

Interviewee: Mert Erden

Interviewer: Danny Rollo

Date: 09/24/2021

Location (Interviewee): N/A

Location (Interviewer): N/A

Transcriber: Lily Crigler

Abstract: Danny Rollo interviews Mert Erden about life during COVID-19 from its beginning to current times. Mert discusses the feeling of being depressed during lockdown but reveals his more positive outlook on the pandemic as he believes that society has greatly improved as time has passed. Mert also talks about the actions of the United States government in response to the pandemic.

Danny Rollo 00:02

So I have to ask, do you consent to be interviewed?

Mert Erden 00:08

I do. I do.

Danny Rollo 00:10

Can you tell us when you're being interviewed?

Mert Erden 00:14

I'm being interviewed September 24th at 4:13pm.

Danny Rollo 00:20

Okay, so first question, what did you do after the first shutdown happened with COVID, March 2020?

Mert Erden 00:28

Okay, so one of the initial things that I did was, I was staying at home, I couldn't really go outside to friends, I couldn't really see other family members, anyone else; I was just kind of secluded in my own home. So I mean, there wasn't really much to do per se, so I mainly focused on my hobbies. I mean, like, I wanted to do programming, so it gave me more time to do that, but as time kind of went on, I realized that, like, yeah, it was great in the beginning, like, shut down and everything, like, I can do whatever the hell I want. But then as time went on, that enjoyment kind of plateaued, and it came to a point where like, Oh, my God, like, I'm just stuck. I don't know what to do, and there's nothing else to do because everyone's just scared out of their minds, and they don't know what to expect. So I mean, like, I mean, that was kind of the first things that I did.

Danny Rollo 01:25

Yeah. Yeah, gotcha. Um, moving on. Did you or any close family or friends contract COVID?

Mert Erden 01:36

Thankfully, no one in my family nor my friends contracted COVID because we were really careful about it, so no one really went to anyone's houses, and when it came to groceries, and like, just ordering, like

getting stuff, was mainly online. So there was zero to minimal contact in that aspect. But recently, actually, now that like, the Delta variant's out, I've had a couple of friends get it. And it really is unexpected, like some, some people just they don't, they get the two dose vaccinations, and they're like, Oh, I'm, I'm doing great, no problems, but then within a day or two, just the tables flip. And before, you know it, they have Delta, or they have something, and they're just coughing like crazy. And then they have to be quarantined for next two weeks, and it happens, like in the blink of an eye. So it's pretty scary. I'd like to say.

Danny Rollo 02:31

Yeah, it is. You're speaking a little bit about now, but could you elaborate more about your feelings towards the pandemic? Like, you know, fear, angst... Can you kind of delve into that?

Mert Erden 02:44

Yeah, um obviously, initially I was really excited, really happy about, like, just being home and kind of doing my own thing and trying to focus on what I'm doing outside of school. But as time went on, especially as I was indoors more, I didn't really have friends, and like, being able to hang out with friends, it was... it was a really depressing time for me; I feel like it's a very similar experience for other people. too. You don't really have much to do, you don't really have like, I'm also being in the same house with the same people doing the same things, just running in those same cycles and motions. You kind of lose your mind. So now, I think like now that the pandemic's kind of chilled out a bit, it's gone a lot better, you're outside more, chill out more. But I mean, to this day, like, I'll never forget the way that I felt, and I'm sure that no one will either.

Danny Rollo 03:43

Yeah, yeah, definitely. Shifting a little bit. Are you satisfied with the national response to COVID and the global response to COVID? Is there anything that you think both we could have done differently in the U.S. and as a planet?

Mert Erden 03:59

Yeah, um, I mean, obviously, global leader, like looking at from the perspective, like citizens, we always want, like, it's gotta happen immediately, no problem. Like, this pandemic happened, a couple of 1000 people got it, shut down, shut down, shut down. But most people don't realize the actual repercussions behind it because shutting down an entire country, just kills the economy. And most people don't look at it from that perspective, so I mean, for me, personally, I think that a lot of things could have been done better, especially in terms of notifying people more, getting more information out, giving more accurate information out rather than just a bunch of news outlets kind of confusing people with certain things because some, some sources you don't know if you can trust it or not, and you're kind of stuck in the middle. So out, in one part, I wasn't satisfied but on the other part, I feel like world leaders did what they, what they like they're also humans too, so they need to react like us. So I understand where they're coming from, and I think that they did the best that they could do.

Danny Rollo 05:11

Gotcha. So, over the course of the past year and a half or so how have your feelings and views changed about both the pandemic in general and the response to it?

Mert Erden 05:23

Um, I mean, I think especially with the situation with the vaccines and whatnot, I think that the government's done an amazing job in terms of implementing it and trying to get as many people to get it. I also feel that companies I know, for example, Uber, they started giving free rides out to people in order to get their vaccines. So I mean, collectively, I think we, as a society, have grown, like, really kind of connected more than ever, in this situation. And I feel that right now, where we stand today is quite amazing. I feel like, people were still, like, back a year and a half ago, none of us knew what the hell was gonna happen. We were not sure are we going to be stuck in our house for the next two, three years, you know, so seeing this now, like, see it slowly recede, like, despite the Delta situation, seeing all the cases receding, seeing people actually go out there and take action for this, for COVID, it's, it's quite the improvement and I'm really happy to see it.

Danny Rollo 06:34

Yeah, that's great to hear that your emotions are more positive towards it now. Yeah, I mean, those, those are my questions. You use yours or had this... me with the same ones?

Mert Erden 06:49

Um, so let's end this one then, and let's start a new one. Right?

Danny Rollo 06:54

Okay.