during the day. And then in a normal year. And my time off, I would go like day trips, travel, hanging out with family, but this year, mostly just hanging out at home. Visiting via digital means and whatnot. Um, yeah, not a whole lot going on this year. Unfortunately.

**SA 1:31**

**We're do you live? And what is it like to live there?**

AP 1:35

I live in Avondale, Arizona. I'm taught hot weather hot and dry. Um, but it's not too bad. It's a nice neighborhood. Where I live I, my parents were in the military. So we lived all over. So this isn't too bad. Wish the temperature would come down a little bit. But overall, not a bad place to live, I guess.

**SA 2:02**

**When you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts about it? How have your thoughts changed since then?**

AP 2:10

Let's see. I think the first time I remember hearing about it was on the news when it had just started in China, and it had just started hitting like the East Coast. And a little bit in like California along the northern part there. I'm like, oh, man, I hope it doesn't come here. You know, like, just one more thing. Because at the beginning of the year, there was all that other, like Australia was on fire. And then there was all this other stuff going on. Like just what we need one more thing. I'm just mostly just like, Oh, I hope we don't have that here.

**SA 2:52**

**Right? What issues have you what issues have most concerned you about the covid 19 pandemic?**

AP 3:00

I'd say the thing that kind of concerning me is just the, the way the information about it has spread like you've got two main camps have sort of emerged, there's those who it's not a big deal. It's a hoax or tricking you. The sheeple want you to believe that it's a thing. And then there's other people on the other side, like it's very dangerous. It's where your mask social distance, it's very important. And it's just kind of concerning how, at least for those two groups, there's like no room in between. There's either you're all the way on this side, or you're all the way on this side.

And as we know, in life, nothing is ever really one or the other. So it's kind of just concerning how, even though you have all this information out there, they're not really taking that into account, if it doesn't fit the block that they're in, and it kind of it's concerning, because everybody else who haven't really picked a camp, I guess, so to speak, is kind of hard to get accurate information. Because depending on which side you're listening to at that moment, there's like no, middle ground there. So for me, it's just the the lack of reliable information, I guess, because you can't really tell sometimes what is and what isn't about it.

**SA 4:27**

**So moving on to employment, has COVID-19 affected your job and in what ways?**

AP 4:34

Oh, geez, Why yes, he has, um, I work in the county jail. So I mean, all the time anyway, we were always you know, like wearing gloves and sanitizing because they're as they're not the cleanest places anyway. But when it really started hitting Arizona, so to speak, we pretty much had to all of our procedures and processes that we had would basically throw those right out the window and start fresh. Because of the nature of the job, there's really no way to completely 100% of the time socially distance. I mean, you have to bring people in, you have to be able to search those people, you have to be able to, you know, get them to court and move them from housing unit to housing unit. So there's really no way to, like avoid that. So basically, what we're doing how it work is, I have our uniform pants have these little pockets, like cargo pockets on the side. And basically, at the start of my shift, one pocket gets full of gloves, and a couple extra masks and the other side is little, tiny bottles of sanitizer, and just all day, just whoever needs sanitize, sanitize gloves, gloves. So basically, it just kind of, we basically had to start over from scratch and all of our procedures, because we already had some protocols for like when we have chicken pox and lice and those sort of things. But COVID is, is a whole different monster. So basically, we took those protocols and just on a strengthened them, I guess you could say and got a lot more strict about it. So it definitely, definitely has affected the way we operate at work.

**SA 6:13**

**And has it changed your employment status or in any in any other way?**

AP 6:19

I'm not really, I guess I could say like, my line of work is one that will never go out of business. Working for the sheriff's office, you're always gonna have people who are being arrested, you're always going to need a place to house those people while they're waiting for their coordinates. So I guess in that way, I can say I guess I'm kind of luckier than most because I, I didn't have to worry about you know, like, I can't work from home, there's no, there's no phone in it. And so I I guess my line of work is one of those that just managed to dodge the bullet, I guess.

