

## Transcript of Interview with Jeffery Scanlon by Jack Halls

**Interviewee:** Jeffery Scanlon

**Interviewer:** Jack Halls

**Date:** 05/19/2020

**Location (Interviewee):** Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Transcriber:** This transcript has been provided by Otter.AI with a 2nd pass for accuracy provided by Bryan Paintiff, HST580 intern, at ASU.

**Abstract:** Jeffery Scanlon edits and directs local news channel 18 WQOW in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He thinks that some people in the US may have a lack of seriousness towards the pandemic. He elaborates on this by explaining how he sees people not social distancing and not wearing a mask. He then explains how Covid has affected his job working for a news channel as it's all that they cover. He then expresses challenges of the pandemic, one being how his parents not being able to see his daughter as often, as they have underlying health conditions. He then describes how he plays video games to pass time as you are not able to go out and do things. He then brings up a frustration of people posting conspiracy information about the pandemic on social media and spreading misinformation. His job is his main source of news. Jeffery believes that his local government handled initial outbreak well, but may be opening up prematurely and specified "no comment" on how the federal government handled the situation. He then ends with that mask wear in public should not be a political statement, instead people should be wearing them to protect their health and the health of the people around them.

**Jack Halls 0:02**

So this is Jack Halls interviewing. Today's date is May 19. The time is 7:36pm. Can you say your name please?

**Jeffery Scanlon 0:12**

Jeffery Scanlon

**Jack Halls 0:14**

Do you mind sharing some demographic information like race, ethnicity, age and gender?

**Jeffery Scanlon 0:19**

Yes, sure. Caucasian male 42 years old.

Ethnicity: Swedish, Irish, and German.

**Jack Halls 0:32**

And what are some of the primary things you do on a day to day basis? Like what's your job? What kind of activities to do?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 0:39

Yeah, so primarily, I'm a video editor. I also do motion graphics and animation work. I work here at Channel 18 WQOW TV here in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. And yeah, my day to day is basically I just help with taking care of the evening news edits, assistant directing. So running cameras, soundboard, all that good stuff.

**Jack Halls** 1:04

Cool. And so you live in Eau Claire, what's it like to live there right now?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 1:10

Well, it depends, I guess on who you ask. So some people are pretty excited about the fact that we've just opened wide up and we're back at it. I myself, I'm nervous, I don't like it. I feel like it's kind of a little too premature. But yeah, I mean, it feels like it went from being a ghost town to now everything's back to normal.

**Jack Halls** 1:34

Sure. When you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts? And have your thoughts changed since then?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 1:43

Yeah, definitely. I mean, like I said, I work for the news. So I basically have watched this story since its inception since it was first created back in Wuhan, China back in late October, early November of last year, and then at first it was just kind of watching it happen there thinking, you know, that's too bad for those folks, I hope they could make it through it. And then watching it kind of slowly make its way across into Italy and then seeing what was happening with Italy. And then we were all kind of, you know, I mean, try trying to make light of the situation here at the station. And then by mid-March, I got to be very real and very, you know, on our own doorstep, and once it became a US problem, yeah, it definitely changed my mind to the severity of it, for sure.

**Jack Halls** 2:29

Sure. And what issues have you most concerned right now about pandemic?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 2:34

I mean, honestly, I think it's more of a lack of seriousness. I mean, I can understand that people need to get their jobs, they need to get back to work and there's, you know, bills and things like that. I think that the fact that there hasn't been like a rent freeze for businesses, you know, like something to kind of hold them over for a couple months so that they don't have to worry about making their bills that they could just freely quarantine and you know, something like that hasn't been in place I feel is a problem. Again, it's just the fact that I don't think people are really going

to follow the social distance. They're not going to follow it that well. I mean, just the other day seeing people go by the roadside cafe, I mean, they were shoulder to shoulder No, masks, nothing like that. At the farmers market it was the same thing. Like they tried. We ran a story and they tried to say in the story that they were mandating, and they were following all these protocols. But you could see people within less than six feet, you can see people without masks. I mean, so I just I just think that the thing that got me the most worried is the lack of seriousness to it.

**Jack Halls 3:39**

And how has it affected your job?

