

Transcript of Oral History Interview with David Mavro

Interviewee: David Mavro

Interviewer: Andy Townsend

Date: 04/17/2020

Location (Interviewee): Manhattan Beach, California

Location (Interviewer): Indianapolis, Indiana

Transcriber: This transcript has been provided by Otter.AI with a 2nd pass for accuracy and formatting provided by Bryan Paintiff, HST580 intern, at ASU.

Abstract: David Mavro is a video producer and owns a small video production company. David begins the interview describing how his community is largely affluent and has the impression that these people act as if they are immune to the safety rules and regulations as they do not often follow them. David then talks about how the community is about half republican, but that the republicans seem to be more arrogant in regard to following the rules. Next David brings up how he has lost at least five jobs related to his company as video shooting requires travel and that is not allowed. Also David brings up how the production company has not been able to pay people that worked for it and that they are having a tougher time. Then David talks about how the hardest part about being home all the time during the lockdown is just making sure to get off the laptop, David discusses how it is easy for him to get locked into things and that that is not healthy.

Andy Townsend 00:00

All right. And I think it's recording. Do you have anything on your screen indicating that it's recording? Should say recording in the upper left or upper right.

David Mavro 00:13

I guess? Yeah. Yeah.

Andy Townsend 00:16

All right. Here we go. So the day is April the 17th. And it is 1:45 Eastern Standard Time and 10:45 Pacific time. Why don't you introduce yourself? Give us your name and go ahead and spell it if you would for the transcriber.

David Mavro 00:47

My name is David Mavro. David, M as in marry, A, V as in victor, R, O.

Andy Townsend 00:55

okay. Great. And my name is Andy Townsend. I am in Indianapolis at the moment. David, where are you? David, where are you located now?

David Mavro 01:11

Oh, I'm on this space station that keeps freezing. I'm in Manhattan Beach, California.

Andy Townsend 01:19

Okay.

David Mavro 01:20

Just outside Los Angeles.

Andy Townsend 01:22

Great. So what are you doing now on a day to day basis? How do you fill your day?

David Mavro 01:33

Well, I am going through my archives of 20 years of footage. I've gone as far back as 91. I think that's farther than that. And just editing a few things together from that footage I've digitized and either putting it up on YouTube that I've always wanted to do, or sending it to the people in the videos if I have clips of them from back in the day, because that's where it all that's where all my whole career has started, now, I've always wanted to do that. Because without that, without those guys, I wouldn't I wouldn't of had the practice.

Andy Townsend 02:16

and what is it that you do?

David Mavro 02:21

I'm a video producer, I own a small video production company. And we do everything from simple one man shoots to full on commercial shoots.

Andy Townsend 02:39

Okay,

David Mavro 02:40

And that's post production and as well.

Andy Townsend 02:43

So you're catching up on some work projects that you've been wanting to do for a long time and now you don't have any excuse to avoid them right?

David Mavro 02:52

Yeah, yeah they're more personal it's more like I'm I've always held the camera and I'm just lucky but I got to do it for a living. So there's some stuff from back in the day where now the editing software's so great, going through like, you know, high eight, like for NTSC like mini DVDs and stuff is cake right now is so fun to just cut through it really fast and send it off almost by iPhone. A lot of times just through the iPhone. Anyway, I digress.

Andy Townsend 03:24

Well you don't fill your day completely with that. What else do you do? Do you how are you getting exercise or are you? Do you live with anybody?

David Mavro 03:33

[inaudible] is a, yeah [inaudible]

Andy Townsend 04:04

David seems to have frozen. Alright, here we go. All right so we're, we got interrupted there and we're starting I'm gonna pick up right where we left off. So the last thing I asked you was in addition to working on your, your video projects, what other kinds of things do you do to occupy your day?

David Mavro 04:33

Well, I've been kind of same thing I'd said, I have way last year was I wasn't able to focus on my library and keeping it in order and I get from that and year before really two years. So I have like, man 100 terabytes of like, you, things that needed to be put in order. And that's like, just archiving, really, and adding my own library, and I guess it's but it's very satisfying to have the time to do it. But it takes time. And that's that.