**SA 6:56**

**And so what concerns do you have about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment and the economy more broadly?**

AP 7:03

Um, well, I guess for as far as my employment, I'm pretty much the same, you know, day in day out business as usual. But as far as like the economy, we've had, you know, a lot of people have lost their jobs. And it's kind of like a snowball effect. Like, all those people now have no job, no income coming in. So they're, they're staying at home more. Which means they're not out spending, which means no more businesses have less money. So overall, I guess I'm concerned about the economy just like slowing down to a halt. Because we're all connected together, whether we want to agree, or knowledge that or not. So the longer that people are staying out of work, the more businesses go under, which means there's nowhere to employ those people and it just kind of a snowball effect, I guess.

AP 8:04

It has it affected the planet people, you know, actually, I do have a couple of friends who worked in different a couple worked in retail, one worked in the real estate industry, and they were both these two in particular, were both laid off. So they're actually currently looking for jobs right now. But because people are still staying at home and not going out and spending and kind of stimulating the economy, there's not really a lot of hiring, at least in the fields that they they're qualified for. So that's kind of a bummer for them. I've been trying to help them out. Like, you know, when I see a job posting that that might work for them, always make sure to shoot them an email.

**SA 8:49**

**Yeah, yeah. And moving forward to family and household. How's COVID it COVID-19 affected you and your and, or your family's day to day activities?**

AP 9:01

Um, well, basically, we're just we're not doing as many in person like Sunday dinners anymore, because my mom also works in the same. She works with sheriff's office as well. So we both kind of try to keep our distance from family members because we know where we work, we have a higher likelihood of in germ areas. So when I get home, I don't even like my laundry room is right off my garage. So when I come in, my first step, when I get home is into the garage, I change. I leave my uniform and everything in there so I don't bring it into the house with me. And she kind of does the same thing. But basically before any interaction when we come home from work, it's just like, stop. Wait, I've changed first have to decontaminate if you will. We don't

really do a lot of get together. So we used to do like day trips on the weekend. Like oh, let's let's go to Flagstaff this weekend and just see what we can get into. We haven't really been able to do that so much and I'm missing,

**SA 10:03**

**right? And how are you managing day to day activities in your household?**

AP 10:09

Well, basically, it's just a lot more, a lot more together time at home. So it's just kind of like, because you're used to, you know, having like your alone time, because so and so would be out doing this. And then I would go out and do that. But well, now we're all at home. So it's kind of just like figuring out a new schedule, so that we don't get on each other's nerves as much because you know, we're family and I love you. But could you just breathe so loud? Could you not for just five minutes, so really, it's just kind of like maybe relearning how to get along with it, everybody, because there's just so much together time now.

**SA 10:48**

**And has come to light has the covid 19 outbreak affected how you associate and communicate with friends and family, in what ways?**

AP 10:57

Oh, a little bit, we do a lot more phone calls and emails now than we used to. And then on those few occasions, when we do get together for an event or something, it's a lot less of the Hey, it's been a while hugs, and no more kiss on the cheeks for man, you know, Mansu, you know, everybody's kind of like, from a distance. So kind of, you know, you don't really realize how important those little things are until you don't really notice how much you enjoyed and Sue coming over and giving you a pinch on the cheek until they don't do it anymore. So in that way, I guess it's a lot changed a lot more standoffish if you will not because we don't like each other, but because you may have the Rona and not notice.

**SA 11:40**

**Right? And what what have been the biggest challenges that you faced during the covid 19 outbreak.**

AP 11:49

For me, I'm, I'm really like a people person, I like to go out and I like to visit and hang out with people and go and do things. So really just kind of learning how to do that from a distance is kind of hard, because I'm always like, hey, let's go and do this. Let's go and do that. And everybody looks at me, like really, I know, when I was forced to have it, I can't help it. Um, so for me, it's just kind of like, having to learn how to be a little more introverted, I guess, because

I've always been like the outgoing. Hey, let's go and do this. Let's go to the park. Let's do this. And then that's not really an option anymore. Right now. That's a bummer.

