**Transcript of Interview with Kevin Secker by Glenn Walborn**

**Interviewee:** Kevin Secker

**Interviewer:** Glenn Walborn

**Date:** 05/26/2020

**Location (Interviewee):**

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Abstract:** University of Wisconsin Eu Clair student, Glenn Walborn interviewed Tyson factory security worker Kevin Secker. In this interview Secker discusses how the pandemic has impacted his life. Secker is also a student and discusses how his classes have changed to accommodate online learning. Also discussed is Seckers new job as a plant security guard for Tyson factory in New London, Wisconsin. He discusses the changes that factory workers had to adhere to and their reaction to all those changes. He also discusses his opinions on government response to the pandemic and skepticism he experienced in the factory. He briefly discusses conspiracy theories he has heard and remedies that some factory workers have been sharing. Secker finished off the interview with hopes for the future and lessons he hopes we as a society have learned.

**Glenn Walborn** 00:03

So who are you? And what do you do?

**Kevin Secker** 00:07

My name is Kevin Secker, I am a security guard at fourth, [inaudible] at Tyson Foods.

**Glenn Walborn** 00:17

Alright, so how is the pandemic affected your life?

**Kevin Secker** 00:23

Personally, it's just kept me at home a lot. And especially the plants put in a number of measures to kind of restrict entry into the plant and help monitor the spread of the virus. And they've been vocal stuff that's for [inaudible] a lot of extra paperwork at work.

**Glenn Walborn** 00:50

So you recently got a new job. So was that harder to get to do due to the virus? Or was that more pre planned?

**Kevin Secker** 00:58

Yeah, I actually think that that it was contingent on me being able to get in for a drug test. And they sit there with the hospital team the way it is, they were unsure about how that wouldn't go. Thankfully, occupational health and everything like that was separate from the actual office.

**Glenn Walborn** 01:15

Right, so moving on to your college career. So what let's just start with just a background information, what classes were you're taking this semester,

**Kevin Secker** 01:25

This semester, I was taking pretty late load, I was taking college algebra and trigonometry with applications. And then psychology one on one.

**Glenn Walborn** 01:39

So I should just say that you're taking them at Fox Valley Technical College. So how was taking those classes changed? Since the outbreak?

**Kevin Secker** 01:50

What was my math class, it was mainly already an online class, we just had to be there in person to get participation and attendance. Psychology class has been the one that's been most affected by everything because we were an online, not online lecture class. So we no longer get participation points. There's no longer that reinforcement. We've just kind of been putting them into our own. And just recently, we've been doing online lectures on Reddit using a video chat.

**Glenn Walborn** 02:22

So how do you receive word that these classes would be changing? And do you remember what the timeline was, I assume this was in March that they changed to online only.

**Kevin Secker** 02:34

It was early March. It was partially via email. I've got a few apps on my phone that notify me. And then one trip in absence you go to class that was cut short.

**Glenn Walborn** 02:49

What was the your last impact Person class like?

**Kevin Secker** 02:52

It was actually, it was my psychology class. And it was business as usual. We didn't really talk about the virus we just focied on things in psychology

**Glenn Walborn** 03:07

how has going online affected your performance in these classes?

**Kevin Secker** 03:13

I've become more aggressive instead of having that class time where I even listen to the rest of your work. And my assignment is to get that stuff done and that kind of push it to the side.

**Glenn Walborn** 03:30

So how has any personal relationships that you've had with either professors or other students who have not been affected by the virus.

**Kevin Secker** 03:40

Um, didn't really have much socialization in my math class. I have definitely. I felt less able to ask my math professors questions on problems. And then psychology over there is the most sense to make friends but that was cut short by everything.

**Glenn Walborn** 04:06

So moving on to the effects of your workplace, how has the pandemic affected the day to day functions of your workplace?

**Kevin Secker** 04:15

With Tyson Foods? When truckers come in for the first time, I think we have a series of questions related to different viruses roughly, roughly determine if they have the virus or could be in a medical carrier. That's for agriculture, we contractors. Visitors, we have to ask them their questions their their temp is taken before they go in. And yeah, there's just we know as security have to keep our eyes out for symptom, we have to enforce the facemask policies have given anybody on site that wear face masks and so we can't just wear a scarf it has to be a face masks disposable one you know most people are walking

**Glenn Walborn** 05:12

So you reusing those masks or is it just like one go and throw away?

**Kevin Secker** 05:17

Yup, like typically with me being done in checking truckers I have almost no contact with people. So I don't want to face as much as I'm supposed to but up top of things checking contractors DMS and everything like that they wear a face mask at least once per shift.

**Glenn Walborn** 05:44

So what do you feel, how was it like to go to work now?

