

# Transcript of Interview with Alma Madrid by Liza Black

**Interviewer:** Liza Black

**Interviewee:** Alma Madrid

**Location:** Valencia, Spain

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**Transcriber:** Sally Velez

**Abstract:** Liza Black interviews Alma Madrid, an American citizen in lockdown in Valencia, Spain. During the interview, we learn Alma is an English teacher whose visa is soon expiring, and will soon need to move back to the United States. Alma's wedding plans and future educational goals have been ruined by COVID-19. Alma shares her experience with the difference in reactions between the United States and Spain.

**Liza Black 00:35**

Hi! I can't hear you. Maybe I, can you hear me? Hi, how are you?

**Alma Madrid 00:52**

Hello? Perfect. All right, this is my workstation.

**Liza Black 00:56**

Its really nice. I love it. I need to work on mine. I don't know. Yours is absolutely perfect. You gotta have a good backdrop.

**Alma Madrid 01:05**

Yeah, you have to with these kids.

**Liza Black 01:09**

You're at your workstation right now?

**Alma Madrid 01:11**

Yeah, this is my workstation right here.

**Liza Black 01:14**

Gosh, okay okay, so, let's, um, let's go. Let's make sure that people know what it is you do for work.

**Alma Madrid 01:20**

Okay.

**Liza Black 01:20**

And you're sitting at your workstation. So you're not in the same timezone. What day and time is it where you are?

**Alma Madrid 01:28**

So here it is Wednesday, April 15th. And it is 5:27.

**Liza Black 01:35**

PM?

**Alma Madrid 01:36**

Yes, PM.

**Liza Black 01:37**

I hope so.

**Alma Madrid 01:38**

Yes, yes PM. No, not AM.

**Liza Black 01:42**

Okay, so can you tell us your name and what you do on a day to day basis.

**Alma Madrid 01:49**

So my name is Alma Madrid. And on a day to day basis, I wake up around 7:30, to have class from 8:00AM until about 3:00PM. And right after that I just read or I try to, I just keep myself busy. What I tried to do is just keep a routine from Monday through Friday. So that feels like you know, I'm in my normal life.

**Liza Black 02:17**

Hmm. Okay, so that is what you normally do. So you're a teacher?

**Alma Madrid 02:21**

Yes. So I'm a teacher.

**Liza Black 02:23**

Okay.

**Alma Madrid 02:23**

Yeah, I work-

**Liza Black 02:24**

(inaudible) Is about eight to three.

**Alma Madrid 02:26**

Sorry, what was that?

**Liza Black 02:27**

And your normal schedule is about eight to three?

**Alma Madrid** 02:30

Yes. So my normal schedules I work for in elementary school for as an English teacher, English assistant teacher. And then on the weekend, Saturday and Sunday, I work for platform teaching Chinese students English as an English teacher. And so now with this COVID-19, I'm not able to teach at my regular Monday through Friday job. So now I'm doing that, that has taken over and now I'm doing it Monday through Sunday. So where I'm working at my second job teaching, Virtual Teaching.

**Liza Black** 03:06

Okay, so you're doing the same job but with a different group. And in a different way?

**Alma Madrid** 03:11

Yeah, it's, so there's, I have two jobs. One of them is working at an elementary school- Here in Spain. And then the second ones that were-

**Liza Black** 03:13

Right.

**Alma Madrid** 03:21

Yes, the one here in Spain was face to face. But since I no longer do that, when the one I was doing initially Virtual Teaching. So now I just, that has just taken over. And I just do that full time, since I'm not.

**Liza Black** 03:21

(inaudible) Going to face prior to COVID-19. That was face to face? So I'm going to ask you more about the face to face. But let's make sure that we cover, we cover these questions.

**Alma Madrid** 03:43

Okay.

**Liza Black** 03:43

So where do you live? And what is it like living there?

**Alma Madrid** 03:46

So I live in Spain, and I live in a city called Valencia. It's the third largest city here in Spain. And its source of revenue is tourism. So it's a city that lives off of tourism, and it's a beach town. So, and it's very beautiful. The weather's always nice. People are very outgoing. So it's very nice. Very nice.

**Liza Black** 04:11

And when you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts about it? And how have your thoughts changed? Since then, if you can go back to sort of when you first heard about it, I know-

**Alma Madrid** 04:25

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 04:25

What happened and we've all sort of lost our sense of time. But-

**Alma Madrid** 04:28

Yeah (inaudible).

**Liza Black** 04:29

If you could walk us through that, that would be great.

**Alma Madrid** 04:32

So like I stated before I work as a virtual teacher teaching Chinese students English and so my, my first encounters were through my students, you know, they were telling me how, because my bookings went from, you know, pretty steady and my bookings just skyrocketed, and then you know, because they were telling me how they couldn't leave their home. So their parents were keeping them occupied by you know, having English classes through the platform that I work for and all of these things. And you know, I would ask them, you know, how is it and they would all just tell me 'Oh, it's so boring, like, we can't leave, we can't leave our home.' And so my initial thoughts were never Oh, I'm going to have to be living what my students are living. And so then fast forward, I believe they were going through this, I think it happened right before Chinese New Year's, so that sometime in January, and then, you know, two months later, or so, or a month and a half later, and then, you know, Spain, goes into lockdown, because of COVID-19. So my initial reaction was, you know, this is something that's just happening in one part of the world, which was China, but now, you know, it's worldwide.

**Liza Black** 05:50

Awesome. Okay. So how did it change from the time that Spain went into lockdown to now? Have your thoughts changed?

**Alma Madrid** 05:59

My thoughts? My thoughts haven't changed. I just think that some countries didn't, or people didn't react fast enough to kind of prevent the spread that we're seeing now. If that makes that makes sense. So those are the changes, you know, at first, you know, I thought, oh, you know, this is something that's just happening, happening in China and one part of the world, but you know, fast forward, and now it's, we're all going through it, it's worldwide.

**Liza Black** 06:32

Did the lockdown feel excessive to you? When. Initially, I mean, you've you've been doing this much longer than we have on in the United States. Does it feel excessive to you? Or did it seem like the right thing to do?

