

Interviewee: Jake Black

Interviewer: Demetri Bush

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Abstract: Jake Black was born in Waco Texas, with a father in the Air Force he moved around the country until graduating High School in Kansas, and College in Texas. Jake now owns a restaurant in Valley Mills Texas. In this interview, Jake discusses how Covid has affected his life, through work, the community around him, and his own family. He talks about how Covid-19 has affected his restaurant, and the struggles he's gone through to help not only the restaurant but his employees as well. Jake shares his thoughts about how Covid has affected the country and the people that he knows as well as the problems that have sprung up because of the government too.

DB 0:02

Good evening. My name is Demetri Bush. Today is December 14 2001. The time is five o'clock

JB 0:11

It's not 2001 2021 said

DB 0:16

2021

As of today in the US, there are 50 million cases of COVID and 798,000 confirmed deaths in Wisconsin, Wisconsin, there are 1 million cases and 10,425 confirmed deaths. There are 60.8% of the country's population that have been vaccinated. Alright, now that we have that out of the way. Do you consent to being recorded for the western Wisconsin COVID-19? Archive?

JB 0:44

Yes.

DB 0:46

Please state your full name, age and race.

JB 0:49

Jake black Jr. 72. Caucasian.

DB 0:55

Thank you. Can you go over your background a little bit and tell ah us where you grew up.

JB 1:02

I was born in Waco, Texas, but never really lived here. My dad was in the Air Force. So we traveled all over the country. I graduated high school in Kansas, and went to college in Texas.

DB 1:15

Okay, awesome. Thank you. Where do you live now? And what is it like to live there?

JB 1:23

I live in Valley Mills, Texas. It's a small town 20 miles out of Waco. Population about 2500. Very quaint, quaint little town.

DB 1:36

Thank you. And what do you do for a living? Jake?

Unknown Speaker 1:41

I own a restaurant.

DB 1:45

When you first learned of COVID, what were your thoughts about it? And have they changed at all?

JB 1:51

Oh, yes, my thoughts have changed a lot. Of course, I think when COVID first came out, everybody was pretty paranoid, because they closed our business for two months, they've shut down the whole country, just about for two months. So I think everybody thought, Oh, my God, everybody's gonna die. And, ah you know, as I went along, and you got misinformation from everybody, you know, and you didn't know. And I told my staff, for instance, I got vaccinated because of my age. And I respect everybody else if they want to, or don't want to you know I respect their right, but I don't think it should be mandatory.

DB 2:28

Thank you. And how was COVID affected your job and how you run your restaurant in Texas?

JB 2:39

Well, it has affected this. Originally, of course, we had everybody we're in mass when we did reopen. And we can only reopen it a certain percentage. And then luckily, we were in Texas, where they didn't lock everything down forever. We were completely closed for two months. And then they let us open 50% and then 75%.

DB 3:01

Right. I remember you guys having the um you guys opened up a lot earlier than a lot of the other states I remember.

JB 3:08

Right. Right. We did.

DB 3:10

Awesome. And um how was COVID affected you and your family from like day to day activities?

JB 3:20

Well, not a whole lot. Now. It was because you couldn't really go anywhere unless you wore a mask. And you know, some of the some of the locations that you went to a mandatory like to get on a bus like Federal Trade, transportation, you still have to wear a mask, you know, in the airports, things like that. So, personal day to day life. It's changed a little bit. And then, you know, then my, my mother passed away in May. And she didn't pass away from COVID. Although they probably want to say it was COVID. She was 94 years old. And Karen's mother's 97. She had both vaccines and got COVID.

And she's still here with us. But as far as day to day operations with us, it did affect

you know, some people come in with at first they lifted the mass mandate. Some people would wear masks that went on for a little while. And I told the server's if they feel anybody feels uncomfortable. They wear masks for a while. And then after a while I lifted it when a lot of people got vaccines. And I said if a customer doesn't feel comfortable, then you put your mask back on. But we've been pretty well, completely open with with no day to day has an effect. I mean, nobody wears a mask in our restaurant anymore. I mean, it's very rare.

DB 4:42

Right, right. I feel like it's becoming more and more rare to see masks on now. Especially with all the vaccines coming out and the mandates and stuff.

JB 4:53

Right.

DB 4:55

All right. Awesome. Thank you. What has been the biggest challenges that you've had to face? During the COVID outbreak,

JB 5:03

probably the biggest challenges when it first came out, and they shut us completely down. And of course, that sort of bothered us because, you know, we had put \$45,000 our own money in it just to keep it going, while we were closed, you know, you still got bills going on while you're closed. And luckily, with the unemployment thing, our, our people that worked for us to go on employment, so they were okay, you know, for that period of time. And then when we reopen, some of them still get unemployment because we, they didn't really come back full time, a lot of work just part time hours. We have a lot of part time people.