Andy Townsend 05:20

Yeah, I feel ya. So over there in Manhattan Beach, are you able to like, get out of the house? What are your you know is there anything going on in the community? What's it like in your community? How are they responding to the corona pandemic?

David Mavro 05:39

Well, we're, we're very fortunate in the place I've been living here, almost 10 years, this place is very isolated, as as far as the rest of the neighbors, but we have two balconies, we're like on the second floor, and we can yell at people. If people don't come over, we can talk to them if they come by, and it's nice and airy. That's that's where we live. The community itself is a weird one because it seems like we're a little biased here. But it seems like the people with the more it's very affluent, Manhattan Beach now. And we are not, by any means close to as affluent, even if we were affluent we wouldn't look affluent next to the people here. And it seems like the more money they have, the less they care about social distancing, or just being respectful, like, you know, just, they're very loose about it. So they basically

they had to shut down, we have a really popular beach strand, and bikepath. And beach for that matter. And they had to shut it all down because nobody was paying attention to it. And so everybody was just gathering so they finally shut it down. There's a lot of upset locals. They're like, this is not fair. And then there's people maybe like us, that are like, it's not fair if you get a sick when you're, you know, my my landlord, for instance, just knocked on my door. And I didn't know it was him. And asked me the most trivial question. And I'm like, hey, man, you're not wearing a mask, get back. You know, like, like, right up here on me. I don't know if that answers your question. But it just seems like, everything's closed. You can go into coffee shops, but coffee has served at the door, types of things like that. But then the people tend to congregate and get close. And it's like, I'm not going out like that for a coffee.

Andy Townsend 07:57

So if I, if I understand you correctly, what you're saying is, is that people in your neighborhood will still go out into public. There are some places that they can't go because they've been closed down. But you're concerned because they're still talking to each other too close and congregating and socializing in that way. I don't want to put words in your mouth. Is that what you mean?

David Mavro 08:24

Yeah, there's there's plenty of congregating going on what a lot of the younger people here and actually the seems like a lot of the older, old money here are just like we've been through, way worse than this why are we been shut down. You know. I don't because I don't think it's really affected people. Maybe it hasn't affected people here as badly. That's the thing about Los Angeles is it's so spread out. It's so, yeah spread out. And, for instance, my my girlfriend who's from New Jersey, and you know, we both were on the east coast all the time, those places have been hit really hard, because it's dense. And we all we know, I mean, we know a couple I know a couple people, but they were working in New York. And so they recovered but it was like, they have no idea how they got it, you know? And they and and we know how it went, how it went for them and it was not cool. To say the least.

Andy Townsend 09:34

How would you describe the attitude of the people maybe attitudes, not the right word? The the political leanings that they have what I guess what I'm wondering without trying to frame this question in such a way that leads you to anything, is how would you describe the you know, the neighborhood in terms of conservative versus liberal? Or do you have any opinion of that? Are people in your neighborhood are there more Democrats or Republicans? How did they lean? Do you, do you find any connection to that with their wealth and their attitude towards the Corona? That's where I'm going.

David Mavro 10:28

Yeah, yeah. That it's it's pretty conservative out here. Republican leaning, probably wh- now we live in Los Angeles County, Orange County is just south of us, and it's much more Republican. But I feel like I feel like it's 50/50 here. It just seems like the Republicans are probably 60/40 Republican. Just seems like that the Republican, the conservatives that are here are a little more. This is, just a, what do you call

it? Just my thoughts on it that little bit more arrogant because they can be. They don't have to worry about it. So. Very, it's, it's a weird space here, because it's not it doesn't feel like real life. When you're when you're here. It's like a weird bubble. I don't know if that answered your question.

Andy Townsend 11:39

Yeah, no, that's good. That's where I was going. Can you if you can try to think back to when you first became aware of the COVID 19 virus and think about how did you learn about it? What was your feeling towards it? And and how did that change over time for you?