**Alma Madrid** 06:46

It seemed it definitely seemed like the right thing to do. Yeah, because I know, in Spain, where I live, it's the regulations, or the the actions that have been taken are much different than they are in the United States. Here, were, everything's closed down there, very few restaurants are still open. And you can only do takeout. And markets, very few, like stores like shopping for markets are open. And, but other

than that, everything else is completely closed, we're not able to go outside and walk. We can only, only people who have a dog can take their dog out for a walk 10 to 15 minutes. And it's definitely regulated. If a cop sees you, he will probably do, you know, go around the neighborhood and make sure that you're strictly only walking the dog for the purpose of you know, the dog to do its needs, and you have to go back home. And so and they will you know, when you're walking and a cop sees you, they will jot down like how you look what kind of dog you're, you know, you're walking around so that if they do come back around, say 20 minutes later, they see you then you get fined. So yeah, so the, the measures that are taken here in Spain are much stricter than the ones are taken in the United States. I know in the United States they call it social distancing. But here it's lockdown. It's no one can leave their home under any circumstances. If you need food, people go should you know, in theory, go once a week to buy food, and that's to buy your weekly groceries. Not, oh, I'm craving ice cream. Let me go down to the grocery store and buy some ice cream. It's no, you know, because if the cop sees you, then you'll be fined. Because everyone needs to be home.

**Liza Black** 08:36

Very different from the United States.

**Alma Madrid** 08:37

Yes.

**Liza Black** 08:38

And you're aware of this because you're you grew up in the United States?

**Alma Madrid** 08:43

Yes.

**Liza Black** 08:44

Of course, through social media, you're staying in touch with your family and your friends.

**Alma Madrid** 08:48

Yeah, yeah so I'm from the United States. My family lives in Washington, about 45 minutes from Seattle. So you know, I keep in touch with them and my friends and my family members, you know, I asked them, hey, what's going on? But also social media I think social media.

**Liza Black** 09:05

Yeah.

**Alma Madrid** 09:06

Okay.

**Liza Black** 09:07

So what has concerned you the most about COVID-19?

**Alma Madrid** 09:12

I think what has concerned me the most are, you know, aside from people losing their job, which I think that that's a huge concern. I think, people losing their jobs and kids, I think my biggest concern are the kids, you know, being a, being a teacher for, you know, students from the age of five to about 14, you know, my biggest concern are, are, are the kids, you know, how they're taking it. A lot of students from my school that I work here in Spain, don't have, you know, resources or don't live in an adequate, regular family environment, you know, and so my biggest concern are those kids who are at home with family members that are alcoholics or you know, maybe drug addicts. And so I think that or, you know, maybe kids that live with like abusive family members, or parents, you know, whether it be physical, mental, you know, sexual abuse, I think that my biggest concern are for those students.

**Liza Black 10:26**

Yeah, and I'm hearing about that a lot in the U.S. What is the social sort of, are there governmental aid agencies to help protect these kids? Or how does that play out in Europe? How do these kids get protection?

**Alma Madrid 10:45**

You know, it's so long process, and I've been living in Spain, it's about going on two years. So I, I'm not too familiar with the laws and regulations.

**Liza Black 10:58**

Right.

**Alma Madrid 10:58**

But you know, from word of mouth, because, you know, I, with my coworkers, I'll ask them, because, you know, some of my students, you know, don't live in healthy environments. And it's a long process, you know, to take those actions of, you know, placing kids who shouldn't live with their families, it's a, it's a you know, it's a long process it, you know, doesn't happen from day to night. But with this whole COVID-19, I'm, I'm honestly, I'm not sure exactly what is, you know, happening to those students, but I do know, at my school, those families that do have those circumstances, you know, the director, or so to speak, the principal speaks to them on, you know, pretty often, and it's, you know, it's hands on calling them, 'Hey, how are the kids?' You know, this and that.

**Liza Black 11:51**

So, are you teaching them at all right now?

**Alma Madrid 11:54**

No.

**Liza Black 11:55**

You're, you're. Okay. So that's just been, and is-

**Alma Madrid 11:59**

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 12:00

Go ahead.

**Alma Madrid** 12:00

Yeah, I'm not teaching right now. So I work for a marginalized group of students in a very tough neighborhood, I believe it's about the second toughest neighborhood to live in Spain. And I teach at that school. And most of my students, I would probably say, about 95% of my students don't have resources, such as, you know, maybe electricity, some of my students don't even have electricity, don't have internet, you know, computers, you know. So those types of things a lot of my students don't have resources to, for me to be able to teach to them.

**Liza Black** 12:49

Wow. And so in the United States, there's been this huge effort to distribute laptops, to all public school kids. And in fact, they're, in my community least, they're keeping the cafeterias open for kids who were getting free lunch. And families can still come to those schools, and pick up the lunches for those kids who are now at home. So I'm, I'm really interested in hearing about the decision that, that your school made to just shut down schooling altogether, because of the lack of lack of infrastructure, it sounds like in these children's homes.

**Alma Madrid** 13:24

Yeah. So as far as work, what the school did, I believe it was two weeks into the lockdown. The teachers were able to go and print out homework for the students to do. And the families that wanted to come to the school and pick up whether it be a brother or sister to go pick up the schoolwork, they could take it home. But as far as the students, or the parents who didn't go pick up the work, the students don't have, you know, any sort of cooling or any of that, because a lot of my students, like I said, don't have even the basics such as electricity or warm water, you know, so so that that's already very, you know, it's very different in that aspect. And as, as far as food, I know that the government here in Spain for low income families, they're, they're given a monthly stipend where they're able to at least go buy food. So I know, for that portion, I know that they have money because the government is giving money to low income families. So I know that at least they have food. Just not electricity, warm water, and other basic resources.

**Liza Black** 14:45

Right. And so has schooling continued for children in affluent neighborhoods in, in Valencia?

**Alma Madrid** 14:52

Yes. Yes, it has. And I've actually spoken to coworkers who have co workers that you know work in affluent schools, and yeah, they're, you know, they have regular classes or they have their students their work. And they're very involved with the, you know, parent student involvement of teaching and working, and making sure that the kids do their homework.