**SA 12:26**

**And what have you, your family and friends done for recreation during COVID-19.**

AP 12:32

And we do, or at least my sisters, and I will do like a not really Zoom movie night. But we'll like FaceTime. And we'll have a movie on in the background. So we're kind of like watching a movie together. But not. We'll do lunch that way too. Like I'll go and I'll make. We'll agree to have like fried chicken that day. So we'll both make fried chicken and we'll have our little iPads set up on the table. So like, I can see her on my little iPad screen and she can see me on her. So we'll do like iPad dinner. We'll do like board games, like we'll take a picture of the board and send it like your move. And then they'll move their piece and send a picture back. It's not nearly as much fun to school, your sister and monopoly when now they're across town, but sometimes you got to do what you got to do.

**SA 13:25**

**And so shifting from family to community. How's the COVID-19 outbreak affected your community?**

AP 13:34

And, well, a lot more standoffish ness, you know, like we can't get together as much and then Arizona is kind of we're kind of in those group of people who just we don't like to be told what to do. And people just don't really want to. I mean, no one likes wearing the masks all day at work. I have to wear it for like eight and a half hours every day. It's a bummer but I do it because I know even though I might not get sick, someone else might. But Arizona is kind of of the opinion like we're in the wild west and you're not going to tell me what to do and you get the people who just will not wear the mask so I guess in that aspect we've got kind of some conflict going on between those two camps again, like the this is a real thing you need to be careful about it and then the Don't tell me what to do if I want to not wear a mask I won't. Even so much down our street we've got the neighbors who give each other side eye because they walk out of their house with no mask on like he's 12 feet from you and he's the only one standing there in the driveway like relax.

**SA 14:42**

**And how are people around you responding to the pandemic?**

AP 14:47

Um, well, we're all taking it very seriously because we actually had three officers at the sheriff's office who passed away from COVID so we We're always we're in the group that take it seriously. Group, I mean, we work in a place, it's not really all that clean anyway. So we were already kind of used to having to wear gloves all the time. And when you're going into an area where there might be some sort of germs or possible infection, we already had the masks. And we have like the little face shields and things. So for us at work, it was kind of like, okay, just one more layer. You know, you have to wear it all day instead of just when you go into these areas. So I guess in a work sense, it's kind of been like business as usual. But in like, my not work life, sometimes I've driven all the way to the grocery store, I get all the way up to the door. And even though I know, all year has been masked up, I get to the door like, man, I have to go all the way back to the car, give a mask. So even for me like even though I know how serious it is, that I need to do it, it still hasn't really, the habit has not formed yet. So and then I get the little side eyed, a little old ladies. Like I know, I'm going like I made sure not to walk near anybody on the way back. So at least in that, I would say it's a work in progress.

**SA 16:13**

**And have you seen the people around you change their opinions, day to day activities or relationships in response to the pandemic?**

AP 16:21

I'm somewhat like, again, I don't really I go to work, and I come home, I'm at least at work, there were a few who's like, like, the younger, like I hate, you know, point a mountain, and I say, and everyone's like this, but like the younger officers, they're kind of like, really, this is not such a big deal like for you. But a lot of people who might have it, they don't show any symptoms. So you're kind of like the typhoid Mary of the group. Just because it's not bothering you, doesn't mean it won't bother them. So at least kind of seeing once we had the first one or two officers pass away from it, it kind of like their lightbulb moment, like, Oh, this is really a big, this is a big deal. And, you know, I then saw I started seeking and then with the gloves in the pocket and the masks, you know, so my, like, it's kind of a bummer that that's what it took to get through to you. But I do see a lot more people, the longer it goes there kind of realizing like, it may not be the absolute end of the world like some people think, but it is something that needs to be taken very seriously. So I have seen a shift, slow and begrudgingly occur, as you will. So a little bit yeah.

