

## **Transcript of Interview with Nate Hayner by Jack Halls**

**Interviewee:** Nate Hayner

**Interviewer:** Jack Halls

**Date:** 05/11/2020

**Location (Interviewee):**

**Location (Interviewer):**

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

**Abstract:** The interviewee, Nate Hayner, describes his experience moving from his apartment in New York City to his parent's house in Wisconsin. Initially, Nate believed covid was going to be like SARS and other virus outbreaks and only affect countries overseas, then he saw firsthand how bad it got New York City and moved out. He tells of how him and his parents took it seriously as he quarantined for two weeks in their basement. Next, Nate says that his biggest concern is that the pandemic appears to be driving a wedge in society. He elaborates on this by telling how he got tired of watching the news as it was so absurd and frustrating the inaccurate things they would report. Additionally, he expressed his concern on how people were believing in conspiracy theories and not following safety recommendations from local governments and spreading inaccurate information on social media. Then Nate describes how Covid made it hard to stay in contact with casual friends but easier to contact good friends via technology. He also explained how isolation being hard for extroverts and people who are not able to work and do not have a emergency fund to fall back on. Nate ends the interview by stating how the government should have taken planning for events like this more seriously and that in the future we need to be more prepared, the government should stockpile PPE and medicine and people should have a food stockpile and emergency fund as he feels we will probably see another pandemic in our lifetime.

**Jack Halls 00:01**

Okay, I'm gonna ask you some background questions here. So what is today's date and time?

**Nate Hayner 00:08**

It is May 11. At what 4:41pm Central

**Jack Halls 00:14**

And what is your name?

**Nate Hayner 00:16**

My name is Nate last names Hayner.

**Jack Halls** 00:19

And do you mind sharing some demographic information for the study like race, ethnicity, age and gender?

**Nate Hayner** 00:25

Sure. White male 36 years old

**Jack Halls** 00:31

And what are the primary things you do on a day to day basis like your job, extracurricular activities?

**Nate Hayner** 00:38

Well, I, before this happened, I was working all the time. I worked for a tech startup in New York City. And after, aside from that, you know, I obviously go out with friends a couple times a week and play computer games.

**Jack Halls** 00:58

Yeah. And so you, you were living in New York, but where do you live now?

**Nate Hayner** 01:03

So now I am just outside of Madison, Wisconsin, in my parents basement at 36 years old.

**Jack Halls** 01:10

What's it like to live there?

**Nate Hayner** 01:12

I mean, I'm fairly lucky that we have a large space here and that we have internet. I think if this happened, even 10 years ago, people would have lost their minds.

**Jack Halls** 01:25

I think people may be losing their minds.

**Nate Hayner** 01:28

Yeah. But it's, it's fairly. It's okay here, you know, because while I'm sure I'm getting on their nerves, we have a lot of space. We have a lot of food, we have safety. It's night and day, here being in the suburbs in Wisconsin, as to where it was in New York City when I left. It was actually getting kind of scary there.

**Jack Halls** 01:50

And how long ago did you leave?

**Nate Hayner** 01:53

I think take a look. I left about a month ago. early April is when I got back here.

**Jack Halls** 02:01

And when you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts about it? And have your thoughts changed since then?

**Nate Hayner** 02:09

Oh, absolutely. When I first heard about it, I thought it was going to be exactly like SARS, or the Middle Eastern version, where there'd be a handful of deaths overseas, and we'd hear about it. And then that would be it. Obviously, as time went on, you know, again, it happened quickly. In New York. I was there one day joking with the guy at the bodega, the local corner store where everyone gets everything. I was joking with him one day I said, Oh, you're not worried. He said, Don't worry. Next day, he was wearing gloves. They after that he was wearing a face mask. And the next day I went there, the whole place was closed down. And that's when I knew it was serious, because it's that's where everyone gets their food. It's not like there's, you know, supermarkets everywhere around that area, especially that neighborhood. So now, I think, yeah, I mean, my whole perceptions change. I think it's, you know, it's very real, very, a lot of people are going to suffer not just in terms of the disease itself, but all of the things that come along with it. Economics, isolation, I think all of that takes a heavy toll on people.