**Liza Black** 15:21

And those kids are working online, or on paper, or both?

**Alma Madrid 15:25**

Online. Yes, their working online. So my students in particular, only through writt-written work really (inaudible).

**Liza Black 15:35**

And family member picked it up?

**Alma Madrid 15:38**

Yeah, family members could go and pick up the work. But then you also run into another problem, where a lot of the parents of my students have never gone to school. So these students are doing their homework or self teaching themselves. So who knows if they're even doing it correctly. Or not correctly. And I know what another thing that my school has done is they created a YouTube account, they created a YouTube account for students who do have a computer or do have maybe a phone and have internet, they're able to go on the, on the school's YouTube channel, and teachers are posting, you know, they're posting games, learning games, or activities that they could do at home. So hopefully the students are looking at the videos and engaging.

**Liza Black 16:34**

But from what you've seen, most, less than half of your students would probably have a phone or what what would you guess?

**Alma Madrid 16:42**

I would guess about 60, maybe even 70% of my students don't have phones. Yeah, because I work at, in an elementary and so kids, sometimes, you know, they hear their neighbors, their their classmates say, 'Oh, I have a phone.' And even though the student might not have a phone, they'll say, oh, yeah, me too. I have a phone to kind of be included in that they have a phone, but I know I'm pretty sure probably about 75% of them don't. Or their parents have phones, but don't have internet. You know, it's your basic your call text, no internet.

**Liza Black 17:28**

Mhm, and they would need to be on some on Wi Fi somewhere in order to use like WhatsApp or something.

**Alma Madrid 17:34**

Yeah.

**Liza Black 17:35**

Okay. Okay, um, let, so you've already sort of answered this question if, if COVID-19 has affected your job. Is there anything you want to add to that about how COVID 19 has affected your jobs?

**Alma Madrid 17:50**

So COVID-19 has affected the job I work here.

**Liza Black 17:55**



Right

**Alma Madrid** 17:55

Work for here in Spain and the fact that I can't teach I There's no way for me to reach my students. However, for my other job where I teach online, where I teach English online, I've just made that my full time job, since I'm not able to do one, one of my jobs.

**Liza Black** 18:16

Right. And that's greatly exploded because of the need for online teaching.

**Alma Madrid** 18:21

Yeah, for the need for online teaching, because a lot of students in China can't go to aren't you know going to school. So their parents to keep them busy to keep them doing something. They'll book English online classes. So that, you know that that's going good, but not for that other job.

**Liza Black** 18:43

Right.

**Alma Madrid** 18:44

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 18:45

It's quite lopsided.

**Alma Madrid** 18:46

Yeah, it's it's very yeah. And it skyrocketed. And I'm actually making, you know more money because I spend more time here at home. And with my Spanish job, since it's a government contract, I'm still getting paid my monthly stipend. So even though I'm not teaching my children, I'm still getting paid. And now I have more time on my hands. So now I'm booking more I'm getting more bookings. I'm getting more students. And my, the two students I have from my Spanish job and my children that I teach online, they're very different. My students I teach online are, you know, students with lots of resources, lots of money. And so they're able to afford these online classes, even with this pandemic going on right now.

**Liza Black** 19:01

I mean your job has essentially completely shut down. And other job has replaced.

**Alma Madrid** 19:17

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 19:17

Second job has replaced your primary job. Right, right.

**Alma Madrid** 19:49

Mhm.

**Liza Black** 19:49

We're glad that you highlighted that. What about the employment of people, you know, what, what are they experiencing?

**Alma Madrid** 19:57

I have a friend who just opened a restaurant and like I previously mentioned, Valencia's main source of income is tourism. And His restaurant is in the heart of Valencia, where all the tourism happens. So he was doing great. I believe he opened the restaurant, it was in February? Dec- January, February, I believe.

**Liza Black** 20:27

Oh.

**Alma Madrid** 20:28

And he was doing great, the business was doing great. He sells very good food, everything, it was in a prime zone where a lot of peop- it was easy access for tourist and locals living here. And it was local, it was Spanish food, it wa-uh, Spanish restaurant. And now with all of this, he can't, he can't work, he still has to pay bills, but he can't work. And so I believe people who are have a business open have to take out loans, or either you shut down your business, or you have backup money to cover the expenses that you know, within the time that we're on lockdown, or you take out loans in order to, to keep your business running.

**Liza Black** 21:20

Right. And does your friend have any sense of when the restaurant might reopen? Or is that entirely unknown?

**Alma Madrid** 21:27

That's entirely unknown. entirely unknown, so, yeah, he does. He doesn't know exactly when it is, or he doesn't even know I believe. I think depending how much longer we're going to stay in lockdown, he'll know. And he'll make the decision than whether or not he'll keep it or he'll close potentially close down the business.

**Liza Black** 21:49

Right, right. So what concerns do you have about COVID-19 and your employment? Or the economy or even your future plans for employment?

**Alma Madrid** 22:03

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 22:03

Is this what you're planning? Is this what you were planning on doing into the future? Is teaching face to face for the government as well as teaching online with Chinese students? Or what are your thoughts about that?

**Alma Madrid** 22:18

So as you know, as we've been talking, so far, it hasn't affected me, thankfully, it hasn't. And I'm in a really good standing, I'm in a place where I'm able to pay my bills and, and do things as I would have if this pandemic wasn't going on. However, as for future plans, my it's, it's kind of scary, because my, my contract with the Spanish government ends in May. So as soon as my contract ends, my Visa ends.

**Liza Black** 22:56

Oh.

**Alma Madrid** 22:57

So I have to move back to the United States, my home my country. So it's very scary, knowing that I'm going into an economy Where I'm not going to be able to get a job. Going into a recession going, looking for a job during a recession. So that's very scary.

**Liza Black** 23:24

So prior to COVID-19, when you were doing face to face teaching Monday-

**Alma Madrid** 23:29

Mhm.

**Liza Black** 23:29

Through Friday, and then weekend tutoring.

**Alma Madrid** 23:32

Mhm.