**Kevin Secker** 05:51

it's just more of a hassle because because I can come through a number of stages with the Coronavirus support [inaudible] for a tent to [inaudible] is that they can take temps outside the factory virus will be attached to the front door that was almost immediately vetoed is still in the parking lot though. It was initially we have a waiting area behind security that's where they were taking temps and now they've set up a cameras to measure temperature down the hall turnstiles so my daily routine is I come into work and got myself I got to face mask so halfway down the hallway give me a thumbs up and we do about faces and go back that's about

**Glenn Walborn** 06:44

So why why was the use of this tent vetoed?

**Kevin Secker** 06:49

Apparently it's because nurses thought it was too cold outside even though four space heaters were also provided for this.

**Glenn Walborn** 07:00

So because it was vetoed they just decided to move further and further inside so right?

**Kevin Secker** 07:05

Yup, to try to get less and less people involved in things started out with there was gonna be four nurses out of the tent and then we had four nurses in waiting rooms they were in close to them and now it's down to one person's approach turns on a blocking way to the corporate door and the waiting room in general and now someone's standing right behind them

**Glenn Walborn** 07:39

So have there been any virus scare so far?

**Kevin Secker** 07:43

There's been a lot of people that they've come in wearing hats their forehead and heated up to oppose the temperature outside we've had a couple of events with the new system with them walking down the hallway. We haven't been posted any errors or anything that definitely whenever you're in the waiting room there's definitely a couple words like you need to ge outside.

**Glenn Walborn** 08:12

Just within your own colleagues that secure a toss and there have been any virus scares?

**Kevin Secker** 08:19

I mean yes and no? Maybe a little bit later on in here. We've got several people who are definitely high risk for the virus and they've had one of them has a heavy smoker so she has a heavy cough already. And she has asthma she's just hacking all day at work. You watch the guys go wide. as shes talking to them, yeah. Theres been a couple of scared but thankfully no ones [inaudible]

**Glenn Walborn** 08:54

you know what? You don't have to be accurate but what would you say to the demographic of your colleagues I have securitas is?

**Kevin Secker** 09:05

Majority late actually retirement age. Past 55, [inaudible] by weight your customers are past retirement [inaudible]

**Glenn Walborn** 09:26

So, do you know how the pandemic has affected the plant in general so how it's affected to Tyson employees?

**Kevin Secker** 09:34

The Tyson employees, they don't have to repeat the whole time. Regularly sanitizing their hands. [inaudible] that way there's not that close and that really just been that. Heavy facemask use, temperatures ebfore you go in [inaudible]

**Glenn Walborn** 10:08

So, what kind of face masks are they using? They have to wear the more formal disposable kind right?

**Kevin Secker** 10:16

Yea, I think its N95, blue masks and they are disposable

**Glenn Walborn** 10:21

And how are they taking temperatures?

**Kevin Secker** 10:24

They started out wihtthe ones that rolls across the forehead. Or can be applied on the temple and now they're using infrared temperature and thermal imaging

**Glenn Walborn** 10:38

So have you heard any rumors or just possibilities at any point in the last few months about the plant plant having to close?

**Kevin Secker** 10:46

No this is, no matter how many scares theyve had [inaudible] inside the plant and Tyson coorprate [inaudible]

**Glenn Walborn** 11:08

So do you think there's been a lot of employees have been staying home out of fear the virus or just been the usual amount of people still showing up to work?

**Kevin Secker** 11:17

I think there's just more people that ride the clock I know. I know it's dry cough from weather. smoking but I don't want to come to work today so I can call.

**Glenn Walborn** 11:38

So, lets segway into that into that picture the poster from a few days ago. So it it said yeah, it said that it will grant a $500 bonus for employees who had been working in April who had no no call no shows plus another another $500 bonus for all those working in May and June under those same circumstances. So in your past experience of working in industry do you think many Tyson employees will actually be eligible for that money?

**Kevin Secker** 12:09

Um the plant just wants people [inaudible] paraoid or they're I'm coming in to work no matter what so I think yeah, there will be a number of people claiming that $500 but they actually you at this time better than I did I just stick to the truth because security does not get any of that

**Glenn Walborn** 12:33

Right so Securitas is not giving any wonderful benefits for those right?

**Glenn Walborn** 12:45

So this is my question I should have asked earlier but do you know why? This Tyson plant hasn't been featured in the news for having just an exponential amount of cases like the Tyson plants in Green Bay.

**Kevin Secker** 13:01

I think it's just because you [inaudible] is not a high traffic area. As we plant, I was aware of [inaudible] and they've been [inaudible] and the plan is just so far out of the way people mostly from notice

**Glenn Walborn** 13:22

How many cases did you say that we're in New London?

**Kevin Secker** 13:25

Last I checked which was beggining of April two cases in London that was there

**Glenn Walborn** 13:38

As a Tyson employee, are you subjected to the same level of scrutiny as one of these Types employees has to go for all these security precautions?