**Jack Halls** 03:16

Sure. And what issues have you most concerned about the pandemic?

**Nate Hayner** 03:24

Well, selfishly, my biggest concern returning was potentially being exposed to it, and then perhaps giving it to my parents or someone in Wisconsin, you know, I didn't want to have that happen. So I filed the full quarantine like strict quarantine two weeks in the basement, you know, no contact sort of a thing. Luckily, there was no issues with that. Overall, my biggest concern, aside from just the actual sheer loss of life is kind of the weird split I'm seeing in society, you know, where it seems like, people are either taking it very serious, or they're convinced it's a conspiracy. And there, it seems like they're just, it's driving a wedge, you know.

**Jack Halls** 04:08

And with your employment, how has COVID-19 affected your job?

**Nate Hayner** 04:14

I mean, it's a disaster. To go from, you know, New York City making a ton of money, being you know, going to an office in a suit every day in Midtown, to being in my parents basement, making zoom calls, you know, when we have things going on, but a lot of the work we were doing is dried up. You know,

we were working in staffing, AI based artificial intelligence, staffing, we could find candidates for people. I won't bore you with the details, but no one's hiring right now. It's gone the opposite direction. We're all kind of just sitting on our hands, waiting to see what happens.

**Jack Halls** 04:53

And what concerns you have about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment in the economy more broadly?

**Nate Hayner** 05:03

Well, I think that I'm like, I'm of the opinion there was going to be a recession at some point, regardless of this. I think this obviously made it worse, seeing the unemployment numbers are crazy. You know, what is 34 million unemployed. Even in the Great Recession, it was a fraction of that. I think this will absolutely have lasting impacts on the economy. But I also wonder, when people get back to it, if there is a certain day where everything's back functioning, I think that would be a great time to start a restaurant, because I think everyone's going to be going out to eat, everyone's going to go into the movies. I think it'll be interesting bounce back. But it will affect things long term, I'm sure.

**Jack Halls** 05:44

Yeah, um, how is COVID 19 pandemic affected? The employment of other people, you know? And in what ways? Are your parents still working?

**Nate Hayner** 05:53

They're both retired, luckily, because, you know, that would have been an issue. Especially because, you know, my mother's was a teacher, and my dad was a letter carrier. So he would still be out there in the thick of it, you know, but they recently retired, just as luck would have it. I have some as like, everyone. I know, so many people, friends and family members that are just out of work. Anyone I knew that worked in the service industry is just out of luck, you know, and I still have friends in New York City that are really struggling. I know, there's a gal I know who is from. She's from Russia, right? And she worked as a server and make good money. Well, she's just out of luck now. And she can't get unemployment either. So she basically is here with no family. Nothing, you know, so I sent her 100 bucks or something, but that's not going to last her. So I know a lot of people like that where they're just out of a job, no idea when they'll be back to work.

**Jack Halls** 07:00

Was there any kind of moratorium on on rent or bills in New York?

**Nate Hayner** 07:04

God so this annoys me, there's a moratorium on eviction. So you cannot be evicted for a couple of months. However, what the landlords have done is they're saying, okay, you don't have to pay March or April rent, or may rent. But then on June 1, you're responsible for all three months, that doesn't help

anyone, there's, if you're not working, you can't in a New York rent is at least \$1,000 a month, even for the crappiest apartment. So that means you have to come up with three grand over a time period that you haven't been working at all, it's really crazy to me that they think that's gonna be a good solution. Right?

**Jack Halls 07:48**

How is COVID-19 affected you and your family in your day to day activities?

**Nate Hayner 07:55**

Again, I think I got somewhat lucky, I have a lot of friends who are really losing their minds. Luckily, because of the video games and stuff, I'm kind of okay hanging out in front of the internet. And I still, I'm surrounded by, you know, family members for the first time and, you know, 15 years, I'm back at my, you know, my parents house. So we're okay, it's still novel, it's still like, good to be catching up with family members. But we obviously not doing anything outside of the house whatsoever. We're just kind of stuck here. You know, my mom or dad will go grocery shopping once a week, and fill up. And that's pretty much to extend of it just there's not a lot to do aside from we can go out in the yard. And you know, but we're not they're not even having my dad usually has a weekly get together with his buddies. And they're not even doing that just out of fear of being in too close proximity.