**Liza Black** 23:32

With mostly Chinese students, what were-

**Alma Madrid** 23:34

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 23:34

Your plans for the summer or May?

**Alma Madrid** 23:36

My my plans were as soon as my contract ended come June, I was going to fly to the United States. My boyfriend and I were were engaged. I was going to get married in June. And now he can't travel to the United States because he's Spanish. So we'll have to be doing a long distance because of this pandemic. Because he's Spanish, he can't go to the United States. I'm American. So I have to go back

because my Visa ends in the 31st of May. So that's kind of where we stand and I was planning on going to going to law school so I thought, Oh, I'll go in June. I'll take the LSAT in August. I'll start applying for law schools in September and life will be great. Well right now. I'm unsure exactly what it is that will be happening because I know that the April LSAT was canceled. So we'll we'll only we'll know if who knows if the one in August will be cancelled too. So I'll be jobless not applying the law schools and it's kind of this big. It's a lot of it's a lot. It's a lot to think of. So luckily, I have my family in the United States and I have somewhere to go where I, I'm not going to be paying bills, and I have my family to back me up. But I will most likely be jobless for a couple of months because I'm going into an economy that's broken.

**Liza Black** 25:21

Yes, you are.

**Alma Madrid** 25:23

Yeah. Yeah.

**Liza Black** 25:24

Has it, has it made you think about staying in Spain somehow a, a, acquiring some other employment? I mean, are you weighing that option now against the United States and recession?

**Alma Madrid** 25:38

I have thought about it. Because cost of living in Spain is cheaper. So I would be able to live and pay off my bills, doing my doing virtual teaching job, teaching my, my students, however, my Visa ends. And so as soon as my Visa ends, I'll become illegal or yeah, I'll be in this country illegally.

**Liza Black** 26:04

So it's not an option.

**Alma Madrid** 26:05

Yeah. So it's not an option. I could do beyond my 90 day. You know, which every person coming into Europe, you have 90 days, like your tourist Visa, 90 day tourist Visa, which I could do. However, I think I'm better off going, continuing my virtual teaching and going to my parents home and not having to pay bills. I think that's the smartest thing to do.

**Liza Black** 26:29

Mhm. So it really has upturned your future plans.

**Alma Madrid** 26:33

Yeah, I just from one day to another. It was Yeah. Yeah. All of my future actually my entire future, you know, marriage, applying to law school, work, because I was planning on finding job.

**Liza Black** 26:51

Right. Right.

**Alma Madrid 26:53**

So all of that. It's yeah. Everything.

**Liza Black 26:57**

Everything truly.

**Alma Madrid 26:59**

Yeah, everything truly my entire life.

**Liza Black 27:03**

Wow, that's a lot to absorb.

**Alma Madrid 27:05**

Yeah, it's a lot. It's a lot, but I try not to think about it too much. Or try not to get bottled up in my thoughts. And what am I going to do? I'm just going to live day by day, and just see what happens. Because you really don't know. You really don't know what's going to happen. Many things can happen during this pandemic. So just taking it day by day.

**Liza Black 27:32**

Absolutely. Well what has it been like in your day to day activities have, has that changed for you? You said that you used to leave your apartment or your home, to teach face to face. In the community. And then you worked at home on the weekend. So now you're working at home all the time, how has-

**Alma Madrid 27:43**

Right. Um.

**Liza Black 27:50**

That changed your day to day, life in terms of just anything?

**Alma Madrid 27:55**

Just anything, it's change everything that I wouldn't have done. Outside of my home, I tried to do it and implement it in my home. So whether it be I keep a schedule, I always try, I try to keep myself in, in a routine so that I, I don't get sluggish. I don't, you know, lack and so I wake up, I teach. So I wake up around 7:30 Because I have 8am classes I teach. I have minimal breaks throughout I you know, have breakfast, I have my breakfast hours, lunch hours, dinner hours, so I, I try to do what I would. And I think what I have just been doing is just keeping a routine. I, Because I think that's very, very important to keep a, a routine during this time and anything that you know you would normally do to try to implement that into your home and try doing it at home.

**Liza Black 28:53**

Mhm.

**Alma Madrid 28:53**

Not to not miss it so much. If that makes to not, you know, have nostalgia and be like, Oh, look at, you know, look outside your window, I wish I could go outside, do your day to day activities. So just try to implement that into my home and my day to day.

**Liza Black 29:10**

And what about your activities in your household? So you're doing a lot of what we're doing right now you're talking to people

**Alma Madrid 29:16**

Yeah.

**Liza Black 29:16**

Who through your computer has that impacted the rest of your household activities or the other people you live with?

**Alma Madrid 29:25**

Yeah, so I live with my boyfriend and we live in a studio. So living in a studio there are no door- there's, there are no doors where I can just go and lock myself and you know not have to hear him. We actually it's funny because we actually share a table. Our dining table is our workspace. So half of it we you know it's it's horizontal, it's horizontal and so half of it is mine. The side that you're seeing right now this is my side and the other half is his side. And so sometimes if he's typing too fast, it'll move my My entire screen. And I have to be like, please stop. So it's really learning to live with your partner. 24 hours.

**Liza Black 30:10**

A day.

**Alma Madrid 30:12**

A day, yeah, 24 hours a day. Yeah. So it-

**Liza Black 30:14**

So when, when he needs to talk to someone in the exact same way you are, and you're in this small space, what are you doing about that? I mean, I can't hear him right now.

**Alma Madrid 30:25**

Because he's quiet, I, I, I'll have to tell him, I'll, I'll give him my schedule, we have to be respectful of each other because I have to also be respectful for towards his work, he's able to work from home. And so sometimes he has meetings, he has to call he has to talk to his boss, talk to his co-workers, hey, this is going on. And I and we just have to both be, be respectful and acknowledge that we both live here. And it's small space, and we have to do what we best can. S ifo he has a meeting, it has happened where he has a meeting with his crew, and then I'm teaching. And either he has to talk outside, just open the door and go outside and just talk or, or he has to talk very quietly, or maybe in the meeting. He's just doesn't say anything. He just doesn't talk or he's just listening to what his boss is saying. But he doesn't talk because he can't talk. And or he'll try to plan those meetings or those talks, during my breaks. When I'm not teaching.