**Kevin Secker** 13:47

Yep. Yeah. Like this is huge [inaudible] that are on disposal and even though I my employer [inaudible] if I get terminated [inaudible]

**Glenn Walborn** 14:14

So what so are the plans the same for Securitas employees as Tyson employees if what you or someone that you work with gets the virus?

**Kevin Secker** 14:24

If someone in security gets the virus I do not know what the plan is. I don't have someone who's positive. I don't know what I wouldn't do with the [inaudible] shut down but again, that was my manager.

**Glenn Walborn** 14:51

So moving on to just reactions of employees what has been the reaction of Tyson employees to these new measures?

**Kevin Secker** 14:59

Um, theres been some disgruntle, especially when they reinforced, first it came out as anybody who's revered in general would say, I'm not going to wear it. [inaudible] Then once there was potential punishment in place, if your not wearing a mask, then they started wearing it [inaudible] in general, just doing both

**Glenn Walborn** 15:39

Then what has been the reaction of your colleagues to? What's been going on?

**Kevin Secker** 15:45

Anywhere from complaints to indifference. And I'm in the indifference, so.

**Glenn Walborn** 15:50

And so what do you say most people are just acting like usual under this just with more burden, shall we say? Or?

**Kevin Secker** 16:03

For anyone who workd with the employees for them, its mainly business as usual, with some thing on my face.

**Glenn Walborn** 16:16

So what has been your grand perspective of this event?

**Kevin Secker** 16:23

It was poorly handled. We had the opportunity to be prepared better than we were. Yeah.

**Glenn Walborn** 16:35

So that's a little vague. So what? What level? Are you talking about? What just be just your low? Just ties in general are the state government, the federal government,

**Kevin Secker** 16:47

Would you like to reveal who that person is?

**Kevin Secker** 16:47

Federal government, I'm a little upset with how the federal government is handling it especially with the delegation of privileges and opportunities to reopen the state. And then there's something in our current needs to say, you need the economy, we need to open now as opposed to need to take care of our citizens and make sure theyre safe. [inaudible] lockdown, few weeks few month. Particular person in federal government I'm not too please with, with handling this situation?

**Kevin Secker** 17:26

That would be Donald Trump.

**Glenn Walborn** 17:35

So then, actually, before I asked his final question, do you have just any stories you'd like to share about your experiences at Tyson?

**Kevin Secker** 17:49

Were you talking about the truckers?

**Glenn Walborn** 17:51

We can talk about whatever you want to as many stories

**Kevin Secker** 17:54

hey, a couple. There was one lady at the plant, I won't name names or position. But um, she called off for a number of days. And [inaudible] she had a number of symptoms that would have warranted a test with any other doctor. She came back with none. That was one of the things they definitely you were having more symptoms, just for diabetes, to never test. She took off twice for similar health issues over and over again, and still she has not been tested. Another story, there's been a number of truckers claiming to have cures or information found on their dark website where there's little inter site, one gentleman said that onion, silver, aka mercury, could cure the virus. And that every day he took a tablespoon of liquid silver and put it underneath his tougue and then just the gentleman yesterday. And he said this is virus is a biological attack on the United States.

**Glenn Walborn** 19:13

So have you heard any other conspiracy theories that you would like to share?

**Kevin Secker** 19:22

There's been some well this wasnt from someone at Tyson, this was a biologic agreement, sent to Wuhan from South Carolina in a biological weapons plant or then we have a high, high population of Asian workers at the plant. There was a rumor that someone thought it was true that they all went back to Asia for the Chinese New Year and go to these exotic markets and were sleeper cells when they came back to the states. [inaudible] need to Introduce the virus into the population yeah, that's all I can think of [inaudible]

**Glenn Walborn** 20:18

So is there are any other interesting reactions like that that you've noticed aver from Tyson or Securitas employees? Right.

**Kevin Secker** 20:36

It's been a roller coaster story. reaction. I've gotten everything.

**Glenn Walborn** 20:43

Then lastly, is there just anything else that you'd like to say? So anything seemingly random that you'd like to mention or just anything that you might have forgotten from an earlier question?

**Kevin Secker** 20:58

[inaudible] could have been properly handled the proper steps taken months and months ago and even now be handled.

**Glenn Walborn** 21:09

So just for the future generations watching this, do you have any thoughts or opinions on what those steps should have been?

**Kevin Secker** 21:17

It could have been either a more coordinated effort not just in the States but federally globally, having better stockpiles is just not. This isnt a media stunt [inaudible] seriously, and in future anything like this. Take it seriously. serious action and with a united front not little squabble, civil wars breaking out over this. actually take some liberties will probably have to be sacrified [inaudible] its all i got

**Glenn Walborn** 22:12

All right, well, Kevin Secor, thank you for doing this interview.

**Kevin Secker** 22:17

Thank you.