

Interviewee: Anonymous

Interviewer: Jenna Schemenauer

Date: December 12, 2021

Format: Video Recording, Zoom

Location of interview: Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Transcriber: Jenna Schemenauer

Additional Transcription Equipment used: Otter.ai

Project in association with: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Abstract: Anonymous is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and is partially studying political science. In this interview, she discusses her own personal experiences with Covid and her thoughts on how leaders have dealt with it. She also discusses mental health and her mother's experience in the medical field.

Jenna Schemenauer 0:00

Okay. Alrighty. Public History interview number two, the date is December 12 2021. The time is 3:02pm. For statistics, US cases, we're looking at a COVID. We're looking at 49,787,387 in the last 3030 days. For deaths, we're looking at 793,937. That's in the last 30 days. For Wisconsin cases, we're looking at 911,568. For deaths, it's 9344. For perfect percent of vaccinations in the US, we're looking at 71.4% with at least one dose in the US. And for Wisconsin, that number is 66.5%. For one dose. All right, alright. We have he with us today. He What is your age?

A 1:01

I am 20.

JS 1:03

All right, what is your ethnicity?

A 1:05

white

JS 1:06

And how do you identify your gender?

A 1:08

Female

JS 1:10

Okay. What are some of your prime or your primary day to day activities?

I go to school. I go to my job. I have an internship at the moment. And just hanging out with friends.

Js 1:29

Where do you go to school?

A 1:31

I go to school at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire.

JS 1:35

And what kind of internship is it is marketing is graphic design?

A 1:40

Yeah, so it is that the [redacted]. And it is for marketing and Ministry of related things.

JS 1:53

Where do you live?

A 1:55

Currently, I live in Eau Claire.

JS 1:58

Okay. What's it like living in Eau Claire?

A 2:00

Eau Claire is a fun city. It's bigger than my hometown. So, it's interesting just to see a bigger city, and just all the more opportunities that there are here and more things to do. Nice.

JS 2:13

What were your initial thoughts of COVID Way back in March of 2020, when news started coming out that you were going to have to go home from school?

A 2:25

I definitely did not think it was going to be turned into what it is. So when like we first started hearing about it, I was like, that doesn't sound like a thing that's actually going to happen, or that's actually going to like impact us. And then all of a sudden one day, they were like, hey, you need to leave now. And so it felt very much like a zombie apocalypse type type situation. Like we all just got into a car and got the got out of dodge. So yeah, though, it was just kind of weird.

JS 2:56

Yeah, it was a weird time. Have your thoughts changed at all since the beginning of COVID? In regards to COVID?

A 3:05

Yeah, I mean, just as we learn more about it, I've definitely just thought differently about it. And then also with how everybody else has reacted to it, it's definitely become more of a political situation rather than at the start of lockdown interviews, like we're all in this together. And it just seems much more divided than it was originally,

JS 3:27

absolutely. What COVID issues have concerned you the most.

A 3:25

So, my mom works in palliative medicine. And so, she's she works with people that are doing end of life care. So, she's just seeing a lot of people that are dying of COVID. And she had to deal a lot with people that weren't able to see their loved ones as they were dying just because of hospital regulations. So, I would say just like not being able to have that human connection that a lot of people are searching for in life, and especially when you need it the most. Yeah.

JS 4:08

Has COVID affected your job or anyone around you in terms of employment.

A 4:15

Um, I actually kind of had the opposite situation to a lot of people. So when we all got sent home, I was able I didn't have a job currently at school, we got sent home. But when I did go home, I was able to pick up some hours at my old job. So I actually worked more hours than I think I would have. But it was also just a really weird time because it was a restaurant job. So we weren't able to do really food and we're bringing it out to people's cars and everybody was freaking out not knowing really what the situation was or what it would be in the next 10 days. Yeah.

JS 4:48

Do you think that the business that you worked for suffered at all because of COVID Or do you think that like you it kind of had the opposite effect?

A 4:58

Um, it was definitely place where the community will gather. And people weren't able to do that during lockdown. But I feel like a lot of people really support the business and tried to keep it, keep it alive as much as possible. So I'm not sure how impacted they were. But there definitely was some impact. And I also know that it served an older population. So there was definitely a lot of fear among that population as far as COVID. And I don't know, for a fact, but I can guarantee that probably some of the customers passed away due to COVID. Um,

JS 5:34

do you have any concerns regarding COVID? In the overall economy?

A 5:41

Yeah. I mean, it's a weird place right now, because you want to be encouraging people to be safe. But you there are legitimate concerns about people that are going to lose their business and, or don't have the opportunity to work because they are immunocompromised, there's just so many more factors to take into account. And just the world is so much more complicated than it was that it's hard to kind of imagine what the economy will look like in this new era.

