

## Transcript of Interview with EM and DC by Each Other

**Interviewee/Interviewer:** EM

**Interviewee/Interviewer:** DC

**Date:** 09/22/2021

**Abstract:** In the interview both discuss how the pandemic influenced their lives, how they thought it changed the world, and what its implications for the future would be like. One of the interviewees was from the United Arab Emirates and provides insight into what life like was there with the strict regulations relative to the United States.

**EM 0:02**

Hello, my name is [EM] and I will be interviewing [DC] for the COVID-19 Archive Project. It is September 22, 2021, Wednesday. It is 12:50pm do you [DC] give consent to be interviewed?

**DC 0:20**

Yes I do.

**EM 0:22**

Okay, so first question is, when did you think you first heard about the Coronavirus?

**DC 0:29**

So I heard about it when it first hit China in around December, but I don't think anyone thought that it was that big of a deal. It was just kind of like another virus like a flu. And then I'm actually from Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, and the first case hit there around March. And I remember like everyone going into panic mode. And it was just one case like there was one case a day, two cases a day, three cases a day. And that's when our lockdown first started, but I remember thinking that it wasn't that big of a deal until it started spreading to other countries. And that's when I realized it was more than just another flu.

**EM 1:02**

Yeah, okay, so what did Dubai do in order to stop the spread and did that last?

**DC 1:11**

So it's a really strict country. They were really strict with the Coronavirus though. We went into a complete lockdown for about four weeks that you had to get a permit to leave your house to go to the grocery store like apply for one online. If you were caught without wearing a mask, and that still goes to this day, it's an \$800 fine without wearing a mask outside or inside. There was a lot more, they did like- after the lockdown stopped you- when you went to the mall if you were over the age of sixty or you're under the age of 12, you weren't allowed inside because you're considered high risk. And the COVID tests there are pretty expensive, too; they're about like \$50 to get a COVID test like every time you have to get tested, so I feel like that might have like- the spread might have happened more because of that because people didn't want to get tested because they didn't want to keep spending money which like eventually probably led to more people getting the virus, but around like two or three months ago they lowered the cost of it it's about like 10 bucks now which is probably better but yeah.

**EM 2:13**

Oh wow. So did you have the virus or know anyone who did? What were the symptoms like? were they as bad as- as the news described it?

**DC 2:26**

So I did have the virus, and my whole family had the virus, but we all had it at different times. It was really bad. My mum got the virus in September of like when you first kind of heard about it when it was becoming big in the U.S. And that was when it was like really strict, so we had a full 14 day lockdown in our house. We weren't allowed to leave, nothing, it was a really big deal. And a lot of people that like we met and we had to inform we were like really scared. And then my brother was visiting and both him and me got it two weeks after each other in December. But at that point, like a lot of people I knew had COVID. I got it from someone I knew and so did my brother so it wasn't that big of a deal we did a 10 day lockdown in our house, both of us each one at a time, and I had to quarantine a total of 20 days and so did he because they were like right after each other. The symptoms were kind of bad for the first three days. I lost complete sense of smell and taste. So I lost about 10 pounds because I just didn't want to eat anything because it just tasted really bad. But towards the end it was just kind of frustrating like sitting in a room the whole day and not being able to leave when you don't even feel the virus anymore. But yeah, that was kind of it.

**EM 3:39**

Oh, wow. Dang. Final question, How do you think COVID-19 has changed the world for better or for worse?

**DC 3:48**

I think it's had a lot of negative effects for sure. But I think some things- some positive things came out of it. It definitely brought the world a little closer together. I also think that the work from home thing's kind of cool now like you don't have to- especially with kids like they don't have to miss school. It can be done online. I know not all of us like that, but it can be done online. I know for my school like parent teacher meetings will never be in person again because they're too hard to like organize; they just do them online now because it's so much easier for everyone. But of course, there's many negatives A lot of people have lost their lives, and a lot of people missed out on really nice things like we didn't get to have a prom or like we- our graduation was online. So it kind of sucks, and I know that we were kind of getting out of it. So for the year before us, it was- it was probably even worse. They didn't get anything. So at least we're grateful we got to do a couple of things like, now we get to do in person school, which is like pretty cool, but yeah, that's it.

**EM 4:45**

Okay.

**DC 4:48**

Okay. So, hi, my name is [DC]. I will be interviewing [EM]. Today is Wednesday, the 22nd of September at 12:55. Do you give your consent to be filmed for the COVID-19 Archive Project?

**EM 5:01**

Yes.

**DC 5:02**

Okay, on with the first question. Do you think that continued research and advocating for mental health that began because of the isolation related to the pandemic would have come out of- out in an otherwise normal year?

**EM 5:16**

Um, no, I really don't think so. And I think that's one of the benefits, very loosely, using the word benefits, of COVID-19 is people really started to realize how important mental health was after being isolated and working from home so long, and I really don't think it would have happened in an otherwise normal year because people would have maintained that norm of putting mental health to the side that usually they have.

**DC 5:54**

How was your mental health affected by the pandemic?

**EM 5:58**

So surprisingly, it wasn't that bad for me, just because I have a twin and a stepsister. So I was always quarantining with them and in lockdown with them, so I did have someone to talk to in the house at all times. So I don't think compared to people who are more elderly or live by themselves, I don't think that I really faced the worst of it. But I do know a lot of people who really suffered mentally just because they couldn't talk to anyone in person for such long stretches of time.

**DC 6:36**

Do you think about your family closer together?

**EM 6:460**

Yeah, it definitely did especially because my mom is a doctor. So she was always updating us on what was happening in her hospital and kind of making sure we were all- we always well informed and had the same protocols at home as she did at work.

**DC 7:01**

Okay. Have circumstances returned to an acceptable normal for you?

**EM 7:08**

I think so. Really wearing a mask isn't that big of an issue with me, so I don't think it's too far off from what pre-COVID normal was like. I don't feel like it's horribly different. Although getting a test every week is a little bit inconvenient.

**DC 7:34**

Yeah, I agree. Do you think the pre-pandemic normal will ever return?

**EM 7:42**

So I think it'll be like, how China dealt with SARS. You could see people wearing masks a lot more on public transportation. And especially now I think people are realizing how unclean a lot of public spaces are and how important hand sanitizer can mean. I think that will definitely be one of the lingering effects for many years to come.

**DC 8:08**

Yeah, I agree. I look at like crowded spaces and like get nervous now because of pandemic.

**EM 8:14**

Yeah.

**DC 8:15**

Yeah. Okay, well, it was really nice speaking to you.

**EM 8:18**

It was nice speaking to you, too.