AP 17:37

And self isolation and flattening the curve have been two key ideas have emerged during the pandemic, have you your family friends community responded to request us to self isolate, and flatten the curve. And we did. Because we have some family members who are immunocompromised, so they're a little bit more in that category need to be safe. So we were

extra cautious about do we really need to go to the grocery store today, or can we make we've got food in the kitchen, or we just wanting to get out of the house, that sort of thing. But again, where we work, we didn't have the option to work from home. So we still had to go straight to work and come home. But we made sure to LIKE separate those trips, like don't stop at the grocery store on your way home. Because you were just at work all day and the jail you know, you need to go home and change just in case. So I think we have or at least for my family, and close friends, we have really made an effort to kind of keep our distance I have a one set of friends who live up in anthem. I haven't seen them since January in person. But they have they have a newborn, and they have a little guy. So we definitely want to make sure to keep you know distance from him because he's so little.

**SA 19:00**

**Yeah, it just kind of falls into the next question has COVID-19 changed your relationships with family, friends and community and in what ways?**

AP 19:09

a lot less in person. But we still find a way to make it work like a lot more phone calls, emails. We have these little like on Facebook, we'll send each other random memes of like favorite movies that we watch, that'll just be it. And we've kind of developed like an extra language like we can hold entire conversations and movie quotes not having said an actual word between us but it's just like we know what we're saying. And then if anybody else we're looking at our pages like What's with these crazy peoples and all these random pictures. But for us it makes sense. So in that way, we've kind of developed our own extra language, I guess you could say just to fill in the time that we would normally have spent annoying each other in person.

**SA 19:55**

**So moving on the health, have you or anybody you know gotten sick during COVID-19 outbreak?**

AP 20:02

and thankfully, no one in my family knocking on wood right now has gotten sick with it. But like I said earlier, we had a couple of employees at the sheriff's office actually passed away from it. And we have had a lot of officers who've gotten sick and have thankfully recovered from it. But we have, we have, we have to report any flu like or covid like symptoms to our supervisors. So even if we haven't really officially been diagnosed yet, even if we have symptoms, we're told to stay home and go to the doctor and get checked, they have, we get free testing set up at our medical clinic. So we can go and get tested every so often just to make sure we stay safe. But we have had I don't know the exact number, but maybe 3040 officers that I can think of in the last Well, since like March is when they started I think actually like keeping track and sending out notices every so often. So we've had quite a few of work, come down with it.



**SA 21:06**

**In what ways do you think that COVID-19 is affecting people's mental and or physical health?**

AP 21:13

Um, mostly, I think it effects both. But I think mostly like it's the mental aspect that I think most people are struggling with, like people. In general, we're, we're social creatures we like we like to be around people, we like to have contact with other people. And then when all of a sudden that's taken away that that really weighs on you. Some people they don't like being alone, they need company they need like the background noise they need, not necessarily to be actively engaged in conversation all the time. But just knowing that other person is like right there. So I know and having to stay inside all the time, lack of fresh air for some people, a lot of people like they might live in an apartment, there's no nearby, like park where they can go and distance but still be outside. So I know that is affecting people. And then a lot more people are staying inside, you know, couch surfing because all the gyms are closed, or if they've reopened, they're not sure it's safe. They don't want to be around a bunch of group of people. People have been waiting for him to open, you don't know, you go back. And there's a big rush of people. So some people are staying back. They I think it's definitely affecting both of those.

