

Transcript of Interview with Fred O’Gorman by Fintan O’Gorman

Interviewee: Fred O’Gorman

Interviewer: Fintan O’Gorman

Date: 05/18/2021

Location (Interviewee): Dublin, Ireland

Location (Interviewer): San Carlos, California

Abstract: This interview was recorded as part of The Covid 19 Oral History Project, a project of the IUPUI Arts and Humanities Institute associated with The Journal of a Plague Year: A Covid 19 Archive.

Fintan O’Gorman 00:02

All righty. We are recording as of right now.

Fred O’Gorman 00:07

Yeah, I saw a message coming up.

Fintan O’Gorman 00:09

Cool. So um, so my name is Fintan O’Gorman and I’m here with- with Fred O’Gorman. And the date is May the May the ninth 2021. The time being 11:45am. Pacific Standard Time. In for you. For you, Fred. What time is it? Exactly?

Fred O’Gorman 00:35

It’s 8pm. Greenwich Mean Time.

Fintan O’Gorman 00:39

Excellent. So I am in San Carlos, San Carlos, California in the Bay Area. And you’re in- you’re in Dublin, Ireland. Correct.

Fred O’Gorman 00:48

I’m in Dublin in Ireland.

Fintan O’Gorman 00:49

Okay, excellent.

Fred O’Gorman 00:54

Do you want the address?

Fintan O’Gorman 00:56

No, you’re good, you’re good. So I want to briefly review the informed consent and deed gift document that you signed. So this interview is for the COVID-19 Oral History Project, which is associated with the journal the plague year, a COVID-19 archive. So the COVID-19 Oral History Project is a rapid

response, Oral History focused on archiving the lived experience of the COVID-19 epidemic. We've designed this project so that the professional researchers and the broader public can create and upload their oral histories to our open access and open source database. So this study will help us collect narratives and understandings about COVID-19 as well as help us better understand the impacts of the pandemic over time. The recordings, demographic information in the verbatim transcript will be deposited in the journal the plague year at COVID-19. Archive, and the Indiana University Library System for the use of researchers in the general public. So okay, do you have any questions about the project that I can answer at this time? No, no, don't think stop just fire ahead. I think okay, I know what the idea is, okay, so taking part in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to take part or you may leave the study anytime. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, your decision whether or not to participate in the study may not affect your current or future relations with Indiana University, the IUPUI UI or the IUPUI, Arts and Humanities Institute. So participating in this project means that your interview will be recorded in a digital video and or audio format and may be transcribed the recordings and possible transcriptions of my interview copies of any supplement or documents or additional photos that you wish to share. And the informed consent and the deed of gift maybe deposit in the journal plague year. So a COVID-19 archive in the Indiana University Library System will be available to both researchers and the general public. Your name and other means of identification will not be confidential. Any questions about that? Or? All good?

Fred O'Gorman 03:02

No, I read that in the document. Yeah.

Fintan O'Gorman 03:04

Excellent. So in addition to your signed document, would you please offer a verbatim confirmation that you understand and agree to these terms, which I'll read right now. So first being the Creative Commons Attribution and Noncommercial Sharealike clause you read that, understood that?

Fred O'Gorman 03:27

Yeah.

Fintan O'Gorman 03:28

And then, the second being the COVID-19 oral history project, the journal the plague year COVID-19 archive. And the trustees of Indiana University acting through its agents, employees or Representatives has an unlimited right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, broadcast, create derivative from and distribute the oral history of materials in any manner or media, now existing or hereafter developed in perpetuity throughout the world. I agree that the oral history materials used by the voices from the waterways and Indiana university including its assigns and transferees for any purposes, including but not limited to marketing, advertising, publicity, or promotional purposes, I agree that I you will have final editorial authority over the use of the oral history materials, and I waive any right to inspect or approve any future use of the oral history of materials. Moreover, I agree that the public has the right to use the materials

under the terms of fair use. And that's U.S Copyright Law, Section 107 of the US Copyright Act. Finally, I want to ask for your verbal confirmation that you agreed that your interview will be a your interview will be made available to the public immediately. I think you've already.

Fred O'Gorman 04:47

I do agree.

Fintan O'Gorman 04:47

Yeah. Yeah, you signed that already. So we're all set on that. So my first question is just a couple background questions. So what are the primary things that You do on a day to day basis during the pandemic? during the pandemic, depends upon the stage like when the COVID thing started hitting the news headlines that we all got kind of cautious about who we'd meet up with. And we were kind of thinking the government were a bit slow in getting things moving, because we were getting informed from like, China. And we see it on there about China and the news we saw about Italy, the numbers increasing, so we were kind of withdrawing from socializing a bit, staying at home, reducing our number of contacts. And the government eventually started now caught up with the people.