JS 6:13

Yeah. All right. Um, did COVID Change your day to day? And in which ways? I know that? That seems kind of an obvious question. But

A 6:25

yeah, I mean, it really depends on like, what stage of COVID you're talking about. But there's a lot to consider now that you just rather than just stopping into a store, you're like, Okay, do I actually need to go to the store? Do I have my mask? Do I have hand sanitizer? And then also, just like, with school, it was always kind of up near? Am I going to go to class? Am I going to do online learning? There's just a lot more thought process that goes into a lot of everyday activities that you never had to consider before.

JS 6:59

Yeah. Has COVID affected communication with your friends, your family?

A 7:06

School? Yeah. I mean, Zoom has been a powerful tool. A lot of my friends that I went to high school with, were able to connect over zoom when we weren't able to connect in person over like breaks and stuff, which, I mean, honestly, that was really hard, just because I wanted to see my friends in person. And some of them I haven't really seen since COVID. And I probably will never see again as they're moving. But I mean, we've been able to stay in touch but nothing embarrassed in person. So, we've definitely lost that.

JS 7:46

What were some of the biggest challenges that you faced because of COVID?

A 8:52

Um, one was definitely online school. And then just the isolation that went with COVID. You were locked in a locked in a room and kind of told to stay there for that your health and for the health of everybody. Which was not great. And then online school just kind of added to that, because you couldn't really see. Yeah, any group, stuff like that. So, you were missing out on quite a bit?

JS 9:01

Yeah, I agree. Do you think that without zoom, or Microsoft, whatever those outlets are, do you think that this would have been worth in terms of communication? Yeah.

A 8:41

Yeah. I mean, if you're trying to think of what happened, you know, 20 years ago, if this had been occurring, it's difficult to imagine how we as a society would have been able to function as smoothly as we did. I mean, there was a lot of hiccups along the way. But we were able to maintain a lot of what we were able to do.

JS 9:01

What do you think that UW Eau Claire could have done better in that initial March of 2020?

A 9:10

It's difficult to say, yeah. Just because there were so many unknowns, that everybody was like, it'll be over in a week. It'll be over in a month. You know, like there was so many unknowns that you can't really say, Oh, they did this wrong, because nobody knew what was happening. So I mean, they tried to keep us informed. They tried to keep us safe. But in those initial months, there really wasn't much that they could have done differently or would work would have known to do differently.

JS 9:40

Sure. What did you What did you do for recreation during COVID?

A 9:49

I have two wonderful dogs at home. So, I took them for a lot of walks. They were very confused while I was home, but they were very excited. The proper. So, lots of walks, I like to run. So, went a couple runs stuff like that.

JS 10:07

Sure, what are some positives that you think came from a lockdown, like the ones that we experienced?

A 10:19

Well, I got to eat homemade food as opposed to cafeteria food. So that was definitely a plus, I was able to pick up some hobbies that I had kind of lost just because I had some more time to work on them. But I'm not gonna lie, it kind of sucked a lot. So, there weren't that many significant positives. Sure.

JS 10:45

All right, did COVID Change your relationship with others? Whether that be good or bad? And throughout the whole timeline?

A 10:53

Yeah. I mean, anytime that you're locked in a locked in house to somebody, you can't really leave, there's gonna be a lot more strain on the relationship. And I would say that I felt that with my family, and then also with my roommates, just because if you were having an issue, there wasn't really anywhere you could go. And then like, with my wife, how I mentioned, she's kind of struggled with everything, just because she's been a frontline worker and seen everything up close. So like, I want to be there and support her. But this is just such a foreign thing for so many people, but there's not much I can do for her. Yeah.

JS 11:33

That's hard. Yeah. How are the people around you still responding to the pandemic? How is your mom still responding to the pandemic?

A 11:43

Um, it's interesting, because I have some family members that kind of think it's over. I have friends that kind of think it's over. But then like, for my mom, she's still very much in. And I mean, I just know that she's, she has a lot of emotions about it. So that's angry, sad, frustrated, she's, she's just kind of feeling them all. Yeah. And I know a lot of people feel that way. Because this is not how I pictured I would start my 20s. And I wish that it wasn't how I was living my 20s right now.

JS 12:21

Yeah. I can agree with that. So I'm assuming you self-isolated, based off of what you had told me previously, during those initial moments of COVID.

A 12:33

Yeah, we were pretty hard on lockdown. And so my grandparents lived fairly close to us. So, we tried to isolate for them, we were trying, we didn't really visit them at all, we were trying to isolate for them. We were trying to isolate for ourselves. And then my mom also had to keep healthy. So that in case she was called to do something, she would be available.

JS 12:53

And so my next question, so my next question was why did you self-isolate? So that that's perfect. Thank you. Did you get COVID?

A 13:04

I have not had COVID My knowledge? No.

JS 13:07

Do you know if any of your immediate family or roommates got COVID? At all?

A 13:12

No, no, no, no.

JS 13:17

Do you know anyone you know, in your community, like a community leader that got sick or or passed away due to COVID?

A 13:30

None that I can really think of right now.

JS 13:34

Have you or anyone you know questioned the vaccine?

A 13:39

Yes. Yeah, I've had. Yeah, go ahead. Sorry.

JS 13:43

I'm sorry. I was just gonna ask like, what kind of questions?

