

TRANSCRIPT

Interviewee: Brogan Daniel Maxwell

Interviewer: Bridget Kelly Maxwell

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Abstract:

Brogan Maxwell was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota but raised in Rochester. He currently resides in Baltimore, Maryland as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University. Brogan discusses the impact Covid-19 has had on his education, work, and social life. He brings a different perspective on communal efforts to flatten the curve and what his school has done to ensure safety. Touched on the government handling in his area and how he feels they are doing, and discussed the importance of being vaccinated and staying up to date on the pandemic.

Bridget Maxwell 0:00

If you just want to state your name, where you live, your occupation where you go to school. It's also Sunday, November 28, 2021. Currently, 11:51 am here, if you just want to briefly tell us who you are.

Brogan Maxwell 0:21

Yeah, perfect. My name is Brogan Maxwell. I live in Baltimore, Maryland. I am a master's student at Johns Hopkins University, where I study film and media. With an emphasis on business and writing. My occupation is as a graduate assistant for the Student Disability Services office on campus. Thank you for having me.

Bridget Maxwell 0:52

Yeah, thank you for joining me. I am going to ask questions revolving around COVID because that's a big issue at the moment, we are living through a global pandemic. And I was just kind of curious about how was it like, in comparison, because you have lived in Wisconsin for a period of your time? Just kind of how it is in Maryland. Are people masked up usually are like, most people, you know, getting the vaccine? Or is your school enforcing it just kind of like an overview of how Maryland is handling it?

Brogan Maxwell 1:31

Yeah, and it's been different. So when COVID first did, I was finishing up my senior year at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Um, since we didn't know, really the full extent of

everything with COVID. They just sent everyone home. And we had to finish up the year online. So I guess, you know, I don't have too much experience with, like Wisconsin state politics with COVID. But you know, I've kept in touch with it. And I know that there are different ordinances and everything like that, with what we have currently in Maryland. And Hopkins to it like, definitely skews the perspective, because I mean, we're the number one. I mean, we're kind of like head honcho with this. I feel. So I mean, I think it's something like 99% of our faculty are vaccinated. And I think 94 to 95% of students are vaccinated at Hopkins. But in terms of like, statewide, two in Maryland, I think we're still like, one of the top five in the country with the vaccination rate. Also, the city of Baltimore still has a mask ordinance for indoor public places. Oh, really? Which I don't think that's the case in Wisconsin. Now we're in Eau Claire. So we're, I mean, I've felt comfortable, like in my current situation with it. And yeah, I mean, it's, it is different. Even though like I said, I don't have the most experience since it was shut down in Wisconsin before I could experience it.

Bridget Maxwell 3:36

Right. Because I know looking at the vaccine rates through like each state, like in comparison, Wisconsin, fully vaccinated is 59.3% in Maryland. Looks like it's 67.2%.

Brogan Maxwell 3:51

So yeah, you're almost at that threshold

Bridget Maxwell 3:54

At 70% of our school is, I think, like 80% students and like, 95% faculty or something like that. Not bad. But you know, we could.

Brogan Maxwell 4:08

Yeah, I'm still in touch with like, my alma mater, UW Lem. And I know that they had to do like a, like a COVID. Like incentive thing where it was like, you got to enter like a raffle. I was just like, no, you have to do this. Yeah, essentially everyone complied.

Bridget Maxwell 4:32

Yeah. Because it was mandated.

Brogan Maxwell 4:37

Yeah, I mean, you had to if you want to, if you wanted to take classes in person, you had to submit your vaccination proof, which of course I did.

Bridget Maxwell 4:47

Yeah. Talking about being vaccinated, what was kind of your reasoning behind getting vaccinated Was it because of school, personal health, and family health.

Brogan Maxwell 5:03

I mean, all the I've also, you know, I am thankful for never having mumps or, you know, chickenpox or anything like that. So I'm well aware of, you know, what vaccines do. And I, my thing, too, is like, I understand that, to get rid of this, we all need to pitch in, and we all need to get it because otherwise, it's just given keep on happening, essentially. But then, like, you're saying, of course, I did it for my health did it for my family. Because I was always scared, being back home with our parents, you know, knowing that I could transfer something that could kill them. You know, that's not what I want to do at all. And I had to school. So it was, I mean, it just kind of a no-brainer.