David Mavro 12:08

First learned about it in beginning of February if I recall, correctly, and and then I, the way it's spread in China, the way I was reading it, it rang a bell from the past, the SARS and things like that, but more from history, and more from the warnings that we've that I've read about in the past six years. And it just seemed like if China has resources and everyplace around there, and if they can't shut it down fast, there's something up. And if they've got that denser population, and they can and they couldn't handle it, then in our current state right now, where we seem to be in a bit of a gap as far as organizational, even as the State Department oversees it's, it's it was worrying. No, nobody's ready for that here and the, the economies kind of fluffed up already. And that definitely the infrastructure for, that's the wrong word, for our healthcare system is terrible. On a first hand basis, so I luckily, my my lady feels the same way, much more vigilantly actually. And she's put a kibosh on everything real fast. And so she's yeah, I don't know if I answered it. I went through the whole but yeah, that's February and then just from you know, I like to overanalyze things I like to think I do. And it just seemed like watching the progression of it over there was not a good model for the rest of us. Not a good, It didn't look good for us if you don't take care of things quickly, like we've seen, maybe the smaller countries around China did. So even even Thailand, Vietnam. Had a much better handle on it.

Andy Townsend 14:32

What issues have most concern you about the pandemic? What keeps you up at night?

David Mavro 14:45

That what might be holding, what might be safe to touch. That's scary. That's that's about it. And then you don't want to catch that. And on the other side income, you don't want to go broker or broke. And and then I, I'll do three and then on the other side is like human nature, and I've seen glimpses of this a little bit of just going in and going out, like when people say there's no traffic or whatever, it's everybody staying home it is it is much lighter, but it seems like to us that people are more on edge and making mistakes, like driving or especially driving where they're going too fast, or they're not looking where they're going, because everybody's a little bit on edge. A lot more on edge and usual. So those three things, I think, catching it, you know, income, and just screwing up on something else, it'll get you in the hospital.

Andy Townsend 16:01

So speaking of income, let's transition a little bit. How has COVID affected your job and how?

David Mavro 16:11

oh, it's completely stopped everything. If I want to, there's, there's because everything I do is out in the I either travel to go there. Which is an airplane, or, and then on top of that I'm always with a person, like one on one at least or one on 10 with a camera. So that stuff's not happening. And that's fine right now. But that's that's my job. And I could very well start editing if I need to. But that's the only thing I could I'm seeing my friends do this actually need it.

Andy Townsend 17:00

How, how many gigs would you say you've lost so far? How many, how many jobs do you think you've maybe lost so far? That you know.

David Mavro 17:15

let's see average, average I have one. One a month, or one that lasts two months, so. I'm gonna man we finished a job right at the end of this thing, it was so close. Yeah, I probably lost, still, I know I've lost, I can count them, five.

Andy Townsend 17:40

Yeah. Now you you've pretty much work for yourself. Right? So your employment status hasn't really changed much. Right?

David Mavro 17:52

What was the status?

Andy Townsend 17:54

Yeah. I mean, your your employment status is the same because you work for yourself, you know, right?

David Mavro 17:59

Yeah, I'm contracted. So yeah, it's the same. It's the same, I would say. I would say unemployed, but I don't think that's technically correct.

Andy Townsend 18:11

Well, how many like, you have people that you probably hired to do your jobs? How has it affected them?

David Mavro 18:20

Well, there's, in fact there is, I have, the last shoot I was on, I that I, my production company, produced. I still owe three people money, because I'm waiting for money from the bigger company that hired me.

And so, they're being very patient. You know, because they, but it's affecting them because I owe you know, one guy 1500, another guy three.

Andy Townsend 18:51

Yeah,

David Mavro 18:51

And that's not fun to see in your bank account and be like, I can't keep up. But but it's you don't you don't think about that when it's a day to day. It's like that's my budget sending it out. There's nothing coming in man. You know, so, but those guys, there's nothing coming in for them. They got kids they got

Andy Townsend 19:12

Yeah,

David Mavro 19:12

Same deal, man. And they got less, they've had less work for me. So I can't wait to take care of that. But that's that's how it's affecting them. Like they're not getting paid. They're getting treated worse too because a lot of a few friends were on productions that just ceased paying period. So like Netflix did that all the way around for all their productions. Yeah, so.

Andy Townsend 19:45

How is how are things within your household with your with your lady and so forth? And as has this really affected how you guys go through your day to day stuff? I mean in terms of within In your house?

David Mavro 20:00

[inaudible] household, how does this affect your household?