**Liza Black 31:37**

Right (inaudible).

**Alma Madrid 31:39**

So its just being respectful and mindful of each other's time. Yeah.

**Liza Black 31:41**

Right. So you. So that's, that's been a huge shift for you, because that was only something you did on the weekends before. And now it's all the time.

**Alma Madrid 31:48**

Yeah. An, yeah. So now it's all the time.

**Liza Black 31:53**

Has this changed how you interact with your friends and your family?

**Alma Madrid 31:59**

It has, I think it has changed in the sense that I'm more inclined to call my mom, to call my family members, to message my friends, call my friends to, to, to be updated on how they're doing, because anything can change from one day to another. You know, it's just I, I think it's changed in the sense that I feel inclined to speak to them more, I want to speak to them more, I want to know that they're okay, that how are things doing? How are, you know, maybe one day they're fine the next day, they might not be okay. So.

**Liza Black 32:40**

And what's been the biggest challenge for you with, with COVID-19?

**Alma Madrid 32:45**

I think the biggest challenge would be not knowing what the future holds for me.

**Liza Black 32:55**

Mmm.

**Alma Madrid 32:55**

Especially, I'm a person I love to plan. I like to keep things very organized. And I like to know I'm going to do A,B, and C while not having control of my life and not knowing what the future holds whether or not I'll be able to get a job whether or not I'll be applying to law school whether or not many things that come within that. Within that setting, so.

**Liza Black 33:18**

Prior to COVID-19, you felt fairly certain of your plans. It sounds like? (inaudible).

**Alma Madrid 33:22**

Yeah, yeah, I'm uh, yeah, I was very like, okay, A, B, and C, and let's tackle A to get to B to get to C. And now it's kind of making, well, what if this well I'll do this, if this and I'll do that. So it's really.

**Liza Black 33:37**

Did you say you had a wedding plans?

**Alma Madrid 33:39**

It, it wasn't a wedding. But we were, we were engaged and he was going to go, we were engaged, and he was going to go see my family. And we were going to talk about engagement and start planning

**Liza Black 33:53**

The wedding.

**Alma Madrid 33:53**

So now he won't be able to.

**Liza Black 33:56**

Right. I mean, I'm hearing so much about that, as well as some of the other things we've talked about. What about recreation for you, for your partner for you know, family, coworkers? What are people doing for recreation? You said the restaurants are really truly shut down?

**Alma Madrid 34:14**

Yeah.

**Liza Black 34:14**

Unlike the United States, where pretty much everything's open for takeout. What, what are you doing for recreation?

**Alma Madrid 34:22**

So we, we watch TV, we there's actually it's funny because a group of our friends here in Spain downloaded monopoly onli- on our phones. And so we'll have like virtual game night where it's you can have up to four people playing Monopoly. So we'll you know, we're in a group chat. We'll text each other. Hey, who wants to play Monopoly and so well, I downloaded the Sims something I used to never have time to play or you know, and now I'm, I, I, I believe, like, the last time I played the Sims I was like, 10 years old. And now I'm 25. And I'm 15 years later, I'm playing The Sims. And because you know, you have nothing else to do. So watch TV and just trying to keep ourselves occupied doing workouts at home. Reading lots of reading, also YouTube, lots of YouTube. So things like that.

**Liza Black 35:23**

Okay, so you're really using the virtual reality we all live in now.

**Alma Madrid 35:29**

Yeah.



**Liza Black 35:29**

To you continue to sort of do what you did before in terms of socializing with people and exercising.

**Alma Madrid 35:35**

Yeah.

**Liza Black 35:36**

Yeah.

**Alma Madrid 35:36**

Video timing.

**Liza Black 35:38**

Yeah. How are people around you responding to COVID-19? I feel like there's a lot of division in the United States about how to approach these issues. What'd you what'd you seeing in your.

**Alma Madrid 35:51**

Yeah

**Liza Black 35:52**

in your community?

**Alma Madrid 35:56**

It's very different, though. The take that Spain, or here in Europe, per the state took versus the take in the United States. I know in the United States, they call it social distancing. Here, it's, you're on lockdown, by any means will you leave your home, unless if you have a dog and the dog has needs where it needs to use the restroom. But you have about 10 to 15 minutes to walk the dog, and to have the dog do what it needs to do. Other than that you cannot leave your home. I know in the United States, people are still able to leave their home, as long as they're, you're just distancing yourself from people. But I don't see it happening. I see my social media and I see friends still posting with their neighbor or their friend. And I, I think that's crazy. Because I think everyone for the sake of everyone's health, whether you're not thinking about yourself, but you need to think about others, whether you need to think about others and be respectful towards others, that I think everyone needs to stay home. Or I do see a lot of people in the United States taking it as not a break. But because they have more time on their hands are going to go visit relatives, family members, or whatever the case might be. As opposed to here in Spain, it's none of that.

**Liza Black 37:27**

And do you feel that that's because of the government or do you feel that the people are cooperating with that, or both?

**Alma Madrid 37:34**

I think it's because of the information that is given to the people in the United States by the government. Mhm. If they would have taken certain regulations. If then it, then it would be different, but I think it's the

information that in the United States is that they're being given, I know that I speak to my friends, and I speak to my mom. And the information that you guys are getting is that things are getting better, and things are much better. And in Spain, the information that we're getting about the United States is that things are not getting better, that things are only getting worse. So it's different news that is being given. So I think that in part, partially it's the government's fault. And partially it can be the, the people's fault, because you also need to inform yourself if you know that maybe your government or your president isn't doing what it's supposed to do to keep you safe, then you need to do that for yourself and your surroundings and your family. You need to go out there and research it yourself and not just rely on the government to just say social distance yourself, things are getting better. You need to act.

**Liza Black 37:40**

Oh. In your neighborhood are you seeing, I assume you, you see neighbors or you can hear neighbors. Are you seeing cooperation where you're where people are staying inside and people aren't having friends over, and they're not going to visit friends, or what are you? And (inaudible) squawks. Are you seeing cooperation?