**Jack Halls 08:52**

Right. And I think that area had a lot of cases. Didn't it?

**Nate Hayner 08:57**

so the yeah [inaudible] county area had a lot of cases for Wisconsin, again, you know, it's less than, like 1000 people, whereas in New York, there, they're saying what 20-30% of population probably has been exposed. So, to me, it's feels infinitely safer, but it's still high for the area.

**Jack Halls 09:15**

[inaudible]. How is COVID-19 affected the way that you associate and communicate with your friends and family?

**Nate Hayner 09:23**

Well, all in person stuff is done. You know, I had to see my Happy Birthday sign here. I had to do my birthday over zoom, which was I mean, it would be heartbreaking if everyone wasn't doing things like that right now. You know, the only positive of this is I completely have no FOMO no fear of missing out because I know everyone's in the same boat stuck at home right now.

**Jack Halls 09:48**

Yeah. What have been the biggest challenges that you faced during COVID-19?

**Nate Hayner 09:56**

Well, I mean, the decision to leave New York was a really big one. You know, and it's going to have lasting impacts financially based on just the way we had to kind of leave our work where it was at. The company was was on the cusp of being acquired. So there's all sorts of issues that have come up with this. And we've don't know where it will land. But yeah, the biggest impacts to me personally have just been isolation based, like sitting at home, I'm very lucky that I'm here, like I said, in a house with surrounded by family members. But I have no idea what will happen. I have no idea if this job will, will exist when I'm when I go back, you know?

**Jack Halls** 10:36

did you keep your apartment? Or did you give it off?

**Nate Hayner** 10:39

Yeah, it's still there. I again, I'm fortunate that I can pay, you know, every month I've been keeping up with it. If it was a situation where I had to pay 1200 bucks a month, for the three months, and at the end of it, they'd say, I would have just walked away from it started over somewhere else, because that would be such a huge annoyance, you know. But that's another problem as my stuff is all just sitting there, you know, I flew back, I was the only person on a flight and myself and one stewardess, from direct from New York City to Madison was 80 bucks first class. That's normally a \$550 flight,

**Jack Halls** 11:14

right?

**Nate Hayner** 11:15

It plus, that's just coach. So I couldn't believe it. But I knew things were serious when I was on that plane.

**Jack Halls** 11:22

Right? So what have you your family and friends done for recreation during COVID-19?

**Nate Hayner** 11:31

Aside from beating Red Dead Redemption, the video game, aside from getting into other online video games, last oasis, this remnant like this is going to be important stuff in the future Jack, people are gonna want to know what we were doing. I've been playing a lot of online video games, I basically will work for about four hours a day. And that's not me being lazy. That's, that's stretching it. I really only have two hours of work a day. And then I, at least I can communicate with friends by playing online video games, you know, because we can't go anywhere.

**Jack Halls** 12:04

What other games?

**Nate Hayner** 12:06

Oh, man, we we did some Borderlands The new Borderlands. You know? And I'm telling you if you haven't seen last oasis? You gotta watch it on a YouTube video.

**Jack Halls** 12:18

I haven't played or seen any of these games.

**Nate Hayner** 12:21

Yeah, they're worth checking out. I've been watching a lot of YouTube videos. I got YouTube premium. That's my new entertainment. You know, because television, I'm getting real tired of watching the and I was keeping up on I was watching the Daily President briefing. You know? And I truly don't try not to care one way or the other. Like, I don't think one political party is, is better than the other necessarily. But I can't watch that stuff anymore. Because it's some of the things I hear are so absurd, that it's It's just frustrating.

**Jack Halls** 12:53

So how is the outbreak affected your community that can be either in New York or where you are now?

