

Oral History Assignment #3 – Oral Interviews for Journal of the Plague Year

Interviewer: Hannah Nelson (HN)

Interviewee: Andrew Chapman (AC)

Interview conducted on September 10, 2020

-START OF INTERVIEW-

HN: What is your full name?

AC: Andrew Chapman.

HN: How old are you?

AC: I'm 22.

HN: Where are you from?

AC: Fishers, Indiana.

HN: Where are you currently?

AC: I'm in Noblesville, Indiana.

HN: What are your preferred pronouns?

AC: Just he, him.

HN: What is your ethnic/racial/cultural background?

AC: Caucasian.

HN: My name is Hannah Nelson, and I'll be conducting this interview today.

HN: Do you consent to having this interview submitted to the COVID-19 Archive, A Journal of the Plague Year?

AC: Yeah, that's fine.

HN: Okay. So, moving on to the actual questions...

HN: Describe what your relationship to food was like before COVID-19.

AC: I'd go out to eat, 3-4 times a week. Mostly places like Chipotle, you know – not like real nice restaurants, but – especially down in Bloomington, I'd go get pizza, stuff like that a lot.

HN: Would you go out with friends a lot, or was it mostly by yourself to get food?

AC: More-so with my roommates.

HN: What is one way that COVID-19 has personally impacted you?

AC: I would say that I eat at home a lot more now. Just because I don't want to do the whole mask thing when I go out, you know.

HN: Yeah, I get that. Do you cook more often now?

AC: Yeah, I would say more-so when I eat at home, I'll cook. I'll still do takeout and heat up store-bought meals, but I mostly like actually eating meals cooked at my home.

HN: With the closing of restaurants and bars, a large portion of the social aspect of eating vanished due to COVID-19. Has this change affected you and if so how? When was the last time you visited a restaurant?

AC: It has affected how much I go out. More-so I eat with my family now, versus with friends. The last time I visited a restaurant and sat down to eat was probably... oh, Saturday night I went out to a restaurant, not far from my house.

HN: What was the restaurant?

AC: It's a local restaurant, it's not a chain, just a little sandwich/burrito place.

HN: Did they make you wear your mask inside until you were seated at the table?

AC: Yeah, but I mean, I didn't really have my mask with me, neither did any of my family members, and we just got a seat outside, so they didn't really care.

HN: Since social spaces that revolved around food are more restricted, what do dates and social gatherings look like for you now?

AC: So, when me and my friends have gone to hangout, we've gone to this place in downtown Carmel, Indiana where it's kind of an open area. It's called Sun King Brewery, and they have a big square basically where people can hangout outside, in this grassy open space, so we've gone there a lot. A lot of outdoor dining, you know, I would say, open places, stuff like that.

HN: So, before COVID hit, what did your hangouts with your friends look like?

AC: We'd probably go to a restaurant and sit down.

HN: Do you guys hang out in each other's homes still?

AC: Last week, I had a buddy of mine come over and I cooked him a meal, but I'm not going over to people's houses as frequently as I used to. Not really cause of Corona, but more so because I'm 22 now, so we usually just meet somewhere in public to hang out instead of hanging around inside our houses.

HN: How has COVID-19 affected your family dynamic regarding food? For example, has quarantine caused you to have dinner more often with your family than you did before? Do you cook together more often?

AC: Definitely, for sure, I'd say my family cooks a lot more now. Especially when Corona first started, my dad was working the grill every night back then, and before he never did that.

HN: So, do you feel like you spend more time with your family since this all started?

AC: Yeah, especially in the earlier days, though that's kind of gone now. Now my parents are back at work, but the first couple of months, yeah, we were together like all the time.

HN: Do you have any siblings you're living with?

AC: Yeah, I have two younger sisters.

HN: Have you had trouble getting any certain types of food since the pandemic started?

AC: First couple weeks, there was a poultry shortage – so, we'd go the store, kind of around the time when everyone was raiding the store, and there was no chicken or meat. So I would say, in that sense, that would've been a difficulty I had, but other than that I haven't really had too many problems.

HN: Yeah, I feel it's less food shortages that people are having issues with, and more so there was the whole toilet paper / paper towel shortage thing. Which I guess people were buying up 'cause they thought it was the end of the world or something.

AC: Yeah, weird stuff like that. I can think of a lot more things I can live without than toilet paper, but...

HN: Yeah, I know. -laughs- definitely.

-END OF INTERVIEW-