A 13:48

Oh, like, I've had family members. And then just also like, people that I know. They don't trust it. They think it came out too fast. They've had COVID before, so they don't think that they need it. And then, I mean, I also have some conspiracy theorists with my family. And they just again, don't really trust it. So they're very hesitant to get it.

JS 14:17

Okay, um, do you do you have questions about the vaccine at all? Did you think that it was rolled out too quickly?

A 14:25

I thought it was incredible how fast they got it out. And I'm sure that it saved so many lives. I mean, I also know that they're working on the working on the vaccine prior to COVID. And working on trying to develop that technology. So I mean, knowing that fact, I don't think it came out too fast. And then also, just again, I think it's phenomenal that they were able to do it as best as they were. Yeah, absolutely.

JS 14:53

Okay, are you are you vaccinated?

A 14:56

Yes, I'm fully vaccinated, and I've got my booster

JS 15:00

Okay, what was your experience gaining access to code or to the vaccine at? What wave? Were you AM? Were you able to receive the vaccine?

A 15:12

Yes, I was actually able to get it before other people. I was considered kind of a frontline worker. I was working at the school at the time. So I was able to get it with like education, staff and support. And I remember, like, when they sent out the email, they're like, hey, immediately trying to get a hold. And like, I was like, I just want to get it right now. So I can like, see my family and see my see my grandparents without having to worry about possibly killing them. Yeah.

JS 15:47

Yeah, that's a valid concern. Would you say that you then had a relatively easy experience gaining access to that? And did you get it through school?

A 15:57

Um, so I got it through one of the vaccine clinics. About but I had to like wait for a couple rounds of the clinics, just because there was such a rush to get it. So I mean, it wasn't like I just walked into a building, it was a lot easier than, and I got it a lot sooner than a lot of people.

JS 16:18

Perfect. What do you think are some important issues that media in general isn't covering or isn't covering enough, and that can be in regards to COVID or anything?

A 16:34

As far as COVID, probably just how horrible the death is. It's not a pretty way to go. And I think if people realize that they would, they wouldn't want to lose their dignity in the way that a lot of people probably have with COVID. Just because it's not a peaceful way to go. And then also climate crisis. I am very much an environmentalist. And I wish that it would be talked about in the way that it is a crisis than just discussed more. So.

JS 17:05

Yeah. I think, and correct me if you disagree, but I think a lot of the public has become desensitized to the death of COVID. Now, my question is, do you think that or how do you think that the public becomes less sense or less desensitized to that? How do you think that the media can fix that?

A 17:32

That's hard, just because we're so deep into it, people have kind of made up their minds one way or another for it.

JS 17:46

So

A 17:48

There's, there's not much that people can do, because they're just listening to their own echo chamber as far as like, I'm going to believe what I want to believe. Which is just really a shame and people have died because of that.

JS 17:59

Yeah. Do you think that COVID should be political? As it has become?

A 18:07

Okay. Yeah. I mean, it's a public health crisis. Yeah. So

JS 18:12

why do you think that COVID became political?

A 18:17

I think it's actually

JS 18:19

Sorry, I'm just want to say you can talk about politics. Oops, sorry.

A 18:20

Okay. Yes. Perfect.

JS 18:23

Some technical difficulties, I think, but we're figuring it out.

A 18:24

Okay, are we good? You can hear me? Yes.

JS 18:25

Can you hear me?

A 18:37

Yes, I can hear you. Okay. Perfect. Okay, so yeah, so I've studied political science as part of my education at Eau Claire. And I know that just in general, we're in one of the most politically politicized times in our history, as a country. So I think it was kind of, there's not really an option that it was going to become political. And just because with how fast the vaccines came out, there was going to be a lot of misinformation, there was going to be a lot of misinformation and confusion, just because it was so new. So there were going to be lines drawn in the sand, and people were going to be trying to take a stand one way or the other. And this is where we ended up. So I think it was just a lot to do with the climate that the country is in right now. And also just the lack of information that we have the beginning and people were searching for answers.

JS 19:32

Absolutely. How do you think that municipal leaders and school leaders and Eau Claire responded to COVID and whether you thought, I mean in in general to now not just in the beginning, and do you think that they've done a good job?

A 19:51

Um, I think that a lot of people in positions of power are trying to play both sides of the fence. So, because it is so politicized, they don't really know what stance they want to take because they want to appease everybody. So, it's been really difficult for them to make a decision that they feel like will help everybody. But then again, I feel like the decision that the decisions that they could have made could have just then safety as a priority, which I don't always feel like that was the case.

JS 20:23

Yeah. Do you think that back home, your municipal leaders good, anything better or worse?

A 20:36

I mean, I haven't been at home as much, but I, again, I kind of feel like it's the same thing, that they're trying to play both sides of the fence trying to appease everybody when that's just not the case. And that's not how you should attack the situation.

JS 20:51

Yeah, I agree. Well, perfect. That is it. That's all the questions I have for you. So thank you so much. You've given me some of your time. And yeah, absolutely.