Andy Townsend 20:06

Yeah, like I mean, in some households, people are actually trying to social distance between husband and wife, you know, things like that. My household hasn't changed at all because I live alone except I have a lot more toilet paper and water stack up in the corner.

David Mavro 20:26

Yeah.

Andy Townsend 20:27

Is it the same for you?

David Mavro 20:31

Yeah, pretty much we're like, me and her, are like one unit. So we know exactly where we've been before this. We as long as we know we're together. We're not. It's, we're okay. But we, you know, we, I just made a trip to the grocery store yesterday morning, which I haven't gone into one in- I tried to go in one a week ago and it was just too sketchy, too many people bouncing on each other. So I finally grabbed like two, they had plenty of toilet paper and no alcohol. So I grabbed that, alcohol like as in cleaning alcohol. So I was able to grab that yesterday. So really, that was the biggest concern that we're about to run out of toilet paper. And we're kind of being lazy about it. Now we got it. We order our food we've been cooking. Together. She's a great cook, and I'm a great reheater. So we we are we're doing good actually. It's a little, it's a little stressful being around each other all the time. But we are really weirdly glued to hip already. So I think we're more prepared for this than a lot of couples.

Andy Townsend 21:45

What about how it's affected the way you interact with friends and family?

David Mavro 21:51

Yeah, that's, that's part of the video thing, too. I just want to make sure I have time to not have time to do it to reach out to people I haven't spoken to in a while, but not just a hey, but like, hey, I've had this shot of you or this footage of you. So it's a nice excuse to do that.

Andy Townsend 22:08

Yeah,

David Mavro 22:09

I feel like people are more, for the most part, warmer. Now. There's a few there's few people that really you can almost watch them on social media deteriorate, but they're they close off. And it's, you gotta watch out for those people. Because they just say hi. You know, like, I tend to do that on a normal day. So when I see other people do it, I can I can feel like I can see it quicker. And I'm like, you're doing you're doing what I do, but it's not right. It's not like you at all.

Andy Townsend 22:44

What do you what do you think, like, can you nail down what like the biggest change or challenge has been for you?

David Mavro 22:55

At home?

Andy Townsend 22:58

yeah.

David Mavro 23:03

Making sure I get up and do something else. You know, like because I'll be sitting in a laptop and luckily, my roommate is very cool with it and she likes to hear it, she says she likes it she likes it because she likes to relax and stuff, but i mean you know I'll get locked into that. And it's not good for my brain and it's not good for us. And I just have to make sure and get up and do something else. So that's I have a tendency to lock into things and block everything out. And that's the thing I got to watch out for. I think that answers it.

Andy Townsend 23:39

Yeah. No, that's good. Um, what are you doing anything different in terms of like recreational activities? I mean, have you guys started a puzzle or anything to pass the time? You're you're an athlete, I mean, what are you doing to exercise? You know? I said, as a former athlete, you must be you know, used to exercising and how has that changed for you? What are you doing? You got a stationary bike? What are you up to?

David Mavro 24:18

No, no, we we go out late at night. Almost every night we go. She doesn't run much less than five miles at a clip. So I go ride with her on my bike. And so that's at least I'm getting an exercise sometimes. We've got like a empty garage parking below us. And I can fiddle around on my bike down there but I haven't been doing that enough. I've we've been playing pushup games. Say if you're watching something and someone says Democrat, you have to do 10 Push ups, something like that you know or you know.

Andy Townsend 24:59

That's a healthy alternative to what college students do, yeah.

David Mavro 25:03

Yeah, yeah. So. But yeah, a lot of reading really, a lot of- that's the other thing I've been doing side editing really is reading. So and just keep in contact with my two half brothers are we're, we've become much closer over the years. But we're so far apart ones in Thailand, the other ones in St. Petersburg, Florida. But we get on our group what's apps and has nothing to do with physical activity. But what I'm saying is not much. We would like to do more.

Andy Townsend 25:49

Right. How do you think that, have you noticed the way people around you are responding? I mean, you mentioned that a little bit, I guess you said some people are closing down. Some people aren't worried about it. Any other thoughts of how people are responding? Or, or how maybe other people's views have evolved in the last, you know, month or two?