**Jeffery Scanlon 3:43**

It's all we talk about. I mean, it's it's every single story and went from being like, a couple of stories at the at the top of the hour to all of a sudden it's in more than 70% of our news, coverage is now all Coronavirus COVID-19. You know, pick your pick your name for it really is kind of how it is. I mean, it's affected my job immensely. It showed how essential we were as workers and that while everybody else around me was getting sent home to stay at home, we all had to stay here and kind of, you know, man the fort.

**Jack Halls 4:21**

And how has it affected the employment of other people that you know?

**Jeffery Scanlon 4:26**

Oh, gosh, I mean, you know, like, well, my girlfriend, she's been working home since the end of March. And she works for the government, for the federal government, and they're not - they're basically considering that they're not going to be going back to their office until probably the end of the year, is what they're looking at. So, I mean, for people that are directly affected, my mom, my mom also works at Sacred and she, she works at Sacred Heart Hospital. And she's actually been put on furlough so she can't come back to work until August, so she's off until August. So I mean, it's, yeah, it's directly impacting and I, I'm just worried again that with everybody taking this lax because everybody wants to get out in the sunshine. We're going to see a huge spike come June, July, and you can have a repeat of April.

**Jack Halls 5:19**

And what other ways affected your family and their day to day activities?

**Jeffery Scanlon 5:24**

Well, I mean, my dad's, you know, he's been a smoker most of his life. And so he's got some underlying issues. My mom also has some underlying health issues. So for both of them, they've had to really do their best with social distancing. And then, you know, my daughter, they haven't been able to see her, which they're used to having her on the weekends, and they haven't been - they saw her just the other day. I brought her by, but they hadn't seen her in, you know, like, gosh, a month and a half, two months almost.

**Jack Halls 5:54**

How is she doing with staying at home and not being in school?

**Jeffery Scanlon 5:58**

Yeah, I mean, she loves it, of course. She thinks it's great she gets to hang out and you know, doesn't have to get up early and all that but I tried to I tried to lay down the law as far as school is concerned and making sure that she stays on top of her tasks and stuff. So she likes it, I don't think she fully understands the gravity of the severity of it.

**Jack Halls 6:20**

And how is the outbreak?

[inaudible, background noise]

**Jeffery Scanlon 6:26**

Can you say that one more time?

**Jack Halls 6:29**

How is the outbreak affected how you associate, how you communicate, with friends and family?

**Jeffery Scanlon 6:35**

I mean, well, the first time that I saw my parents because I hadn't seen them either. And the first time I went over to their house, I wore a mask. You know, the only reason I'm not wearing a mask now is I'm kind of standing you know, in a field so I'm far enough away from people but I you know, I yeah, I wore a mask the first time I went over to their house. I mean, it's just been basically we haven't seen each other you know, it's been just text messaging and things like that. So it's definitely a change.

**Jack Halls 7:05**

Yeah. What have been some other challenges? What are the biggest challenges that you face throughout the outbreak?

**Jeffery Scanlon 7:11**

Um, I mean, I don't know, I guess just you know, like trying to find supplies. I remember trying to try to find a thermometer was fun. Yeah, that that turned into a whole day's ordeal just to get a thermometer. And that was just to check myself because when this whole thing first started, and it was something that I noticed too is like the end of last year into this year, it seemed like everybody kind of had this like sniffily cold, like I had it and everybody kind of had it and then now since everybody social distanced, I feel a little bit better. But I was worried and so I mean, finding supplies, I think it's been difficult, but I don't know. I mean, for me, my life hasn't changed too much because I still you know, I went to work the whole time during the whole

thing. Like I've had social interactions with my coworkers and stuff. So I mean, for me it, it hasn't been like, terribly different. But yeah, I mean, it's just, I don't know, it's still kind of try to stay away from people, feel weird when people get close by, and stuff like that now.

**Jack Halls** 8:15

And what have you and your family and friends been doing for recreation?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 8:20

Aha, I've been playing a lot of Red Dead Redemption 2.

I'm learning the lore of the Old West, myself. Yeah, you know, we've been we've been - my girlfriend, she has two daughters and my daughter when we all get together, we do those murder mystery boxes. So we've got the hunt a killer and we've been doing those, so like a lot of family games. You know, my girlfriend's got a pool. So we've been trying to swim but the weather hasn't been cooperating but a lot of yard work doing a lot of you know, cleaning and that kind of stuff to stay busy, yeah, odds and ends.