**Alma Madrid 39:06**

There's definitely cooperation because in Spain, if you don't cooperate and the cops see you walking, then you'll get fined. It's a 600, 600 Euro, fine up to 1,300 depending on the circumstance, you'll get fined. So it's very different and I, everyone, everyone here in Spain, at least or at least from my knowledge is taking it very serious and no one's leaving their home. I don't see anyone visiting one another. Well, for one you can't because if you're, right now I look out the window and I work and I live in a very busy near busy street. No cars. So it went from one day hearing. I remember teaching and if I had the window open I would hear the cars going back and forth the beeping all of that now it's silence complete silence. I don't see any cars. The only people I do see outside are people walking the dog. And that's it. So it's complete cooperation of Spain (inaudible).

**Liza Black 40:12**

Regardless of people's poli-politics.

**Alma Madrid 40:15**

Yeah, regardless.

**Liza Black 40:18**

(Inaudible).

**Alma Madrid 40:18**

Yeah. Besides people's political views, you I've actually seen, there's actually videos of, you know, one, one or two people who don't care to stay home or who the rebels, I guess you could call them who will go out, I know that there was this viral. This video that went viral in Spain of this guy who was working out in a playground. And the neighbors here in Spain, a lot of the homes are not houses, their apartments, they're called flats. So and it was all the people living in the apartments or in the flats, seeing this man, and all of them calling the police, you need to come get this guy. He's out here running, exercising, when everyone should be staying home and the video went viral, and everyone

was so upset at this man working out, why aren't you taking this serious? Why are you putting others and yourself that risk? You know, no one should be at the park exercising. Why do you think that you could jump the law and go ahead and do it? So I think it's- I think it's, everyone's cooperating, I would say, a good amount of people are Cooperating.

**Liza Black** 41:30

That's incredible. Do you know any- so now we'll talk about health a little bit. Do you know anybody who has been sick? What's been your experience with people, you know, getting tested and getting sick?

**Alma Madrid** 41:46

So personal, I don't know anyone personally, but my boyfriend's co-worker, who, they're co-workers. But he's he lives here in Valencia, and she works in Madrid. So you know, they talk to each other. And she hasn't been tested. But given her symptoms, she's 100% sure she has the virus. That she's been con- contracted with the virus. However, she hasn't been tested because there aren't enough tests to go around. So there are lacks of there is a lack of resource here in Spain, as far as testing goes. And the only, and what's being done is she's being called frequently throughout the day to ensure that she doesn't even leave to go grab groceries that she's staying home with her family. So that's, other than that, I, I have my boyfriend's family members, some of them are doctors, some of them are nurses. And they potentially can have the virus too. And they're nurses that do their job and then come home to their families. So it, it's tough.

**Liza Black** 43:04

Right? What about news? Are you participating in watching the news and have your news sources changed? What are your news sources if you, if you have any?

**Alma Madrid** 43:16

I, at the beginning, when this whole thing was happening, I remember I would watch the local news here in Spain just to keep myself updated. But I just thought that the healthiest thing for my sanity was to not watch the news all the time, just because I, you know, you don't want to be reminded of what you're already living. So at first, it was local news. And now it's more like social media. My boyfriend and I will have conversations, sometimes we'll read things online. But we try not to focus too much on the news and every exactly every little detail that's going on, because you know, you're already staying home, don't want to even add on to the pressure of knowing every, absolutely everything that's going on in detail. So.

**Liza Black** 44:13

Right. So that's so that's changed a bit for you.

**Alma Madrid** 44:16

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 44:17

And so you've already started talking about this, and maybe we don't need to revisit it. But in terms of the government, in your town and in your country, and in Europe as a whole. Is there anything you want to add about how they have handled COVID-19?

**Alma Madrid** 44:32

I remember when this was happening, like I previously said, when this first happened in China, I never thought that it was going to happen in Europe. And when the first case was found in Italy, my immediate reaction was okay, this is going to spread and slowly but surely more people it started spreading throughout Europe. And at that time, Spain in particular wasn't doing anything. And I remember being scared for my safety and talking to my boyfriend like, hey, like what's going on? Like the government needs to take action now. What is it waiting? Why, why is the government waiting for the outbreak to happen here? Right? Why are they waiting for everyone to be contracted with the virus to then to then take action? Why don't they try to prevent it prior to every, everyone getting contracted? So I think that that's, that was one of the my main issues, I would say, or what stands out to me the most.

**Liza Black** 45:45

So on the one hand, you're pleased with the lockdown and the cooperation.

**Alma Madrid** 45:51

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 45:51

But you're not, you're not appreciative of the timeline?

**Alma Madrid** 45:55

Yes, I think it could have been prevented. Much earlier on, it could have been prevented, because Spain is actually the worst country in Europe that's facing deaths and the spread of COVID-19. So I think that it could have been prevented or not prevented, but at least it wouldn't have gotten so out of hand like it has would, if the government would have taken action sooner.

**Liza Black** 46:29

Yeah. So how has this transformed your thinking about your community, your family, your friends, your partner? Work?

**Alma Madrid** 46:40

So it's, I think it's transformed in the sense that I, I, everything is going to change now. Post COVID-19, every, everything's going to change. I think people are going to be more cautious. I think hygiene is going to change. I think hygiene is a big part. I, and I think that we'll start to see it globally, even traveling, even traveling, gatherings of big groups, all of that is going I think all of those things are going to change post COVID-19, and we'll, and we'll see it.

**Liza Black** 47:25

Mmm. And knowing what you know, now, what do you think people, communities, governments, what do they need to keep in mind for the future?