**Nate Hayner** 13:00

I'll do both just to be safe in New York. I think it's really devastated things. The people that have resources have gotten out. But there's so many more that do not my the neighborhood I'm in Bushwick, Brooklyn is split about, I wouldn't say 50/50. But it's split between low income working families, mainly Hispanic, and white hipsters who like the neighborhood, right? And think it's, it's cool to live there. The majority of those people, especially if they have trust funds or there, they got out of there. But the people that are still there are completely isolated. And I've talked to friends where they're the only person in the building there. And the worst aspect of that, to me, is if you get sick in New York, they tell you not to come into the hospital. So you're just sick as hell with no one to watch over you. I can't think of something that would be more frightening to me. If you're like truly ill, you know,

**Jack Halls** 13:56

how are people around, you're responding to the pandemic?

**Nate Hayner** 14:01

I think the majority of people I know are ready for it to be done. Luckily, I think the 85% of the people I know are taking it seriously, and are willing to wait it out and hopes of flattening the curve or not making things worse. And then there's about 15% of people I know and these are not bad people. They're smart people. They're just for whatever reason. They think this is a conspiracy, and they want it to be done. And they're saying things like wearing masks is counterproductive. How dare they This isn't constitutional. And again, I'm open to hearing those sorts of things. But I think this is an unprecedented event, and we should probably we shouldn't make it worse.

**Jack Halls** 14:51

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

**Nate Hayner** 15:00

I know a lot of people that are married that are losing their minds. You know, it's because they've been stuck indoors with their, their spouses forever. I actually have seen a lot of people shifting, you know, with my mom being a teacher saying, Wow, we should pay teachers, more people who would have never said that four months ago, because they're stuck with their kids all day. And they're like, Wow, this is actually work, you know, I thought they just, you know, had didn't have to do anything. At the same time, there is a small percentage of people I'm seeing, like I said that were smart, normal people that have gone really conspiracy minded. There's someone I know from your neck of the woods from Eau Claire, who was like, more or less normal, who is constantly posting things about Plandemic, the movie and how we must watch it. And this is all a conspiracy. And I even went ahead and checked it out myself, just out of curiosity. And while I don't think things like that should be censored, it's so the points that they make are so farfetched at certain points, that it's just laughable to me. But some people are taking that stuff real seriously. And there's, it seems like there's certain people that are very susceptible to that kind of thinking, they want there to be a big shadow government, the cause of all their problems. And they're going deeper and deeper into that stuff. And they're getting a little nutty about it, you know?

**Jack Halls** 16:22

So self isolation, and flattening the curve, have been the two key ideas that have emerged during the pandemic, how have you, your family and friends community responded to requests to self isolate and flatten the curve?

**Nate Hayner** 16:37

So locally, I mean, we've taken a very serious here, as I mentioned, when I came back from New York, I had two weeks where I was in the basement, people like leaving food on the stairs, you know, no contact, because I didn't want to deal with that. And we really aren't leaving the house except for groceries. So I think we're taking it really seriously here. People in New York who have seen the death firsthand, are taking it crazy seriously. that haven't been said, I am surprised when I go out in the Madison area, and I go outside and I see people just, you know, four or five, six people into a yard just chatting it up on lawn chairs. I don't know if they're taking it as seriously as people in New York City are.

**Jack Halls** 17:20

You didn't see any of that New York?

**Nate Hayner** 17:23



No, when I left people were like, scared, you know, they were staying very far away from each other, literally weaving out of their way, you know, to avoid people. And this is usually such a congested city that. Now granted, that was just my experience. Very briefly, I'm sure there are pockets of people that are out and about causing problems.

**Jack Halls** 17:44

How is COVID-19 changed your relationships with family, friends and community?

**Nate Hayner** 17:54

Well, I think you lose touch with, you know, casual friends that you would see out, you know, maybe a couple of times a month. But it be thanks to the internet, I've been able to stay in touch with my close friends. In a way that wouldn't have been possible even 10 years ago. You know, we've done zoom meetings for birthdays, we have a once a week get together where my my friends will hop on a Zoom meeting and just, you know, talk trash about one another. So it's kind of good that we have that. And I don't think that I personally have really suffered in terms of my my direct relationships yet if this drags on, who knows what all the outcome will be.

