

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Patrick Mceleney

Interviewee: Patrick Mceleney

Interviewer: Chloe Brasket

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Abstract: This is an interview with Northeastern student Patrick Mceleney about his experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. He talks about the experience of leaving school suddenly, flying home to Japan (where his parents are stationed), and working as an EMT under the threat of a global pandemic.

Chloe Brasket 00:05

All right, wonderful. So, the proposed subject of this interview is your experience during the covid 19 pandemic. So, hello there. We'll start with a bit of an introduction. Can you state your name for me?

Patrick Mceleney 00:25

I'm Patrick Mceleney.

CB 00:28

Wonderful. And would you mind telling me the date and time of the interview?

PM 00:35

Absolutely. It's a Saturday, September 19. That's 2:04pm.

CB 00:41

Okay. And then, before we start in earnest, do you consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19? archive project?

PM 00:52

Yes, I do.

CB 00:54

Fantastic. And where are you? Right now?

PM 01:00

Currently in Boston

CB 01:01

Okay. Fantastic. So you are a college student at Northeastern University? What is your name and major? Or a year and major?

PM 01:18

I'm a fourth-year health science student.

CB 01:23

And where are you from? Where do you generally live?

PM 01:29

Parents are in Japan. Other station there. So, every summer and winter I go back.

CB 01:35

Interesting. Did you spend the pandemic period? So, when school shut down in March in Japan, or were you here?

PM 01:47

Yeah, I was forced to go back to Japan because I was kicked off campus and forced to find a flight quite quickly.

CB 01:56

CB: Oh, that's crazy. Was it stressful traveling during that time?

PM 02:03

Not really, because there wasn't much cases in Boston and in Japan at that time. So it was I didn't feel too at risk.

CB 02:13

Was it difficult to pack up all of your stuff on campus? Really quickly with not much warning?

PM 02:21

Yeah, I mean, they gave us like, what, 36 hours to move out and leave. So it was very stressful.

CB 02:30

So then, were you in Japan for most of the summer?

PM 02:38

Yep, I was stuck there from March to about August.

CB 02:46

So, when the stay-at-home orders were put into place you were you were there? Did you have much contact with other people in Japan? Or are you mostly quarantined?

PM 03:04

I had contact with my friends back home. Um, they were pretty much in the same boat. We were all stuck. At home, we couldn't really go anywhere because everything was shut down. So.

CB 03:17

So, what did you think? When the school shut down and right before what were your thoughts on COVID? Did you think you knew how long this would last?

PM 03:32

Um, no, I wouldn't have expected it to be this long. also work as an EMT. So I get to see what, like the first cases and stuff in Boston. And we were kind of seeing that there's a trend upward in cases. At first, no one really thought it was too bad. And then it got to Boston. And then we kind of realize like, "Oh, this is real, and people were actually getting really sick. Oh, wow." That's when I realized it was more serious than we thought.

CB 04:03

So that was last spring. For you went home to Japan.

PM 04:08

PM: Yes.

CB 04:11

Was there a lot of worry among the people you worked with about cases skyrocketing?

PM 04:20

Yep, that was probably the primary concern that we all had. We didn't know how it was transmitted at the time. People thought it was airborne. And so we were just scrambling to wear the proper equipment. And now that we know it's a little different, we kind of eased off but we're still a bit.

CB 04:43

Are you still are you still working?

PM 04:47

Yep. Yeah, I primarily do overnights on the days and the weekends.

CB 04:53

Oh, wow. Okay, so how has your experience been since coming back to Boston, working with them

PM 05:02

Ever since we came back to Boston, it's a lot of the patients seem very tired. All the staff seem tired. And we're still as EMTs. We're all still concerned. Because the cases are, are going down but not in a not acceptable, but like, comforting. Great.

CB 05:29

Yeah. So being in Japan watching all of this stuff happening in the US and in Boston over the summer. How, how was that for you? That must have been a weird experience.

PM 05:47

Yeah, I mean, you turn on the news. And it's like, 30,000 people in America tested positive that day, and you only see, not the highlights, like the worst of the highlights if that's the thing, and it gets you really concerned. And it's terrifying to know, it's because you're not there. You don't really know what it's like. So being removed, it's a bit scarier.

CB 06:12

I'm sure. Fantastic I don't know much about what the response was like, in Japan, did it feel safer there? Were you worried about coming back to campus?

PM 06:31

So, Japan was fairly similar to the US and that there was no lockdown orders. It just depended on each city to lock down if they felt like they needed to. The only difference I saw was in the beginning. When I got back, everyone was wearing a mask, no one was really concerned about not wearing a mask. And that's a problem in the US. And in the cases in Japan, they dropped tremendously around August when I came back, so I had no concerns about flying to the States.

CB 07:10

And how do you feel about the national and global responses to the pandemic?

PM 07:19

Nationally, um, at first, again, no one knew what was gonna happen. So I felt like everyone was a bit. Just weary about everything. And then now we're looking back and we're like, oh, we could have done a little bit more, or we could have done something different. So it's a bit. I'd say it's frustrating. Yeah.

CB 07:42

All right. So that's about seven minutes. Is there anything else you'd like to say about your experience of the pandemic?

PM 07:54

Not now.

CB 07:56

All right. Thank you.

PM 07:57

Thank you.