David Mavro 26:19

Oh, yeah, we've, we've watched people go from blowing it off to full on, you know, taking it very seriously. So that's good. And I feel like we do have a large medical population, and that's in the medical field here. And I think that has a lot to do with it. And people started off a little slow with it, maybe not the medical but the locals. And then sure enough, after, after you start seeing the numbers, and people started hearing about things around here, or just in LA, and or you have friends back east, then you're like, let's, let's take this seriously so.

Andy Townsend 27:03

Are people in your neighborhood wearing masks?

David Mavro 27:07

Yes. Almost almost everybody now save my landlords and, and in a few other people, but it's you know, it's in there you see some it's probably 75%, though. It's good now.

Andy Townsend 27:28

Um, have- do you know of anybody who's gotten sick?

David Mavro 27:30

We'll see how that holds up, I feel like- I do. Yeah. One not so close anymore. But the other one I worked with every day for 10 years. And he was working in New York. And casually brought it up on his social media. He's not a private accountant. Like, whoa. But it was it was rough. You know, he didn't have to get on a ventilator. But he he was down for the count for man a month, I guess.

Andy Townsend 28:05

Yeah,

David Mavro 28:06

very bad.

Andy Townsend 28:07

That's exactly my my situation that my close friend, my business partner, the guy do most of my stuff with. He came down with it. Like four days after we did a shoot he told me he was sick, which freaked me out. And and then it took him about a month before he recovered. He was in a bad way. So he still hasn't got his taste back yet.

David Mavro 28:33

Wow.

Andy Townsend 28:34

Crazy.

David Mavro 28:36

Yeah, that's the problem. People will think a month it's hard to say it like that because they say it's a month. That's like Well, yeah, that's how long flu took or you know, bad cold or bronchial infection, something like that. But it's you it's much worse than that.

Andy Townsend 28:54

What what's been your primary-

Andy Townsend 28:56

I think people-

Andy Townsend 28:57

go ahead finish your thought.

David Mavro 29:00

it would help if people actually saw people need to see it before they can believe and I think if people see what it does to you, and you know, then it would help people. That's that's all w-

Andy Townsend 29:15

I was gonna ask where are you getting your news?

David Mavro 29:22

The, Google, I'll search and then I'll get the hell away from what it says I might think I want to see then I'm just staying in a bubble. So as CNN though, because man everybody's so all over the place but CNN, NBC, although sometimes they go a little bit overboard. I just someplace where I can get clean fact, you know, like just and then I've got my own views on things. I don't need anybody to push me. But I just want to start off from a baseline that's like, just just the facts. So, a lot of times, that's CNN, and I've been, I've been watching after the fact that, you know, like some of the live briefings, just so I stay in tune with what people are seeing, you know, what I mean? So, what, when, when that President is saying things I, I want to hear, hear, it's through my ears and, and try to hear it through their ears. And just, I just tried to take the most raw thing, so people, I understand where people are coming from, because it's, it's tough. Not everybody's gonna think, you know, everybody's different, as they say, so just trying to find the most clean thing, and then work from that, and then see how people are reacting. And a lot of times, it's Twitter, too, which is a scary place, if you don't.

Andy Townsend 31:10

Well, are there any issues that you think are important that aren't being covered well? Or do you notice that one news source is covering something completely differently than another that you find odd?

David Mavro 31:27

I think overall, the problem I see is the constant distractions. Oh, lost you.

Andy Townsend 31:41

Yeah, like, like what, for example?

David Mavro 31:44

Okay yeah, [inaudible] lost ya but the on, say on a right leaning side or left leaning side, they if they tend to get caught up in distractions, you know, these whether, you know, the President's saying he's a, like today, liberate Minnesota liber-, all this stuff, it's like they don't, it's, it's disappointing to have to, that they give that any credence and they're not catching the fact that we do need modern healthcare. And to chase that, and to not get caught up and. I just see a lot of things, a lot of tripping over little things that don't matter. There's, and trying and thinking a lot of people coming in and thinking they're gonna change, things like that, when it needs to start from the bottom. So when these things come in, and, you know, distract you, whether it's the president or the Democrats, the Democratic side saying, trying to get their nominee, it's, you're forgetting like that it's a country. We're all in this together. Supposedly. We need to bring that back. That's, that's what bugs me.