**SA 22:31**

**And, like, as far as information, what are your sources of news during this pandemic?**

AP 22:39

OH, well, it's kind of hard to say because you media is the enemy for sure. Because you can have one story and then you look three different news channels, they have absolutely completely different take on that one situation. So it's kind of hard to say, like, I actively Avoid Facebook news, because let's be honest, Facebook is the last place you want to look for reliable news. But I do try to watch like at least one of the local news channels like Fox 10, or CBS or whatever. And then every now and again, I'll flip through and like see what CNN has to say. But again, you have to take like everything with a grain of salt, because whether they want to or not everything has become like a political issue, whether it has nothing to do with politics or not. So depending on which side that channel happens to be on, will completely change the whole piece of news you're trying to get. So I tried to like I don't get newspapers or anything. I don't know if anybody actually has newspapers delivered anymore, but I tried to stick to like the more reputable big name, so to speak, but also kind of like, weigh it with what I also know, on my own. So it's kind of hard to to get good news lately.

**SA 23:56**

**Have your news sources change during the course of the pandemic?**

AP 24:01

Um, not so much because I was always wanting to check out the evening news every night when I you know, I'm making dinner I'll have it on in the background. I always knew that Facebook is a terrible place to get reliable information. So I never really considered that a good go to basically any social media I kind of just it's there for fun, but not for information as far as I'm concerned. So basically the same places. But I don't watch as much as you know, it's depressing. It's not one thing, it's another when it rains it pours. So I know it's not really that the sources changed but I do watch less of it. I'm like, you know, enough is enough by here COVID-19 one more time. My head's gonna explode. So I kind of smaller doses, I guess.

**SA 24:49**

**And what do you think are important issues that the media may or is not covering?**

AP 24:56

Um, well, I know there's more to life than just The Black Lives Matter movement and COVID-19. Both of those are very important things to be aware of and be informed on. But there's got to be other things going on. Earlier this year, I saw an article, I think was back in July. It was a timeline of things you may have missed. All of the things that didn't make the headlines, I think earlier in like March, NASA, one of the spaceflights had a woman in space. For like, 380, something days, that was the longest a female had ever spent in space ever. And I really don't recall ever having heard that on the news. I mean, that's, that's cool. That's good news. It's positive stuff. And yeah, it completely gets swept under the rug. So I don't know that there are anything that they're not being covered. Because if you're not not being covered by anyone, you may not hear about it. So I know those are not the only two important things going on. So when I do look for news, I try to look for positive things, because I know they're out there. But people like to, they like to harp and really linger on the negative. So I hope there's more good news out there. Hopefully we'll find it soon.

**SA 26:17**

**And onto government. How have municipal leaders and government officials in your community responded to the outbreak?**

AP 26:25

Geez. Well, depending on who you ask, either they did a great job or they had their head in the sand and kind of not necessarily head in the sand. But I think they waited a little bit longer than they should have before they really started taking it seriously. I think they did. Or they set our lockdown a little too soon. Um, like it was a good idea to kind of like lock everything down and try and stop the spread. But I think it hadn't really progressed to the part. Like they started it too soon. So they ended it too soon. Because people were jealous just about as long as they were

gonna last and like okay, lockdowns over and then there was the spike, right there. Again, then trying to get people to go back and say that would have been like, herding cats like oh, no, we're out. Now, we're not going back in. So I think maybe they they jumped the gun a little bit on it. But you can't really prepare for something if you don't, if you don't have any like frame of reference, the last time we had a super big plague outbreak, like this one was what back in 1918, there was over 100 years ago. So obviously, there aren't very many people alive with me, who were old enough to remember that and be able to offer words of wisdom and advice. So I mean, you can't really fault they're doing the best they can with what they have. So if you've never experienced something like this in your life, obviously there's going to be a serious learning curve there. Now knocking on wood, let's say this happens again in like 510 years, obviously, they're going to be a lot more prepared, because we just did it now. So I think, yeah, there could have been improvement in the way they handled it. But if you don't really have any better alternative for what they should have done, then can't really complain about the response they had to it.

