

Transcript of Interview with Jacoby Mena by Cristal R. Mendez

Interviewee: Jacoby Mena

Interviewer: Cristal R. Mendez

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Location (Interviewee): San Antonio, Texas

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: Jacoby Mena, a 9th grade student, shares his views on staying home, the BLM movement, anti-maskers, and staying safe during the pandemic.

Cristal R. Mendez 00:03

Okay, Jacoby, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Jacoby Mena 00:09

My name is Jacoby Mena. I'm from San Antonio, Texas. I'm in the ninth grade. I don't really-, or I like drawing. I play games and I watch anime.

Cristal R. Mendez 00:28

Okay, and how are you handling pandemic life?

Jacoby Mena 00:34

I think I'm handling it doing pretty good. I think I've kind of gotten used to it before it was kind of a little hectic because it was different than from what we were like regularly doing- what we were used to.

Cristal R. Mendez 00:51

And how often did you go out in public versus now? Has there been a big change?

Jacoby Mena 00:59

Not really.

Cristal R. Mendez 01:04

You never used to go out before?

Jacoby Mena 01:07

Well, it wasn't really that, that much. I mean, now I'm like, I guess, yeah, because before I used to go out to like the stores when they would go- when my parents would go grocery shopping.

But now I really just stay home and just do like homework stuff.

Christina Mena (Jacoby's mother) 01:27

The movies, we used to take you to the movies.

[unintelligible talking, laughter]

Cristal R. Mendez 01:34

And how do you feel like, as far as being connected to the city like, San Antonio? Because you would go out and stuff with your parents, right?

Jacoby Mena 01:45

Oh, yeah. Well, I feel kind of--I would say I do feel disconnected. It's not really like- like going out to places was fun, but like now it's not like, we're just staying home and not really going anywhere to have fun, just checking up on our family and seeing how they're doing. So it's mostly just staying home.

Cristal R. Mendez 02:17

And before, what were some of the places that you liked going to with your family?

Jacoby Mena 02:25

Uh, I think mostly like going to like the mall and going to places there. But now it's like you can't really go because how many people are there. Even if- they're not even like open or if some of the stores aren't allowing that many people in or you really just don't want to get the virus. And we used to travel a lot, too. So traveling to like, when we went to like California or went to Disneyland. We don't really get to do that anymore just because of how much- how bad it is. And the people that are out and about not wearing masks. We used to also eat at a bunch of different restaurants too, but now we're just stuck at home like, making our own food because we don't really want to catch the virus.

Cristal R. Mendez 03:22

So have you all not gone to any dining rooms or restaurants at all?

Jacoby Mena 03:29

No, we haven't really gone.

Cristal R. Mendez 03:35

So none of like your favorite places, have you been able to visit any of them? Like, I know you said you used to go to the mall a lot. Have you done any kind of traveling or gone to any parks or

anywhere?

Jacoby Mena 03:48

Not really. We haven't gone- I haven't gone to the mall at all. I haven't really gone to any new places I would say I liked, my favorite places really.

Cristal R. Mendez 04:02

So overall, you're kind of unusual because you're like a homebody. You've always been like a homebody, so I feel like the pandemic life, in a way, kind of suits you. Is that fair to say?

Jacoby Mena 04:17

Kind of, yeah. But I feel for some people, like some of my friends, they weren't really people who stayed home or liked staying home. They kind of were people who were busy and like doing stuff, so they don't really get to do stuff that they like, and they kind of feel like they're not able to do things. But for me, really, I really just like staying home. Not really doing that many things, or- yeah.

Cristal R. Mendez 04:47

What about when the pandemic is over? I'm sure you'd want to go somewhere. What's like the first place that you want to go to at least in like San Antonio?

Jacoby Mena 04:58

San Antonio wise, probably to the mall to see if they have any like new things to buy or anything like that.

Cristal R. Mendez 05:06

What about like the movies, or are you much into like going to theme parks or anything like that?

Jacoby Mena 05:14

I like to go to the movies. I know there was a bunch of movies that we haven't been able to see just because they've been in theaters and not really like on Netflix or anything new like that.

Cristal R. Mendez 05:28

And have you tried going to any new places like maybe places that your parents have taken you just to try and get you out of the house? Are there any like safe places that y'all have been to?

Jacoby Mena 05:43

I think the safest place we've been to that's been pretty good that don't have that many people is probably the Botanical Gardens. I've been there like four times, I think. And it's pretty good. We have like the passes there, so we get in early so there's not that many- there's like, not that many people at all.

Cristal R. Mendez 06:05

Okay. Have you gone to any places like the zoo?

Jacoby Mena 06:10

No we haven't, we been basically just staying home.

Cristal R. Mendez 06:15

So pretty much the Botanical Garden, is it?

Jacoby Mena 06:20

Pretty much, yeah.

Cristal R. Mendez 06:21

Wow. You all have been doing really good with staying home. Well, I guess it helps that your mom is a nurse, right?

Jacoby Mena 06:30

Yeah.

Christina Mena (Jacoby's mother) 06:33

Because his dad's a psycho. [laughter] Don't put that in there.

Cristal R. Mendez 06:41

What else do you want to add, Jacoby, that you'd like people in the future to know about this time and like, you know, trying to stay not only busy, but like entertained? What should people know about this time? Like, what were you doing, what was going through your mind?