DB 5:40

Yeah, it was I know small, like restaurants, the small business they got, they got hit really hard.

JB 5:47

Right.

And a lot of people, of course, we've been in business a long time, we've had 14 restaurants in three states. So so we weren't like, like a ma and pa where we're real small. We're going to big chain. So luckily, we had, you know, funds put away for rainy days kind of thing. Of course, it goes through pretty quick. You not selling anything, right, you know, in your in your you know, and then when we came back trying to keep our staff going, you know, and so it, it was definitely a challenge for the first six months.

DB 6:21

Copy That

JB 6:22

Because Because you weren't open full time. So you're doing partial money. And we have changed our hours due to the COVID. Because we couldn't get people to work part time at night. So we're still not doing nights again, and we're not going to go back to their nights.

DB 6:38

So it's changed for you only two days now.

JB 6:41

Right.

DB 6:43

That must be a big adjustment.

JB 6:45

happened is a lot of people. And I just turned us on talk radio today, they have the same feeling I get a lot of these people who've been off all this time in the Senate plummets and never went on for 90 eligibles for 96 weeks. And they're realizing how to make it on less money and not do nothing. So you know, they have no desire, no drive, no nothing, but they're making less money can do nothing. So they don't want to go to work.

DB 7:14

Right. All right.

JB 7:18

It's been really an employee challenge. I think more than anything,

DB 7:22

they've probably been and they've probably got hit the hardest because you know, depending on paychecks.

JB 7:28

Yeah, employees hit it the hardest because, oh, that we're going to be there no matter what happened. You have employees that they're not sure. Oh, gosh, what's going to happen? How am I going to pay my bills and these kinds of things? How long is money going to last? So and then little bitty Mom and Pop restaurants? Many guys, some of them never came back.

DB 7:52

Yeah, they're gone for good.

JB 7:54

Yeah.

DB 7:56

All right. Thank you, Jake. What have you, your family and your friends um done for recreation during the COVID? Outbreak?

JB 8:06

Well, that's a good question, not a whole lot as far as recreation. You know, I can't say we did much recreation.

DB 8:19

It was was definitely hard the lockdown.

JB 8:21

Well, there was nowhere to go,

DB 8:22

Right.

JB 8:23

Everything was everything's closed. You know you couldn't even go to the movie theatre.

DB 8:27

No, no.

JB 8:29

you couldn't. A lot of restaurants weren't open at night just like us. So. And my wife and I, you know, we always go to different play different towns and different restaurants, everything, everything was closed up. So we didn't know where what and when you can go anywhere. So we pretty well hung around, not because we were worried about getting it. But nothing was open.

DB 8:52

Exactly. How has COVID-19 affected the community around you?

JB 9:00

Well, again, I think in the first six months, it was pretty devastating. Because like I say, everybody was unclear unsure of a no, you got misinformation, you know what the deal was? And you didn't know whether to take the vaccine and the younger people didn't know, to take it because what if they could never, you know, a young girl couldn't get pregnant or whatever. They didn't know a lot about it. So I think there was a lot of paranoia, the first six months. Nobody's ever been through this. I mean, yeah, they're the Spanish flus, you know, in 1919, but nothing like this. And of course, one of the problems is the problem now we didn't really pay attention to attend is the local governments, you know, the cities, the counties, the states. They they have authority they've never had. They've never had this kind of power. You know, to say, you know, a year ago, two years ago, nobody could say, Okay, you're closing for too much, but you can't do that you get sued.

DB 10:00

It was unthinkable.

JB 10:01

Yeah. And now they still have all this power. And they're still trying to dictate what everybody can do. And that's, that's, that's hard on business people. You don't know what you don't know. And it could happen again that could say, Okay, we're going to shut down, although where we live, small town, Texas is a good place to be with all this going on.

DB 10:24

Right, right. You don't have the you're not in the big cities where everything happens faster.

JB 10:30

Right, right. We're not We're not in Dallas or Austin, where everything's, you know, everything's chaos. That's what happens first, no matter what happens, it's always in the big cities first.

DB 10:40

Exactly.

JB 10:40

So we're starting in our own little world. We're sitting home not making any money. But But anyway,

DB 10:48

Right, How have um How are the people around you responding to the COVID, 19? Outbreak?

JB 10:56

Actually, the people now are sort of sort the same feeling as me like, well, you know, it is what it is. You took the vaccine or you didn't take the vaccine? And if you get it, you get it. If you don't, you know, and I think people are just sort of throwing their hands up now. You know, because because, you know, CDC says one thing and National Health Organization says something else, and the White House says something else, state government says something else. So nobody, a lot of missing from it. I think there's still a lot of misinformation now. Nobody's on the same page. And that's, I think that's a big, big problem.