Bridget Maxwell 5:59

Right. It was just kind of like; this is what needs to be done. Yeah, this is the box we're checking out. Yeah. So you didn't have like, in the beginning, when they're the first kind of like coming up with the vaccine? Did you have doubts about getting it ever? Just because I know, people were scared because it happened so fast. But in my opinion, it happened so fast, because we're going through a global pandemic, and we had everyone working on it. Did you have kind of doubts about receiving the vaccine?

Brogan Maxwell 6:30

Um, no. I like to trust professionals, and I trust the scientific community. So I was happy with the great leaps and bounds we've done in modern medicine with these mRNA vaccines. I mean, the only not like, it was doubt. But I mean, after my first vaccine I had symptoms. Yeah. But it wasn't like I had like doubt it was just like, Yeah, I'm glad I got this vaccine because I can't imagine how bad right if it's our case, we would ae

Just getting the minor dose wiped me out.

Bridget Maxwell 7:19

Like, you've mentioned that you have a job with students' disabilities, has this affected or shifted your employment at all? Not just with that, I suppose. But in general, do you find that Maryland's harder to get employment because a COVID, of or, you know, anything related to.

Brogan Maxwell 7:39

You know, I'm pretty blessed that I was able to find this job and be able to work with this university. So I mean, the only thing that's changed for me day to day is like, I have to wear a mask indoors and get a weekly COVID test, make sure that I don't have it, spreading it. Right. But I think it's shifted everything. For most people, unfortunately. I think it's made employment harder. I mean, my girlfriend, she's been having some difficulties finding employment. And I

think it's COVID related mostly. Yeah. And I also, I mean, it just nation statistics to that. It's, it is, unfortunately, we're in a recession when you look at what a recession is. And also what you see what the supply chain to that alone recession is, because all that is, is just downgrading in the production of goods, essentially in the GDP. So I'm just, I'm thankful, in the situation I am.

Bridget Maxwell 8:59

Right. And you mentioned like, you know, shifting, like ideals or relationships, do you think because of COVID it's changed any relationships you've had, or do you think it hasn't? It's made closer relationships or distance yourself from people? Like, how does COVID affect your relationships?

Brogan Maxwell 9:23

Yeah, I mean, I think it has changed that I mean, you know, I'm in my early 20s, which is like the time that you think that I should go on to this bar or, you know, whatever. But it's not like I'm jumping for joy over train and get like getting this deadly virus right do that as much so I think it's like changed, like how we all interface in society. And I think like, it's made me be like more Have an indoors person in some ways. I mean, in like relationships, it's also like, I do think there's something like I mean, my writing partner, my creative partner, a lot of like, the stuff that we do. Now, it was all just on Zoom. Which that all started because of COVID. Because we first met over zoom. And then we established a relationship over zoom. So I think it has, like, changed, like, what our relationship is pressure.

Bridget Maxwell 10:44

It's a lot more, it's not as personal because you can't, it's slowly gotten more like virtual relationships in a way, slow down a bit because I'm able to see more people and so are you. But yeah, definitely, I remember you talking about the difficulties of having to like, essentially, produce content, like, right, you know, direct all that stuff. And that's incredibly hard in today's climate, especially when you need actors. And like, you have to use equipment, and you have to, like, do all these different and involve so many different moving parts, and so many things that need to be like, cleaned, inspected, like, people need COVID test.

Brogan Maxwell 11:28

I mean, you're right about all that. Like, I mean, it's, we produced this short test footage for this pilot, my creative partner and I came up with, but we hired everyone over zoom. Like we didn't, yeah, we never met a single person. No, in person. Wow. So I mean, it was kind of crazy that we're able to like, still get it up and running, like with just digital, what we have now. Yeah, and I know you said virtual, but we're not quite there. In terms of virtual this is all, digital. Unfortunately, when I know I'm just I just say that because everyone says it's all virtual. But digital, virtual is actual virtual, Digital's actual digital. I just like to be a stickler because I'm in this field, I guess I like to correct people.

Bridget Maxwell 12:29

I mean, if you want to touch more on what it's like been, like filming and like, kind of creating, because you're starting, your kind of making a show making different content. How has that then, with COVID? Because it's the only experience that you've had with? Yeah, reading content? Yeah.

