

At the start of COVID-19 back in 2019 I was not in the U.S. I was back in Gambia, West Africa. To be quite frank, I had no idea what was going on in the world because I was living life to the fullest and did not seek to know News related issues. It was my friends who I've left back in the U.S who kept me sort of updated. " everything is on lock down, no stores are open. We are not at work. I've not been too concerned about the spread of Covid-19 in The Gambia because there were no known cases at the time. My sister and I had been in The Gambia for about six months, had taken a gap year and were very eager to get back to start work and prepare for the starting of the next school year as a college freshman. Around the time we did leave The Gambia in March, the U.S. started to regulate the number of people from coming into the country and urged U.S citizens to evacuate and come back home. In The Gambia I've heard of reports of tons of people at the embassy and airline companies trying to find a way home. People's flights were also getting canceled left and right. Luckily my sister and I already booked our flight to return home months ago. It was also reported that we got on the last flight leaving The Gambia to Newark, New Jersey. We had left our older brother in The Gambia and he was not able to get any flights until September. On our way back from The Gambia, we were not even able to land in New York instead Newark, New Jersey. As we were on our way home from the airport the streets were empty, absolutely no one in sight. Grocery stores, retail stores, Restaurants all shut down. It was like we were entering a dead zone LITERALLY!

Once we got back to New York, I found a job at a supermarket located in lower Manhattan. It was in April 2020, the peak of COVID-19. While I worked here it was very crazy and hectic. People buying loads of groceries, loads of toilet paper. There were long lines inside and outside. People fight each other because of limited resources such as paper towels and Lysol spray. At one point we even had to limit the number of paper towels one can buy so we can sort of ration this resource. One thing that I saw was how frightened people were to be in close proximity to someone including myself. As a cashier I had to be careful that I had my mask on at all times and make sure I properly sanitized. That was also the peak of when tips were given often.

My freshman year I was fully online. I myself was new to the uses of zoom and online applications. Brooklyn college had resources available but I had no idea how to access them. I spent my first year fully online and working full time. I guess it helped in a way. It helped balancing my work/ school life a little easier. I live in the Bronx so traveling to Brooklyn College was not as ideal for me. One thing I would say annoyed me was my wifi. At times it would not be working as efficiently or it would turn off causing me to get disconnected from my classes which the professors understood. I go into the campus now not even able to tell people when asked if I am really a sophomore. In my eyes I'm technically a freshman. The campus is unknown to me. I would like to join clubs but I'm not sure if there are any in-person. I am in this one club but since I'm not in-person on the days that they meet I'm not able to participate as much. Overall my experience with Covid-19 there wasn't really that much of a difference in my grades. Though it would be hard for me to wake up and be in my bed and pay attention through zoom. As for my professional goals there were good resources available for me plus it was really convenient to conduct my interviews via zoom.