Fred O'Gorman 06:00

Okay?

Fintan O'Gorman 06:00

Of course. Just kept- kept more to ourselves. And as time has progressed, we had to keep more and more and more like me, one or two people, that's all I kinda know, we found our own little bubbles, if you like, on the first lockdown. I was in Cork, and I stayed with my sister and just interacted in that house. It was only two other people in the house. And the second lockdown, I stayed with a friend down in Navan But I go on holidays with because we were, we were to go on holidays for five weeks in Tenerife. And when we came back, we were going on it, we could only stay there for a week. And when we came back, we decided the best thing to do was just form a bubble in Navan with him, and I stayed there for the weeks after coming back from Tenerife, we only got a week holidays instead of five other weeks holidays in Tenerife. I don't know if that's answering the question, but if you want to be more specific, oh, yes, I think so. I should clarify this. So these are just background questions. You got a lot of great information there, but I just like on a day to day basis. I know that you recently retired a couple years ago, but just-

Fred O'Gorman 07:19

Retired, retired about, what, seven or eight years. So it's been very quiet life really. It's hard to remember what it is like before COVID I usually go out every day and probably meet somebody for coffee, go for walks, and the gardening and things like that and we're used to kind of meet up at least once a week with friends. But you know, go for a drink and that and have a meal out. And since COVID started all that stopped really you don't socialize, just have the coffee with one person who I kind of cocoon with in

Dublin if you like, he's elderly. He's about 70 he is 81 so I tried to keep contact with him and other friends who's 78 down in Navan even when I was down there I kind of cocooned with him but I don't move around much.

Fintan O'Gorman 08:18

Of course um and you live in Dublin. Of course and what is it generally- generally like in Dublin and has it changed a lot since the pandemic started Yeah, you meet a lot more people out walking the city is like a ghost town and I haven't been in there so I'm only I'm only judging this by news reports even though I've only about a kilometer so he used kilometers or miles still miles but we all know kilometers here Yeah, five miles five miles from the city center. And- and I don't go in there. The only shops, a lot of the shops are closed. Like normally if COVID wasn't here the shops would be open and I'd go into the shops nearly every day. I'll go to the local supermarket to get my groceries and that's about it and wear a mask and come home just walk up and walk down to the shop but avoid meeting people and virtually everybody wears a mask and are very careful and outside all the supermarkets in the shops that are open it's only the- the essential shops are open and the banks and the post office but outside them all there's there's disinfectant to disinfect your hands before you go in and when you leave. Okay. Of course Yeah, it's very much the same way in the United States but with with some differences.

Fred O'Gorman 09:52

Yeah.

Fintan O'Gorman 09:53

Um, so when you first learned about COVID-19, what were what were your thoughts about it?

Fred O'Gorman 10:01

Oh, that's a tough one. fearful, I suppose we knew it was a serious problem, there was a lot of people dying, we're lucky because at the island being an island, even though we didn't close down our borders to other countries like say, New Zealand and Australia. But uh, being an island, I think gave us a little bit extra time. So we could see the way things were going in other parts of the world. At that, in March 2020, it was obvious that we were going to face the problem. And as I said earlier, the government were a bit slow to act, but you could understand No, they didn't want to be shutting down businesses. It's funny, it kind of coincided with the traditional holiday and Ireland St. Patrick's. St. Patrick's Day. And, like, we could the first indication we have really, I suppose the things were getting serious, was when St. Patrick's Day, parades were being canceled, you know, and a lot of villages and towns and cities would put a lot of effort into, you know, getting ready for the St. Patrick's Day Parade, because the people who dress up and that. So people that was kind of exposed to we knew that things were getting serious. The government started introduce restrictions, but only they give about a fortnight. Say, for the next fortnight we'd have to reduce the travel and things like that. And every fortnight they'd update, so it didn't feel like, you know, you're we're faced And as it turned out, over a year, and four or five months of of quarantine, you know, because that's basically what's happened we've had quarantined and lifted. So by

last September, people could holiday in Ireland, and it was the weather was good and was a great atmosphere, in spite of the COVID. But the big, the big issue, I think that shocked everybody was the number of people who were dying in nursing homes, because seemingly, hospitals were getting worried about coping with a number of people with COVID. So they tended to send the older patients out of the hospital back to the nursing homes, but they didn't check whether they had COVID. So the result is that when they these patients got back to the nursing homes, they spread the virus. And then a lot of the workers as well are foreign. And they think, you know, they were going home and coming back. And they had had the virus and they didn't know the virus, they had the virus and they passed it on to the patients. So that was the first real impact the number of deaths in a nursing homes to the old people, old people in nursing homes were rising, and the government had to act to shut things down.

