

Transcript of Interview with Emre Muftu by Soham Phadke

Interviewee: Emre Muftu

Interviewer: Soham Phadke

Date: 09/19/2020

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Transcriber: Gilbert Lopez

Abstract: Soham Phadke interviews Emre Muftu who describes the challenges he faced during the pandemic and how he overcame them.

Soham Phadke 0:02

Hi. Do you give consent to being recorded?

Emre Muftu 0:07

Yes, I do.

Sodham Phadke 0:08

And can you state the date and time right now?

Emre Muftu 0:13

It is September 19, 2020 at 2:30pm.

Soham Phadke 0:18

Awesome. So can you start by introducing yourself?

Emre Muftu 0:23

My name is Emery Muftu. I'm 18 years old, and I'm a freshman at Northeastern.

Soham Phadke 0:31

Great. Um, so I would just want to begin this interview by asking you about when this thing first started, right, so when we first heard about the pandemic, before it started spreading in the US in late December, like what was your initial reaction?

Emre Muftu 0:50

Um, well, to be honest, I was a little bit ignorant. I didn't think that like, the pandemic would like come across to like US borders. And like, I don't know, really, like be a pandemic, in every sense of the word. I really thought it was just going to be localized, kind of in China, similar to the way that Ebola spread through I think it was Western Africa, but I'm not sure.

Soham Phadke 1:23

Okay, so. And when it started spreading rapidly in the US, when did you first realize that things are not going to be normal for, for a long time now?

Emre Muftu 1:36

Well, I feel like I, the first big day where I realized things weren't going to be normal was the first day I wasn't in school. Think it was like March 12th, or 13th. Our Governor in Massachusetts said that, you know, we really can't do school anymore. And that was really weird. But kind of the shocks and like the overall confusion of like, what's happening right now, like kind of lasted for a while for me. It wasn't like a single moment of like, Oh, shit, this is real.

Soham Phadke 2:16

Right. And when the pandemic first hit again, how long did you think it would affect the world? So when did you think that this would end? Like how many months, or one year? How long did you think it would last?

Emre Muftu 2:31

Um, to be honest, I thought it would, it would last a while. Um, once I got out of school, I kind of realized that like, it was summer before a lot of the kids like within maybe the first week I was like, Yeah, maybe, maybe the spring break is actually just a long summer. Um, I never thought

that it would have affected me going to, going abroad or staying at home. That was a real shock for me. But um, I don't know. Yeah.

Soham Phadke 3:10

Yeah, I agree with you. I think I felt the same way about going abroad. So again, when the nationwide quarantine started, how, how did you spend your time? Was it a challenge at first having all this free time?

Emre Muftu 3:26

Um, it was a challenge for sure. Like, I'm not great at spending time by myself. So I really like I was glad to have like a strong support network in my friends. And we were able to spend a lot of time together. And I don't know, we just became even closer than we already were.

Soham Phadke 3:47

Right. And how do you think social media improved like your chances at spending time with your friends because right now we're, we're living in an age where social media and technology is a big part of our lives. So do you think it helped us?

Emre Muftu 4:07

Yeah, I mean, as a collective, I feel like for sure, everybody maybe started to use social media more to like, communicate with people they don't, they would usually just talk to in person. But throughout quarantine, I kind of tried to stop using my phone so much, because I thought it was kind of a drain of my energy and kind of like my mental health and stuff like that.

Soham Phadke 4:30

Right. And so again, getting back to the world as a whole, how did you feel about the US government's response to the pandemic? Do you think they could have done more, what do you think they could have done better?

Emre Muftu 4:45

Um, well, honestly, it's kind of hard for me to say. I don't like really feel educated enough in the idea of like, what the US specifically did to like, prevent and like mitigate the damage from Coronavirus. But from an outside perspective, it seemed as if they care a lot more about the

economic values of the United States rather than like the public health and like kind of human rights questions that came up during Coronavirus.

Soham Phadke 5:18

Yeah, I think I agree with you about that. And so, did you have to go through any mental struggles? And if so, how did you cope with them?

Emre Muftu 5:30

Um, the mental struggle. I mean, I obviously, like everybody missed out on a lot of things. And I knew I was going to miss out on a lot of things, which made me sad. Um, but at the same time, I like led like a pretty privileged life through Corona. And I kind of like kept reminding myself that a lot of people have, like, a lot worse than me right now. And that I should kind of just like, bury my head in the sand and just kind of like, ride it out.

Soham Phadke 6:04

Right. And did you have a job? And like, if you did have a job, how did this pandemic affect your job?

Emre Muftu 6:14

Um, I was actually unemployed, I was looking for work basically the whole time through Corona. Um, but in my area they were, there was just a ton of people looking for jobs. And I didn't really necessarily have that much experience-

Soham Phadke 6:30

Right.

Emre Muftu 6:31

-Because my last job was like, I think two years ago.

Soham Phadke 6:35

Okay. And did your town have a lot of cases?

Emre Muftu 6:41

Um, I live in a town of about, like, 60,000, I think. And so we had about, I think we only had like, 100 or 200 cases. But, um, I think a lot of that is due to the fact that like, um, a lot of the people in my town are wealthy and the fact that they don't have to go to work-

Soham Phadke 7:07

Right.

Emre Muftu 7:07

-It helps like, the fact or like, it really helps people like not get Corona, if they can just stay home and do nothing, and work all day.

Soham Phadke 7:19

And how did, so quarantine for a lot of us meant that we would spend a lot of time with our family. So how is that experience for you?

Emre Muftu 7:30

Um, well, it was kind of, it was kind of weird having my parents around all the time. Um, and it was obviously nice. I don't know, it's been so long since I like, got to spend so much time with my family. And usually we go to Turkey every year. And unfortunately, we couldn't do that this year, but it felt like um, I don't know. It just really felt like we grew a lot together and got through a hard time together. So yeah.

Soham Phadke 8:09

Well, thank you for your time Emre.

Emre Muftu 8:11

Yeah, thanks so much.