**Jack Halls** 18:39

So have you or anybody you know, and gotten sick during the COVID 19?

**Nate Hayner** 18:45

So I do know two people from New York, actually the gal who I was talking about earlier, the Russian that her roommate is sick. They actually think that she might, she might have been sick as well with it. But luckily they had very mild, it presented very mild. You know, they said they felt like they had a bad cold, flu like flu like symptoms for a few days. And then they were they were okay. Other than that, I have a friend whose father passed away, but luckily it hasn't directly impacted me outside of, you know, acquaintances and people I knows ring of friends.

**Jack Halls** 19:26

The person who passed away where were they located?

**Nate Hayner** 19:29

Actually, they were in Canada. That's the craziest thing. They were in Toronto. And I don't I don't think of Toronto as being like a hotspot. But apparently their, you know, their father. Father got sick. They told him to go home and rest. Right so he he's like a guy's guy who doesn't want to be a bother. And within 48 hours, he was having difficulty breathing. And you know, he passed away before they could do anything more. No one really knows how to respond to that. Like, do you rush over there and try to help? What can you do? You know if you're not? You don't have a ventilator? Yeah, I don't usually I don't even I wouldn't even know how to work one of those. If I have one.

**Jack Halls 20:14**

In what ways do you think that it's been affecting people's mental health?

**Nate Hayner 20:20**

Oh, I mean, it's incredible. I think it's, it's fascinating to me that a lot of people I know who were like, really, like strong independent types have actually been hit really hard. You know, I know a lot of people that are like, posting like teary videos on Instagram, about how they can't handle this anymore. And I think they're just extroverts are getting hit so hard people that need that sort of physical contact. Isolation in and of itself is having effects on people. I think the worst effects I've seen are from people who need to make money to like, support their families who can't right now, because not only are you at home isolated, they're just thinking about the money. You know, I mean, I'm very fortunate that I'm, like filthy rich right now. Because otherwise, you know, it would be a problem. That's a joke you look disgusted with. I'm lucky that I was making a lot of money in New York, because if you were sitting at home, thinking about how you're not making money, I could see it being completely psychologically destructive.

**Jack Halls 21:19**

Right? Um, what have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic? Are you like going to the internet or watching TV?

**Nate Hayner 21:29**

So I do watch, I tried to watch the president briefing. I've stopped recently, but I usually watch that every day. Every time I get alert that Cuomo, Governor Cuomo is on. I watched that, because that's kind of a balance to the Trump administration. Again, I have problems with both of them. So I'm not saying like one superior, at least not openly on this video. But in addition to, to that, I use the internet again, you know, I'm watching YouTube videos from to get sort of sources directly, as well as just weird stuff. You know, Reddit, I'm always on Reddit looking up there. The news comes in fast. And honestly, I get alerts. I'm really shocked by the number of alerts I've been getting, it went from like none. So I get Daily Mail, Vanity Fair Wall Street Journal, all sending alerts to my phone, whenever something big happens, I feel fairly well informed.

**Jack Halls 22:25**

And has the way that you've acquired news or the sources that you use? Is that changed at all? Are you still using the same sources? Like before the pandemic? Were you going to YouTube for your to watch videos about things?

**Nate Hayner 22:41**

No. So before the pandemic, I was going YouTube to watch people shoot at Tannerite and blow things up, you know, or building a video game computer or something. Now, I'm actually watching independentish news sources on YouTube. So that's new, for sure.

**Jack Halls** 23:02

Um, what do you think are important issues that the media may or may not be covering?

**Nate Hayner** 23:11

I think that they're covering a lot of, you know, I'm getting a lot of numbers, which is great, actual hard data on where the cases are, things like that. I think that's great. The thing that I don't see covered a lot, and I think it's just by the nature of it is exactly what I'm talking about that sort of wedge that I'm seeing being driven, you know, I wish they would talk, take some of these conspiracy theories, or even plandemic and do a full review, which I'm sure exists, but do a full point by point like, this is accurate, they're right about this, or this is utter nonsense, you know, cuz I'm seeing a ton of people post posting articles on Facebook, that are verifiably false within five minutes of googling. But I don't know if other people are going to do that googling themselves or if they're just going to take it at face value.