Brogan Maxwell 12:51

I don't think we have anything to compare it to like you're saying, but I mean, I think, it's, in some ways, it's better. Because sometimes it's less frictionless, because it's like, Alright, I need to meet with Sam. And we can do, we can do a quick two hours, you know, just like this. And so that's nice that we can like do all this pre-production stuff beforehand. But then I think once it gets difficult is once you start moving into the production sphere because that's all like you'd need people to be there. Because otherwise what are you filming? You know? Do you I mean, that part's hard, because it's like, for us, we were on a student that. So like, we had to, like do everything ourselves, essentially, like we didn't have like a dedicated medical team to enforce six feet social distance. Yeah. We didn't like it so you just have to be more conscientious, about the climate and everything like that. Yeah. Okay, sorry, if it didn't answer.

Bridget Maxwell 14:05

It did. I'm kind of unrelated in a way, I guess I was kind of just wondering because you're talking about safety and keeping people safe. Do you feel like John Hopkins, and maybe just your community in general has been helping flatten the curve? Like, do you think people are pushing to do that in Maryland, or even at your school?

Brogan Maxwell 14:34

Yeah, I mean, I think Hopkins is really good for our community. In that, we've, we've brought vaccines on campus. So the accessibility, you know, is there because you're here, you're going to be able to get it because it's like, a couple of blocks away. Right. He did that with the flu vaccine. They made sure that like, always consistent with like, what they, like what the guidelines are? What is required of me? What's the deadline? Right, all this different stuff, they also put together like an infrastructure, which they had to come up with for uploading, you know, vaccination proof. You know, I think in terms of statewide, you know, definitely the vaccines are there. at some point, it does become an individual thing where it's like, individuals aren't getting it, unfortunately. But, you know, there are probably greater socio-political factors that underpin everything and make it you know, more complex than just, you know, you're not doing this, you know, Joe Blow, because you read this Facebook meme. Right. So there are probably deeper concerns that are just, not on my radar. But we're doing about as good of a job as there is in terms of American standards.

Bridget Maxwell 16:27

Valid, very fair answer. Kind of to, I suppose, conclude our interview and kind of wrap up if you have any, I don't know, I guess, did you internalize anything, during this whole experience? Your

first year of master's program on mine, and you know, having basically, everything has been related to COVID, with your work, you know, and having to deal with that, and having your first experiences like writing in like directing, and all that be during a global pandemic? Taught you anything, I guess internalized anything or kind of? Any life lessons, I suppose that you concurred during this time?

Brogan Maxwell 17:21

Yeah, I mean, definitely, like, I mean, I guess to give some context, but essentially, you know, I moved from Minnesota to Baltimore, before there was like a vaccine. Before we even were like, in person and meeting, so I moved into this state not knowing anyone in having no physical contact, yeah, with people. So that was, I remember just being very, like lonely, for guidance. Yeah, it was. So I mean, I think, with all that, in some ways, you kind of turn in more, like, I was working out more than I think I was, like writing, I think a bit more even too, but I think it did make me realize, like the importance of people and to still like gather, and to still have these relationships, which like, which is what I effectively ended up doing is like reaching out, and then, you know, meeting Sam, and then putting together a project, and then even like, connecting with these people over zoom to cast them and like, put together this thing. So, you know, it's it took, I think, more effort, in some ways. And then I think it was also like, how everyone says this, like zoom fatigue, you know, or it's like, this again, I'm talking about this flat surface. But I think even with that, it was still important for me to connect in toke relationships and to not work. And, you know, I think he did a pretty decent job fit. But yeah, I think humans need humans, I learned that from this.

Bridget Maxwell 19:24

Yeah, I think that's been an eye-opening thing for a lot of people the importance of having strong relationships, especially during a time where you don't necessarily see everyone all the time or have the opportunity to, so I feel like, you know, I even have internalized like, it's important to have built relationships around you and have a good community. I don't know if that's overall what you were saying.

Brogan Maxwell 19:50

Yeah, yeah. No, that's what I was saying.

Bridget Maxwell 19:52

It takes a village. Yeah, it does. It does. And especially during a global pandemic. It's nice to have People solid people around you who you know will be safe and also get vaccinated, etc, etc you know, but thank you for meeting with me. I appreciate it. Thank you, Brogan, and that will conclude our COVID interview.