Andy Townsend 33:15

Do you, I'm curious to know how you think that government leaders or you know, local, municipal leaders, how you think that they're doing, like, let's let's start since you brought up the President that let's start at the federal level, and compare that to how local leaders are handling it in your eyes?

David Mavro 33:41

I yeah, at the top, I haven't been able to take him seriously, as a human. So I can't, but what's what's I try my darndest not to listen to him because I feel like it's a little bit, just hearing the voice will drive me crazy.

Andy Townsend 34:02

And just to be clear

David Mavro 34:04

what's interesting-

Andy Townsend 34:05

Just to be clear, you are talking about President Trump, correct?

David Mavro 34:08

Yeah. That's President Trump. He's just, let's, see, putting it simply he's not a very good communicator. Doesn't it, so it's, I can't I can't listen to him. But the what's interesting about this whole thing is our let's

just stay with California and we're, my my ladies from the New Jersey, New York region. So listening to their leaders is it's been great, California. Our you know, and then our, our mayor in LA and it's been very, very good and very, what you want in a leader like very direct and It just makes you feel like there's somebody in charge, you know, and they're taking blame that they have to and there's telling, everybody's gonna make a mistake. And it's, there's definitely mistakes made where this did not have to blow up. And it's, they're seeing those mistakes that other people made or they made themselves and they're saying that that's not working. So we're going to do this and you guys need to help and let's do this together. As opposed to when at the top and with the president where you're, you're just hearing a lot of somebody else. I'm stuck with this. That's it feels like it's a broken record. So you're like, that's not helping us, man you know. So.

Andy Townsend 35:40

do you think, do you find this experience transformative in any way? Are you do you think you'll be transformed? Or, and then do you think other people, the community will be transformed? For example, people are talking about, hey, you know, let's stop shaking hands as part of our cultural greeting, you know, that that would be a transformative change, you know, for Americans. Are there any are any transformative things that you think you're gonna take away after this blows over?

David Mavro 36:15

Were you saying people are saying let's stop what? You cut off right there.

Andy Townsend 36:20

Shaking hands.

David Mavro 36:22

Oh, yeah. That's not that's, that's interesting. The first few times that happened, when it started from people that I would stop me from doing it. And that made me think like, oh, man, you're right. And that's great, because but I because I don't think that's coming back. It's not for me. Not, not until we can prove it. I've had plenty of handshakes, I can do them for a while. So I think it is transformative, in that people will take take their well being and other people's well being more seriously. But my [inaudible] you didn't ask. But my fear is weirdly if this, well, it'll fix itself wont it? If people if it ends too soon, then people are gonna forget, like they always do. And we're gonna be there again. But I think what's. What I'm afraid of what's different with this is people are going to let up and ease up, and it's going to come right back. And then unfortunately, that's the way they're going to remember it, too. That's what's going to transform people right now. I think it's like novel. And it's like, you know, a lot of people are saying worries me a little bit. Because they don't know what's happening to someone else. But until it hits them twice, i feel like. It's not it's, it's transformative for me. But I don't I don't know about the rest of the people. I hope so. But I think it's going to take a couple a one two punch.

Andy Townsend 38:01

Um, is there anything else that maybe you want to say that I didn't touch on? On how, how, on how this pandemic has affected you and the people around, you?

David Mavro 38:19

No, I just, I it's very idealistic, but I just hope that that helps people to think about other people's situations, before thinking about their own, try to open some people's minds that you're not going to get everybody. Maybe you don't want everybody. But the strategy, hopefully, you know, it's like a domino effect that we're seeing, like, we don't have to have this lack of healthcare, we don't, we don't, we have the ability, you know, with all of these loans to do better things with it. To make things easier, we could actually have leadership that was just, we could have leadership that would also have room to be shady on the side, if they want to, but they could be helping us out too you know, like, it's night doesn't have to be a full on smash and grab all the time and I just hope people see what's happening with that. And let's not do this again. You know, I think a lot of people lost their parents, and you know, a lot of close loved ones, and I think they're gonna remember that, and so let's not do that again.

Andy Townsend 39:45

All right. Well, we're done with the oral history. Thank you very much for participating.

David Mavro 39:51

Thank you.

Andy Townsend 39:52

All right. I'm going to stop recording