Jacoby Mena 07:00

Wel, what's mainly going through my mind is, is everything going to stay the same? Like before everybody has kind of stayed on the same flow. They were doing what they wanted to do and what they got to do. I mean, there's still people who are doing the stuff, which they really shouldn't be doing that. Getting more people sick, who really don't want to be sick. And like,

now we're not really on the same flow. It's just everybody's staying home or if they are staying home. I mean, because there's still those people who are dumb, who are spreading the virus, not listening to what health officials are saying to do and not listening to what the people are saying to do, what to do. So it's kind of just like, are we really safe though? Thinking about it like, are we safe because the thing is- it's just like, it's just crazy to think that I'm in a time where it's kind of like the plague, what happened back then. It's kind of like the same thing, basically the same thing in my eyes.

Cristal R. Mendez 08:12

Yeah, it is, and I agree. A lot of people don't realize it, and I think that's why it's important for people to understand like, what's going on right now. Because I don't think that people will ever really grasp what it was like during this time, if they didn't live through it. So yeah. I mean, that's good. You offer a different perspective than what some adults might say, because some adults don't want to stay home, and those are the dumb ones that I think you're referring to.

Jacoby Mena 08:52

Yeah.

Cristal R. Mendez 08:55

What is your wish for 2021? How do you hope- what do you hope it looks like?

Jacoby Mena 09:05

I hope that more people are listening, that they're not disregarding what these people are saying, they're not being dumb. Because, I mean, the countless lives that are lost, just because some people were partying at a college or going to bars or going to other places, which they really shouldn't be going and getting other people sick that don't want to get sick. They're going to stores not wearing masks, causing problems at stores for the people who are telling them to wear a mask. And I just hope that it's better, coronavirus is settled down, it's not really as crazy. And hope that doesn't still change the minds of people who think "oh it'll settle down, so let's go to a party, or let's go to bars, let's go to places, let's not wear our masks." Still, if it's still there you can still get it. So it's just people being- needing to be safe.

Cristal R. Mendez 10:10

And do you feel safe, like in our city in San Antonio? Do you feel like they've done a good job here?

Jacoby Mena 10:18

I do, I haven't seen- I haven't really seen that many people not wearing masks and maybe seeing one or two people maybe not wearing a mask, but I still see them wearing masks, which makes me happy. But at least they're wearing masks and trying to be safe because you always see those

people on the news like not wearing masks causing trouble at like Costco, or Walmart.

Cristal R. Mendez 10:55

I agree with everything that you said. I think those are all my questions. Unless you have anything else that you want to add?

Jacoby Mena 11:07

Just saying safe is really my main thing. It's just listening to the people that are- actually know what's happening. It's just listening to, like, the science of things. Don't disregard the science at all because that's what's helping all of us.

Cristal R. Mendez 11:31

Do you think- do you ever watch like the updates from Ron Nirenberg and Nelson Wolff? Have you ever seen them on the news?

Jacoby Mena 11:41

No, I don't think I've ever seen them.

Cristal R. Mendez 11:44

Okay, I was just curious because they're the ones that have been instrumental in like making all these rules for San Antonio, and they tried really hard to get people to follow these rules, even when they didn't want to. So we have them to thank. But yeah, I agree, like, you know, safety is number one. And it's really interesting to hear that even though you're so young, you've been very responsible, I feel like, in social distancing and just staying home. And it sounds like you really only go out to visit your family, right? Like do you go to see other friends? Have you yourself gone to any like big parties or anything that you feel was not safe?

Jacoby Mena 12:42

No, I haven't really gone anywhere to a party or not really at all. It's just like when we go see our- like, my grandparents we stay at the fence, and they stay at the door, and we talk to them from there. Or they're wearing their masks or we're, we're both wearing our masks, even though we're still far away to make sure that we don't spread it to them. Because I mean the elderly are the ones that are most- they're most able to get the virus.

Cristal R. Mendez 13:17

So where do you get all your information from, regarding the pandemic?

Jacoby Mena 13:24

Mainly the news. It's just I- I personally haven't- I watch the news, but just when it's on. I listened to it because I, I really don't like focusing on the news. It's usually just bad stuff

happening. Like, I really don't like hearing like stuff like, the whole- also like during this time, too like, the whole Black Lives Matter movement like the way that was happening too during this time, too. Which I was like I really like hope that that changes. Like people- white people who are doing this stuff like they need to listen to what these people are asking for because it's not really fair to them.

Cristal R. Mendez 14:14

Yeah. Do you think that having a new president will help the Black Lives Matter movement?

Jacoby Mena 14:22

I do. I feel like our last president wasn't really- he wasn't great and he wasn't the best. Like he didn't do that much for the black community by far, I don't think. And I just hope that our – [audio lost] ...to help out and help like, unite people instead of just dividing them completely. I mean, that's what the last president did. He just divided and decided- people are- one side is better and the other side is just complete trash. It really should be just everybody's equal like, it's United States of America for a reason. We're not supposed to be divided.

Cristal R. Mendez 15:22

Yeah, I agree. So I guess that's another thing you'd like to see in 2021. Safety and unity. Anything else that you'd like to see for next year?

Jacoby Mena 15:41

Not really, those are my main things. People need to be safe because it's just going to bring up the death toll even more than what it is already. Which, to me, that's a lot of people have died. And that's pretty big, and the countless lives that have been lost in the black community for like the officers who are hurting them for not really any reason at all, and people who are being racist or deciding that it's okay to carry a gun or to sell guns really to people who need help. It's just being safe, really.

Cristal R. Mendez 16:30

Okay. Good. Thank you for sharing your perspective. I'm going to press stop now. But we'll continue with our conversation. Thank you.