**SA 28:20**

**And do you have any thoughts on how local state or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently?**

AP 28:29

On a federal level, I mean, I don't hate Trump. But I do wish she had actually gotten a little more science classes a little bit. Listen to your scientists, they they went to school to get the degrees listen to them. So I kind of wish, you know, every scary movie starts with the scientists being ignored their doom and gloom and like, this is bad idea. And then they do it anyway. And they're like, Oh, yeah, we should listen to that guy. I don't know why that's a lesson we can't seem to learn. Sometimes scary movies do have a positive life lesson for you. So on all levels, I think, you know, you have all these experts who recognize that they're experts, and then when they try to give you advice, I think maybe you don't have to necessarily agree with it right away, but at least you know, take the time to consider that what they're saying might be true.

**SA 29:22**

**So moving on to the future. How's your experience transformed? how you think about your family, friends and community and in what ways?**

AP 29:32

Um, I think overall, everybody's going to kind of they're not going to take them for as granted as much like before, like, Oh, yeah, my friends are there. You know, they're a phone call away or they're just a short five minute ride down the street. I can go and knock on their door and there they are. But now, yeah, they're there but you can't really interact with them the same way. And the same with like your family members like next time grandma invites you over for family.

Dinner, you're going to make sure you go, because that might be the last time in a long while or ever that you do get to have family dinner at Grandma's. So I think, or at least for me anyway, you're going to cherish those moments, once you get to have them again a little bit more than you did before, because that might be the last one you get to have. And I think having seen on the news, all the people who did pass away from it, it kind of reminds you that every day is not guaranteed. So if you have the opportunity and you want to take it, then you definitely should.

**SA 30:34**

**And how does this pandemic compared to other big events that have happened in your lifetime?**

AP 30:40

Well, thankfully, this is the only pandemic I've ever had to live through. Hopefully the last big knock on wood person, not necessarily superstitious, but sometimes you just don't want to risk it, you know. I'm so I guess it's kind of hard to compare a pandemic to anything else because it's kind of a category unto itself. And the only other big milestones is when I graduated from college with my undergrad degree, but that was a positive thing. That was something you look forward to not something you dread, waking up to every day. So hopefully, this is a one and done kind of situation. But I will always have a little thing a sanitizer in my pocket from now on because you never know.

**SA 31:25**

**And what can you imagine your life being like in a year?**

AP 31:29

Oh, I hope it's back to our regular normal. I was planning a big trip for the end of the year. And now I can't go. So I'm hoping that this time next year, everything. I don't like the term new normal, because everything is the new normal until you know it becomes the next new normal shows up. So I'm hoping things go back to being a little more carefree. I hope that this time next year, we're not all side eyeing our neighbors like when was the last time you washed your hands? It did concern me a little bit that people you had to teach them how to wash their hands, like what were you doing before? So I'm hoping that this time next year, all the lessons that we're learning now, we've retained and then I can you know, go back to in person visits and traveling and I miss going to the movies. I hope this time next year, I'm sitting in a movie theater with a big bucket of popcorn, and a soda and a really awesome movie that I'm watching.

**SA 32:28**

**As a final question, knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals communities or governments need to keep in mind for the future?**

AP 32:39

Whoa, good one. Say first and foremost, I would say we're all human. Not everybody is going to do everything perfectly all the time. As long as they're putting in the effort, you know, to keep their distance and wear their mask. Just remember that yes, you are an individual and that's important, but also so is the community. Like if you can do something to help out someone else you should so I'm kind of hoping that this experience I guess we can call it. It kind of reminds people like it's not just you versus everyone else it's us together not really against anybody but just us together and you start thinking like well I don't have to wear a mask because I'm not sick. Well, you're also part of a community and not everybody has the same ability to stay well that you do some hoping this time in the future or for now on the kind of remember that community is a thing that's important. And it's not just you versus everybody but all of us together as a team.

**SA 33:55**

**Is there anything you'd like to add? covered?**

AP 34:01

COVID sucks! No, just kidding. Um, No, I think we've pretty much covered the gist of it.

**SA 34:10**

**Great! Well, I want to thank you for taking the time to do this interview with me.**

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