**Alma Madrid** 47:36

I think we need to be more prepared for situations like this, I think more money should be, should be used for research. Also, and also our environment. It has changed our environment, we're starting to see a shift, where we're starting to see that the world is generating. I know here, we've heard that in one of the things that stood out to me is that in Venice, it's Venice is in Italy, it's, it's a city where it has water all around it going through going in and out of the city. And they're starting to see fishes. And I remember when I visited two years ago, the water was black, it was very dirty. And now with all of the shutdowns, global shutdown, we're starting to see that the world is generating. So I think that that's also something to take in mind that if post COVID-19, and we start taking care of our Earth more, and we're more conservative, and we're more aware that we can save all of the damages that we have already made to our environment. So I think that that's one of the things that, that I really think about a lot is our Earth and our environment and how everyone being on lockdown has or has been regenerating our Earth. So we start to see that. So maybe having more money, you know, be put into research or hygiene, and things like that.

**Liza Black** 49:13

Hm.

**Alma Madrid** 49:13

would be great.

**Liza Black** 49:15

And so what is your ultimate hope? Where do you hope to be in a year? What would what would be ideal?

**Alma Madrid** 49:22

Something

**Liza Black** 49:23

Personally.

**Alma Madrid** 49:24

Personally, something that would be ideal to me is to take the LSAT, apply to law school, and hopefully in a year start hearing back from law schools, get into a law school, and have the economy slowly but surely start rising because it's also very scary to, to go to law school because it's a huge commitment financially. It's a huge commitment. So knowing that you're going to take 1000s of dollars in loans when the economy's not so great. That's also very scary, but hopefully, come to a year from now, hopefully, things are settling things are getting into place and hopefully going to law school and being with my, with my boyfriend.

**Liza Black** 50:14

In the states, together?

**Alma Madrid 50:15**

In the States.

**Liza Black 50:16**

Face to face.

**Alma Madrid 50:17**

Yeah, face to face. Yeah. Yeah, not through zoom. Yes.

**Liza Black 50:26**

Well, I hope, I hope that that all happens for you.

**Alma Madrid 50:30**

I hope so too. Thank you.

**Liza Black 50:33**

Um, is there anything that you would like to add? You know, I've gone through this list of questions, which are just meant to be a launching point for a conversation. Is there anything that you that we haven't touched on? Or that you maybe forgot to mention that you would just like to add?

**Alma Madrid 50:54**

I'm, I think, for the most part, I think I captured everything that I wanted to talk about, and I think I elaborated. However, do you have, is something that you wanted to know more or that you're interested on knowing more about? Or?

**Liza Black 51:16**

No, I just wanted to make sure that the things that probably you had thought about sharing that you got an opportunity to share them, and that you got to do so in a way that was exactly what you would pictured.

**Alma Madrid 51:28**

Yeah, how I pictured, I think, what I wanted to really encompass was my children here in Spain, because they're they're marginalized group and I, I work for a school. It's a gypsy school, and they're very marginalized, they, they live in a very tough neighborhood. And I think that outsiders would never think people maybe from the United States or people from around the world would never think that that would be happening, and maybe just getting, getting the word out there that people here are also suffering, such as my students, they have no resources. And it's, it's really scary to think that some of my students have to be home with maybe four or five other siblings in a two bedroom, apartment. And to know that homes here in Europe are much smaller. In the United States, everything is so grand everything is so big, homes usually are, homes are much bigger. People are lucky enough that they have a backyard, they have a front yard. Here, you're lucky enough to even have a porch. So you're really confined to four walls. And.

**Liza Black 52:48**

And that's true for middle class. European?

**Alma Madrid** 52:51

Mhm.

**Liza Black** 52:51

Is that what you're saying? That's true for all classes?

**Alma Madrid** 52:55

N-yes, I would say, I mean, unless if you have a lot of money, then you do have your, a house. But as far as even middle class, families, they all live in apartments, it's kind of it's kind of just how it is here in Europe, most people just live in apartments, just because it's such an old country that you know, it's built from, it's very old. So they're just all buildings.

**Liza Black** 53:25

Mhm.

**Alma Madrid** 53:25

So it's much different. It's not like the United States, where it's fairly new, it's growing. It's huge. Homes are very big. So that's also something to note that people here in Spain, don't have a backyard to say let me grab some fresh air, don't have a front yard, and things like that.

**Liza Black** 53:44

Right. And so the disadvantage, would have that issue that most people have in Europe, but it would be even more so because of being a larger family, and more people.

**Alma Madrid** 53:59

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 53:59

Living together in a smaller space. So-

**Alma Madrid** 54:01

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 54:01

What we do, so I, you, you've been clear that you're very concerned about abuse, potentially increasing.

**Alma Madrid** 54:07

Mhm.

**Liza Black** 54:08

Where there may be already-

**Alma Madrid** 54:09

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 54:09

Abuse.

**Alma Madrid** 54:10

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 54:10

And we're seeing that in the United States as well. Is your concern-

**Alma Madrid** 54:14

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 54:14

For their health? I mean, if if, if COVID-19 was to sort of make its way into these marginalized communities, who-

**Alma Madrid** 54:23

Mhm.

**Liza Black** 54:23

You are teaching, how would that play out in the healthcare system there? Would they be discriminated against if they sought medical treatment?

**Alma Madrid** 54:33

No, so the thing about here in Spain and all of Europe is healthcare is for all so you can be the wealthiest person, you can be you know, very poor, it doesn't matter your income doesn't matter, you'll get treated just the same, I know in the United States is not like that because not everyone has healthcare. And so I think from for that aspect, my students are okay if they were to get sick because they have access to health care. It's, it's throughout all of Spain, all of the citizens here in Spain have access to health care. And it's actually very interesting that I don't have health care in my home country. But through the government in Spain, I have health care here. So I actually feel safer being here in Spain, because I have healthcare, if I were to get sick, if I were to have the virus, I know that because of my contract with the government, I have healthcare. If I were to go to the United States, which I'm planning in June, I wouldn't have healthcare. So that was also one of the biggest reasons why I decided when all of this was going on this pandemic and the shutdowns of schools. That's one of the reasons why I didn't choose to go back home. Because I know a lot of teachers that are doing the same thing that I am, they're teaching English here in Spain, a lot of them decided to go back to their home. I didn't, because I thought about the fact that I don't have health care back home. And I know that here, at least up until May 31st, I'll have, I'll be covered. And I'll have access to health care. So with that being said,



for that part, I'm not worried. I'm not too worried about my students, I'm more worried of their health within their homes,

**Liza Black 56:26**

Right. Mental Health.