**Jack Halls** 9:00

Yeah. And how has it affected your community?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 9:07

I mean, it's turned it upside down. You know, I mean, I lived above a salon that actually just opened reopened yesterday. Um, you know, like, all the businesses around me were closed. And it's yeah, I mean, everything's just been kind of flipped up on its head and, I don't know, different.

**Jack Halls** 9:34

How are other people that you know, responding to those sorts of situations? And all the changes?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 9:41

Yeah, I mean, I've seen I've seen people almost emotionally breakdown, like here at work, especially I want to say about like, about mid to closer to the end of April, I noticed a lot of my co workers really just we would be talking about it after, after the shows and we get in conversations about the virus and you know, like, be on the verge of tears and just not easy.

**Jack Halls** 10:07

Have you noticed any shifts of people's opinions throughout the pandemic from the start till now?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 10:13

Um, I the only shift that I know is some of the folks that I'm friends with on Facebook at first were posting things about how it was like a government conspiracy and how it was this and that.

But then once they had family members that actually contracted it, and they like actually, like, hit their front door, they changed their tune quite quickly. So I've seen more of the conspiracy theorists flip onto the other side, than the other way around.

**Jack Halls** 10:42

Self-isolation and flattening the curve have really been like two key ideas throughout this. How have you, your family, friends, and community responded to self isolation requests?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 10:56

Yeah, I mean, in limiting the amount of people that I interact with. You know, just staying to my close knit group. Not, you know, like, if I do go in any public places, trying to make sure I'm wearing a mask, make sure I'm washing my hands after I, you know, go out or using hand sanitizer, like, just being a lot more mindful of cleanliness, and touching my face and touching things and like what I do touch how I touch it. Yeah. So, a lot of that and just basically staying with a close knit group of folks keeping it to less than five. And like I said, I mean, I didn't see my mom and dad were going on, yeah, it was like almost two months before I saw them.

**Jack Halls** 11:41

Has it changed or affected any other relationships with friends, family, or community?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 11:46

No, I mean, I mean, I've had I've had friends that I hadn't spoken to in a while that reached out and so I've reconnected with folks. I would say that that's happened more than any of the latter. I mean, I feel like it's been a lot more of a positive outcome in some aspects, you know, like, you know, people kind of paying it forward and wanting to show the love and help everybody get through this. And so that's that's where it's been for me I haven't had really had any opposite or negative, like relationship from it.

**Jack Halls** 12:18

Have you or anybody you know, gotten sick during the COVID-19 outbreak?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 12:23

Nobody I know. Knock on wood. Like I said, my mom worked at Sacred Heart where they had a multitude. In fact, they had you know, somebody who passed away while his wife was able to make a recovery her husband passed away [inaudible] to it. But no, nobody I know directly has gotten sick from it. So yeah, and nobody, none of my co workers that I can speak of have gotten it. So yeah, I don't know anybody relatively close. So.

**Jack Halls** 12:59

In what ways do you think it's affecting people's mental health?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 13:03

Yeah, stressing them out. Big time. I mean, it's, you know, the new norm is not normal. And it's, [coughing] excuse me, and it's you can definitely tell the stress level, like I said, with my co workers on the verge of tears half the time and just, it's, it's hard. It's hard to have an uncertain future. You don't know what's going to happen. Everybody just wants it to be over with and we just want to go back to life the way it was. I think it's I think it's been pretty hard on a lot of people.

**Jack Halls** 13:40

And what have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 13:45

WQOW Channel 18, right there. I mean, yeah, pretty much I am the news. I'm a part of it. So I hear all the stories and you know, we all kind of will spitball ideas. I mean, I also reach out to other media outlets. I do get my news also from like, you know, satire late nights with, you know, Colbert and Seth Meyers, and you know, and get me some John Oliver and all that good stuff in there. So that's been, you know, but I've been gobbling it up, you know? Yeah, I'm in the thick of it.

