

## Transcript of Monologue by Mekenna Miller

**Speaker:** Mekenna Miller

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**Location:**

**Transcriber:** Lily Crigler

**Abstract:** This is a personal reflection on current issues regarding Covid-19 and social media censorship.

**Mekenna Miller 00:01**

This is a personal reflection on COVID-19 and censorship. As I reflect on my experiences with COVID and what I've observed going on in the world, there's so many issues and concerns that come to mind. One that's been weighing on me recently is censorship. I've been hearing a lot about social media platforms increasing censorship by flagging, hiding and removing quote misinformation. I was watching a doctor on YouTube today, Dr. Suneel Dhand. Dr. Dhand has spoken out about COVID, his argument for natural immunity, and other issues including relationship between obesity and COVID-19. Recently, he was blocked from a widely used social media platform for misinformation. Although all of his posts are backed by scientific evidence and scholarly research, he was told to apologize and commit to not spreading misinformation again, if he wanted to return to the platform. He's taken a stance against the censorship and is looking for alternative platforms. In addition to this, Instagram has allegedly banned the hashtag 'natural immunity,' which I found to be true after testing it out myself. Banning this hashtag does not make sense for a lot of people who understand that natural immunity has been backed by scientific evidence. Even the World Health Organization has recognized natural immunity in 90 to 99% of COVID-19 cases, while admitting that it is not completely understood. However, banning the hashtag altogether in order to prevent misinformation is alarming. Scientific discourse is crucial to the field, and open conversation is crucial to civil society. In this day and age, social media is the best and most effective tool to make conversation and share ideas with other people. Having ideas banned by plat-, by platforms arguably stifles learning and progress. With all this going on, I'm concerned for the future of the United States. The United States is founded on freedom and liberty and freedom, freedom of expression is protected by the First Amendment. While I do believe that we must work together to stop the spread of COVID and help protect others, is stopping conversation the best tool?