**Jack Halls** 24:04

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

**Nate Hayner** 24:13

So in New York, aside from initially, where, you know, I was in, in Europe in early February, and I remember there were a couple of cases there. When I got back in mid February. You know, de Blasio and them said, go out to eat, keep using the train, don't worry about it. Hindsight is 2020. You know, everyone was saying that looking back on it, that was a disastrous decision. You know, they think that's what everyone being on the subway, even if you only have two or three people in the city, that habit you're all forced in a small tube like that. It causes serious spread. So I think after they realize that they've done a good job there. I think the local governments in Wisconsin haven't done as good of a job at least not with. I know a lot of people who still aren't getting unemployment even though that they filed a month and a half ago, and they say, Don't worry, stay calm, you'll get your money. It's like, Yeah, but people, if you don't have money saved, you're out of luck. You know, if you don't get that something coming in, what do they expect you to do? And I do, I'm very sympathetic to this, because they expect people to sit at home, as if you'd planned you have emergency savings, you've saved up food. But if they don't, what do you do? You know, ask friends and family for help, and you'll get some, but even those networks are wearing thin. You know, I see a lot of people asked for things on Facebook, where if this would have happened two months ago, they might have gotten a bunch of it, but people have are really worried about their own finances and long term stability. So it's tough to give right now.

**Jack Halls** 25:48

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

**Nate Hayner 26:00**

Well, I think it's very interesting in that people are all over the place. You know, you know, when Trump said it's up to the governors, and then it seems like when governors make a call, sometimes they don't like it, and they want to overrule it, you know, I've heard that like Michigan, state homeowners have been ruled unconstitutional, you know, or something by that they've been overturned by the supreme State Supreme Court. So I think that there's a lot of normally, you want to have a lot of separation, you know, between the different levels. That's kind of one of the strengths here, but in a pandemic that's really tested, because we need to move rapidly and respond quickly. And we can't do that. When there's gridlock and disagreements at the different levels. I'm doing this with my hand, but you couldn't see because it was too low.

**Jack Halls 26:50**

So has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends and community? And in what ways?

**Nate Hayner 26:57**

Yeah, you know, I always used to think, because when I was 1015 years ago, I would always hear these doomsday predictions from people, you know, this giant virus is coming, or this is coming, or this is coming in, I had gotten really complacent. Like, whenever I would hear that stuff, I'd be like, No, I've been, you know, alive 36 years, nothing bad's really happened aside from obviously, you know, a couple of major events. But this is a real reminder that that these don't come out. You should take that stuff seriously, you know, and plan for it. Because this came, you know, no one had even heard of this. And last year in 2019. And now it's the entire globe is on varying degrees of lockdown. Take it more serious.

**Jack Halls 27:45**

It's a good segue into this. I want you know, now, what do you think that individuals communities or governments need to do? And keep in mind for the future?

**Nate Hayner 27:57**

I mean, just more preparedness for something just like this, you know, we need to have our masks supplies up, we need to have PPE for healthcare workers. I think personally, people should have a stockpile of beans and rice and stuff like that. Again, you can't make people do that. But just be smart. You know, if this drill dragged on, for six months, we'd be okay here. Because we have food. And that's a huge comfort, you know, but what would you do if, if things got worse? You know, what would you if the power went out? There's so many questions that you I haven't really considered before. But that are now something worth thinking about. So I think just preparedness and this is all you can do. Try to have more masks. I don't think this is the last time this is going to happen. You know, as the population continues to increase. We'll probably see this again in our lifetimes. So let's try and be ready.

**Jack Halls 28:52**

Okay, thanks. That's all the questions I have for you.

**Nate Hayner** 29:00

Oh, man, well, that was wonderful. You Sure you don't want to ask anything else?

**Jack Halls** 29:05

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

**Nate Hayner** 29:08

No, this is just going in the annals of history. So I feel like I should have really told a funny story or something.

**Jack Halls** 29:17

Well, I think that was great. I think you gave a lot of good information.

**Nate Hayner** 29:21

Yeah, well