**Jack Halls** 14:21

What do you think are some important issues that the media may or may not be covering?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 14:27

Um, again, I, you know, I don't know if they haven't been covering it, because I feel like they've been doing a pretty good job of staying on top of like, all the different stories. But again, for me, it's just stressing the importance of it and the lack of respect for it, I think is the thing that's but I don't know, as soon as you say something about it, people will just, you know, tell you that you're being weak or anything like that. So I, I don't know. I feel like they've been doing a really good job covering it. I just, yeah, I just really hope that people can understand that you can't just, you can't just, you know, wish it away. It doesn't work like that.

**Jack Halls** 15:08

How have municipal leaders and government officials in the local community responded to the outbreak?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 15:14

In my opinion, good. You know, again, I err more on the side of caution. So it depends on who you ask, of course,. But I, I appreciated that when when the Supreme Court shot down, Tony Eavers [sp?] Safer at Home Action that the Eau Claire County put in their own, you know, they filed their own, you know, action to, you know, ordinance to make sure that people tried to follow it. So they still tried to make that a rule even though, you know, they couldn't really enforce it. But they at least were trying to say, hey, you know, this is, you know, use caution, even if you're going to still do this. So I think that I think Eau Claire's been really good about being cautious as best as they can, you know, regardless of the fact that you know, that's like

you're about to have a mutiny and absolute anarchy from these bar, you know, owners who've got to have the bar crowd come in! Very important. So yeah, no, I actually kudos to the Eau Claire city officials, they really think they've done a good job on it, honestly.

**Jack Halls** 16:19

Do you have any thoughts on how local, state, or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 16:26

Um, I mean, I, you know, no, I mean, I feel like Tony, I'm on board with how Tony Evers has handled it. I think that he was he was the right amount of cautious even in the face of adversity with people not wanting him to go to those extremes. I think that he did, he kind of pushed forward and then I respected that so no, as far as the state's concerned, I just think I just think that we're falling back into an "open states too quickly" is my only my only concern. I think that we're going about the reopening too fast.

**Jack Halls** 17:02

How about at the federal level?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 17:06

You don't even get me started there. Yeah. No comment.

**Jack Halls** 17:12

Has your experience transformed how you think about family, friends, or community?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 17:18

Ah, I mean, I don't know. I don't know I you know, I really do appreciate the the love and the paying it forward. I think that there's been a lot of that that's been really great. Again, on the flip side, though, there's still all the, you know, the gross and disgusting folks of the world that are trying to take advantage of the vulnerable and will try to find my way to get money out of this however they can. So yeah, no, as far as I mean, I don't know. I don't know I'm moreso changing for myself and just, you know, trying to make sure that I'm doing right and then I'm making good changes. You know, this has kind of opened my eyes to that vulnerability, but as far as like people are concerned ehh. I'm still not too impressed. They're doing, I do like how, again, there's the love, and there's that wanting to give and I really do appreciate that. I mean, I feel like, you know, we've been in those situations before, and we really do our best. But is there still? Yeah, there's still the garbage out there too.

**Jack Halls** 18:23

Knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals, communities, and governments need to keep in mind for the future?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 18:32



I mean, you know, this, this is not a political thing. Wearing a mask in public is not a political statement. It's a statement of whether or not you care about your own health and the health and safety of others. I think that making this a political thing in an election year is ridiculous. I am beyond frustrated with the powers that be and how they've handled it. I think that if we continue to have the elected officials that we do have, it's going to be more so of this garbage in the future. I think that, I hope that maybe something of this will come where people will open their eyes to the kind of leadership that they want in the White House and the kind of people that they want to help move the country forward and not make it a political thing, not make it a you know, try to lie to people and not use science and things. I just, I don't know, I hope that that's the takeaway from it. But again, like I said, I just, yeah.

**Jack Halls** 19:38

Is there anything else that you want to add?

**Jeffery Scanlon** 19:42

Um, I mean, just stay safe, and wash your hands and all that good stuff.

Yeah, try to try to respect other people and try to just know that, you know, like, we're only going to be going forward if we actually can listen and give each other a little bit of space. So, that's all I got.

**Jack Halls** 20:07

Okay, thank you. Um, I'm gonna end the recording now and you can stay on and I'll give you some more information.

**Jeffery Scanlon** 20:13

Okay