**Alma Madrid 56:28**

Yeah, mental health. Because going to school was in a way, it's an escape from what's happening home, what's happening in your home. And now you're you're having to be with in, in that situation all day long. And so that really concerns me, for those students.

**Liza Black 56:49**

And are they often living in extended family structures where aunts and uncles or grandparents or other elderly relatives might be coming with those kids? Are you concerned about about that? Is that a factor? Or do you think?

**Alma Madrid 57:04**

So where I work. It's, it's a neighborhood, and it's a, it's a gypsy neighborhood, and a lot of the homes, so they actually they actually used to live in the city, but then they got allocated to the outskirts of the city, where now they're marginalized, and they're in a space where, you know, it's just within themselves. So it's, it's a neighborhood, it's a tough neighborhood, there's a lot of drug dealing, there's a lot of violence. Being here for two years, there's been about three crimes of actual killings, my students have seen those in take place, you know, have seen people get shot, have seen people get killed, and things like that. And so I think that that's just what worries me the most is just having my students around that all day. And school, I know, at school, we teach them different values than their families might teach them. And so you're able to get through to some students and tell them, look, it's not normal to, you know, get hit, or it's not normal to see drug dealing, it's and all of these things. It's not normal to smoke, I have students who are eight years old, and they smoke. I have students who are the barriers of, or their the point A to point B of drug, drug trafficking. So all of those things are just very concerning. Students that get sexually abused, students who get physically abused. So all of those things are very tough. And I know that the principal is trying her best to communicate with the families because it's a very small school. So it's a very knit tight teacher to student interaction. So all the professors, all the principals, we're all very close to the students and the families. And we're all very aware of the situation in the neighborhood and things are going on. But there's only so much you can help at the end, you know, to do sometimes. And I know that the principal is trying her best to reach out to the families as much as she can. To wants to make sure that there safe.

**Liza Black 59:32**

(Inaudible) Face to face. It sounds like you have zero contact now.

**Alma Madrid 59:37**

Yeah.

**Liza Black 59:37**

That they've stopped doing any they're not even doing online teaching. So when was the last time you've had contact with your students?

**Alma Madrid** 59:45

The last time I had contact with my students was the day that we went on lockdown was the day prior that we went on lockdown, so it was a Thursday. I believe it was March sometime in March like the 13th or the 12th around there. And I remember that the government, the central government of Spain, went on the news and said, Okay, we're, we're going on a lockdown last day to do anything or to start shutting down businesses and schools is Friday, and this was a Thursday. So I remember even calling the principal and saying because I take public transportation, and that's one of that's its easiest way to contract COVID-19. So I remember calling her and saying, hey, you know what, because of my safety, I, I am not going into work, which was the Friday, I don't feel safe going on in public transportation to, to teach. So and she was totally okay with that. So it was the Thursday before the entire country shut down.

**Liza Black** 1:00:52

So did you say goodbye to them then? Was the last day that you were in the classroom, You didn't know that was your last day?

**Alma Madrid** 1:00:58

I didn't know it was my last day because I, I left school and it was that night. No.

**Liza Black** 1:00:58

Huh. Mhm.

**Alma Madrid** 1:01:05

I believe that that or that evening, that night that the government decided to, to shut down.

**Liza Black** 1:01:12

Mmm.

**Alma Madrid** 1:01:13

Yeah, so I didn't get, I didn't get to say goodbye to my students. But I definitely always think about them and have them in the back of my mind.

**Liza Black** 1:01:21

Mhm.

**Alma Madrid** 1:01:22

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 1:01:23

Yeah. Wow. You've been through a lot. You've been through a lot.

**Alma Madrid** 1:01:28

Yeah.

**Liza Black** 1:01:28

Fortunate in many ways.

**Alma Madrid** 1:01:30

I have.

**Liza Black** 1:01:31

But, but in other ways, you know, your life has been completely transformed.

**Alma Madrid** 1:01:36

Yeah, it's changed. It's changed dramatically right now I'm okay, but coming uh, two, two months from now, I don't know exactly what's going to happen. So. Yeah.

**Liza Black** 1:01:49

Yeah. Well, I can't thank you enough for your time, you've really been so generous to share thoughts and to give me so much of your time. So I, I appreciate it so much. Are you sure there's Is there anything else you wanted to add?

**Alma Madrid** 1:02:04

I think. I think that that was pretty much all I wanted, that I can remember at the time, I'm sure maybe once this is over, I should have said this. But as of for now I think I've pretty much covered everything I wanted to cover.

**Liza Black** 1:02:21

Okay.

**Alma Madrid** 1:02:21

So yeah, but thank you so much for having me and asking me to do this and for sharing my opinion, my thoughts and my journey of this pandemic.

**Liza Black** 1:02:35

Yeah. Thank you so much. I really, really appreciate it and wishing you future health and happiness and safety.

**Alma Madrid** 1:02:42

Thank you. You too in the United States. Yeah, yeah. Thank you so much. And thank you for having me once again.

**Liza Black** 1:02:50

Thank you so much. Take care.

**Alma Madrid** 1:02:51

Thank you. You too.

**Liza Black** 1:02:53

Okay.

**Alma Madrid** 1:02:53

Bye-bye.

**Liza Black** 1:02:54

Can I get a picture? Can I get a picture?

**Alma Madrid** 1:02:58

Yeah. Let me take off my glasses.

**Liza Black** 1:03:02

They make you look like more of a teacher.

**Alma Madrid** 1:03:06

Yeah, you're right, you're right.

**Liza Black** 1:03:06

It goes so perfectly with your backdrop.

**Alma Madrid** 1:03:10

It does.

**Liza Black** 1:03:10

Bye.

**Alma Madrid** 1:03:12

Goodbye.

**Liza Black** 1:03:14

Thank you so much, take care.

**Alma Madrid** 1:03:14

Thank you so much. We'll keep in touch.

**Liza Black** 1:03:18

Okay, perfect.

**Alma Madrid** 1:03:18

All right, bye bye.