DB 11:32

Have you or anybody, you know, gotten sick from COVID-19? And if so, what was what was that experience like?

JB 11:41

There have been some customers that came in and said they had it, some of them were mild cases. And I know one guy who, who didn't have COVID. But he took one of the shots. And he's, he's 25 years old, real healthy young guy. And he passed out right there in his truck. He was in the hospital for three days, some kind of reaction to a vaccine. And you know, that's like, years ago, you don't remember that? Well, you probably do, but years ago, to go to school, you had to have a shot record. If you didn't have smallpox and measles shots, you couldn't go school. And ever since a lot of things have changed since private schools and religious schools and everything. So I don't want my kids taking any medicine. I don't take any of this, you know, and so we sort of leaned that way trying to accommodate everybody. So now, it doesn't really matter to anybody. But as far as a lot of our customers said they basically had a helicase. And they had it and they Doctor told them, they don't need a vaccine anymore. Nobody in our immediate family at all around us had it at all. Except my mother in law, who's getting ready to be 97.

DB 12:57

Okay, thank you, Jake. And lastly, um what are your thoughts on the COVID vaccine as a whole?

JB 13:06

Well, I think that science has improved so much since, you know, since the polio vaccine installed vaccine years ago, you know, where it took 10 years to get anything approved. And that science is so much faster. And I think a lot of people are paranoid, because they think, well, they

happen too fast. They've got a vaccine too quick, too quick, while science has really changed. So things, you know, like, used to turn a DNA test, and it would take three months to get it back. And now they can, you know, they can basically do it overnight kind of thing.

DB 13:38

Yeah.

JB 13:38

And I think that's, that's been part of the problem. Everybody's a little, a little confused on there. But I think that as a whole, I think what's changed is, I personally believe I didn't have a problem getting the vaccine. But I have a granddaughter, you know, she's young. And I said, you know, it's your decision and I understand a lot of these things, they don't know, because they haven't, they haven't done these studies for five or 10 years to see if there's any effects. And I understand that, you know, and everybody's, it's their choice, although she when she did get a vaccine. So that was her choice.

DB 14:19

Seems to be

JB 14:21

I feel comfortable with it personally.

DB 14:22

Right. Right. It seems to me, like more of a problem with like, the younger people, deciding whether or not to get it or not get it.

JB 14:28

It is, you know, that's why of the colleges, you've given them money to get vaccines and everything else. And, you know, I don't know if it's because they're rebellious, or just, you know, step one, right. And I understand their view and, and I accept their choice. It's not my choice. And I'm not making them get their work for me. That's that's, you know, it's there. If they want to do it, I'm not going to get it. I've been vaccinated, I feel comfortable, and I'll probably take the booster, you know, pretty soon, I just had a flu shot. But I go to the VA because I'm a disabled vet. So I go there, and they give me all this. Of course, I didn't go there to get the COVID test. COVID I got it right. In the little town down the road.

DB 15:06

Thank You Jake. Well, that's all I got for you today. I want to thank you so much for doing the interview today.

JB 15:26

You Bet.

DB 15:27

And if you have any final thoughts or anything you want to say,

JB 15:30

well, good luck with it. And I think that, I think, still, and then you see this, whether you're in Wisconsin, or South Dakota, that never shut down, Florida or New York, you know, they're starting to mask mandates mandatory as of today. The military, just like 20 Some people fired by the US military. I mean, there's two sides that when your in the military, and I did, they pump you up with all kinds of shots, you don't know what they are. But, but you know, they're exercising their right and they lost their job. And I don't think that's right. Military might be different than a private owned company shouldn't have the authority to make it take this. You know, it's sort of like, after you're open, and you've had a policy for 10 years and all of a sudden Okay, your policy now is everybody gonna take the directors? Well, that hasn't been the policy. And people you know, might say, Oh, I refuse to do that because when I hired that wouldn't policy and I think it's wrong with they're doing a lot of these people need accountants that's my only thing.

DB 16:38

All right.

JB 16:40

But anyway, that's good or bad is my thoughts. I started rolling with it. I'm not too worried bout it.

DB 16:47

Awesome

JB 16:49

variants, you know,

DB 16:51

right

JB 16:51

gonna keep mutating everything.

DB 16:53

Right

JB 16:53

twice. That's why they don't have flu. Shot that kills the flu because it mutates every year.

DB 16:58

Yeah, same thing. with the common cold too, and

JB 17:01

as long as it's mild, that was think about this. Nobody died of the flu this year. rolled out of COVID because they get paid through COVID

DB 17:11

Right. Alright, Jake, I want to again, thank you so much for for doing this on appreciate it.

JB 17:20

You bet buddy, I don't know if it helped you a lof or confused you.

DB 17:22

Does a lot. I appreciate it.

JB 17:24

Yeah. Okay. Thanks a lot.