

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Spencer Rode

Interviewee: Spencer Rode

Interviewer: Max Brotman

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Abstract: A northeastern University student interviews another about the transition from high school to college during COVID-19. The interview includes discussion on prom, lacrosse sport, online school, and starting college.

Max Brotman 00:04

Hey, what's up? I'm Max Brotman here with Spencer Rode on September 19, 2020, at 3:40pm, exactly. Um Spencer, how are you doing? And tell me what you were up to before COVID-19 crisis.

Spencer Rode 00:24

I'm good right now. And before COVID-19 I was, I was in my senior year. And you know, when it really got close to lockdown in March, I had just started lacrosse, my last season of lacrosse. And, you know, we're getting our preseason going. We looked good for once, which is like ironic because we didn't get to play our season. But whatever. That is what it is. And yeah, at the time, I was, I was just having a good time in high school. I was hanging out a lot with my friends getting my AP classes done. Yeah, just like getting excited for this stuff that was to come like, like prom and graduation and stuff. But uh, sure, you know, then lockdown hit.

Max Brotman 01:18

Looking, looking uphill. Right?

Spencer Rode 01:20

Oh, definitely. Definitely looking uphill. And then I don't know how it came crumbling down.

Max Brotman 01:25

Yeah. So tell me about that. Tell me about that, like kind of initial shock you experienced as a high school senior during that time period, especially in the early time period, like the first two weeks when you were shoved online.

Spencer Rode 01:39

Right. So um, at the time, it was like- everyone was kind of like, "well, you know, two weeks off of school, yay." But there was there was, including myself, just a few of us that knew like, this is not good. This is like- it- We're not getting the rest of our high school experience. We're losing out on three quarters, the junior- or senior year. We- It's not just going to be two weeks. We are going to lose prom. I'm going to lose lacrosse. I'm going to lose a lot. And it was frustrating, to say the least. Definitely. Just It was so frustrating. Because it's like, you look forward to all of these things for so, so long. Like you get into high school, you're a freshman. And you know, teachers are like "I know it sucks now, but just you wait senior year is going to be so fun." Then you're you know, you're a junior, you're like really slaving away, just trying to get all these hard classes and college credits from APs. And the teachers like, "oh, yeah, this sucks, I know this sucks, but just wait till next year. You're gonna have a great time." And then here I am next year. Where's my great time? I don't know. [both laugh]

Max Brotman 02:58

Well, so how do you- So moving on probably another like month or two in advance or past that point, how did you, like, start find yourself kind of like coping with or dealing with it? Like, I know some schools, like, had, like, a spaced out graduations others had online ones. There's some prom things going on.

Spencer Rode 03:19

Yes. So um, my school actually did well, in that regard. I mean, unfortunately, we didn't have our any sports seasons, obviously, or, or a prom. But as far as graduation goes, we waited a while a lot of schools just kind of you know, did their little car parade thing, try to crack it out right away. But our principal decided to you know, let's just set a tentative date. Just say July it was like July 6, I think. see what happens. And then by then things had gotten better. Um, you know, some some rules were lifted. And we were able to actually have like, a regular graduation on our football field, which was very nice.

Max Brotman 04:03

Gotcha. That's, that's great to hear, honestly. So after- So post-graduation, right, and then, I think the normal high school experience, it's kind of that feeling of like, yes, like it liberated like, I'm on to college now. How is that for you?

Spencer Rode 04:21

So that- It's really interesting, actually. Because I did, I did get that feeling of freedom. You know, I'm fortunate enough that, you know, my, my close friends live very close to me. And I would see see them relatively often, you know, in like the summertime when things were better, like outside and masks whatever. And, you know, we were having a good time we were, we were having that good amount of freedom. And then, we lost it because one, one of my friends actually went to North Carolina and got the Coronavirus. And then I got the Coronavirus from him. And that immediately just all freedom gone.

Max Brotman 05:08

Really just cut the head off the snake there.

Spencer Rode 05:12

Yeah, it was frightening because, um, you know, I had to quarantine in my home. Luckily we'd like caught it really quickly. Like, when I- when he found out he had it. I was like I got tested right away like that night quarantined away from my family, whatever. And I was in just my basement for like two weeks away from everyone.

Max Brotman 05:34

Gotcha. That's it. That sounds like a harrowing experience, you know.

Spencer Rode 05:39

Oh, definitely. Because, um, you know, like a couple of my family members have some, like medical things. So, if if they got the Coronavirus like that they could have been bad. And you know, thank God, you know, it all worked out. Okay, no one got sick. It was just me, but I was actually asymptomatic to, which I'm really thankful for because I didn't get the crappy part of things.

Max Brotman 06:02

Yeah, no, avoid. Avoided the bullet there, for sure.

Spencer Rode 06:06

Definitely.

Max Brotman 06:07

Now real, real quickly, just kind of transition me into college. You're here, finally. Back at the bottom, the food chain freshmen in the middle of a pandemic. So take me through that real quick.

Spencer Rode 06:22

Um, you know, it's, I, I have a lot of mixed emotions about it. Firstly, I love that I'm here. I'm grateful that I here- I'm here. And I'm grateful to have a school that legitimately cares. And even though like they do set rules, and the rules can be frustrating. I know that it's for the best because, you know, I talked to some of my friends that are in other colleges, my friends at home, who'd never even had their college experience like they're bored or the friends at other colleges. They're getting sick. I just had a friend in Wisconsin that her whole dorm has the Coronavirus. And, you know, I'm grateful for that, that Northeastern does everything it can to stay open and to keep us safe. At the same time. I'm not frustrated with the school. I'm frustrated with the circumstances that I can't get the- as of right now, the typical college experience. You know, I know that I will eventually but like right now, um, it's a little frustrating.

Max Brotman 07:24

Yeah, I think I think most people can hop on board with that one.

Spencer Rode 07:30

Definitely.

Max Brotman 07:30

And with that, thank you for your time.

Spencer Rode 07:33

Thank you.

Max Brotman 07:36

You wait, you consent to having this interview posted online?

Spencer Rode 07:40

Most certainly.

Max Brotman 07:41

All right, cool. Can't forget that one. [both laugh]