Fintan O'Gorman 12:59

So have your thoughts changed, have your thoughts changed since since those those early months and 2021 this first kickoff?

Fred O'Gorman 13:08

I think we are getting optimistic because of the vaccine, the vaccine, you know, people are taking up the vaccine, and we're all desperate to get the vaccine. You know, unlike some other countries where people are worried about the effects of the vaccine here, there's a great acceptance for the vaccine. People just can't wait to get the vaccines and have them rolled out so that they can get back to normal life. I don't think we have the I think we trust our politicians here on health issues anyway. Maybe not on financial issues. More than in other countries, you know, but we've had protests about the the lockdown and about forcing people to take vaccines and wear masks and stuff. But they've been very minority events, you know, very low turnout and that

Fintan O'Gorman 14:01

of course, what issues Are there any issues that have concerned you about the pandemic, sort of specifically and on a personal level, anything that just jumped out to you.

Fred O'Gorman 14:11

But I can't really understand why people would would object to wearing masks. It seems such a small, small thing to do, you know, and I think a lot of people feel that, oh, you're wearing the mask to protect yourself. But the truth is, you're actually protecting others rather than yourself. Because it's your droplet infection. Now you're stopping droplets getting from your mouth into the atmosphere. So like it's it's a it's, it's for the benefit of others, you know, whereas the people who protest seem to think now they're being forced to wear masks. You know, what? You know, we I think personally, I feel the government handled the thing very well initially, on the first signs last March and April, was a one or two incidents like being St. Patrick's weekend, like they did act and parades were canceled. But a lot of the villages and towns made the decision themselves. The government didn't force them. They made a decision before the government even thought about it. It was interesting, there was a big rugby match going to

take place with Italy. And the government got the rugby union to cancel the match. But the thing was the Italians still traveled to Ireland. So that was probably one of the the earlier spreader events and some other things that came into my head. Yeah, there's a big tradition in Ireland to go to England for a horse racing competition called Cheltenham races and hundreds of Irish go over there. And the English went ahead with that. So a lot of Irish went over there. And that was another reason why I think we got hit very early on by the virus. This you see I think there was a reluctance on the government to cancel foreign travel. We didn't act like say, New Zealand and Australia. But we're part of the European community. So there's a reluctance to close borders with other European countries. So but I think we've learnt our lesson there. So by the end of the summer, say, August, we had the numbers down and governments kind of relax, could relax and people could travel and outside their counties and that and have a stay at home holiday in places like Killarney and Galway, and all along the west coast. And these these towns were thriving. But that created a problem because the restaurants had to restrict the number of people coming in. You couldn't just go into a restaurant, on spec, you had to book a table, maybe the previous day, and they regulate and how many people that have in the restaurant and how far apart they be. And but things numbers started rising again, I think, increasing again in October, November. So the government had to introduce another lockdown. And then unfortunately, they've kind of felt that the Irish would want to come home for Christmas. So they, they they lifted the sanctions against people traveling and we started we got a big outbreak. But I think we've got that under control now, thanks to restrictions, movements and the vaccine. hardly any people are dying in nursing homes now the number in intensive care units and hospital have got are at their lowest since the outbreak. So things are there's an optimism of maybe it's because of this summer and people are outside. They don't have to meet inside. But we were very restricted in who we meet. Like there's people who have been virtually in their house for 12 months, 13/14 months, hardly met anybody, especially grandparents have have met their grandchildren and have been at home. You know, depending on how seriously they take it. But you have to take it seriously because if they get it they could die. You know, I've only I only know of one person she was a grandmother across the road here. She actually went into hospital before Christmas, because she got a some chests complaint. And she's not sure whether she picked up the COVID there or picked it up from a friend of her sons. But she got over a point she does she don't think she was even hospitalized. So it's very, very varied how things go. Go on. I know I'm rabbiting on a bit, but next question

Fintan O'Gorman 18:41

all good stuff. Fred all good stuff. Um, so the next set of questions are about kind of employment stuff, but I know you're retired. So in I'll just ask you questions about what ways it affected your time being retired and how has it affected your old place of employment if you've had any connections?

Fred O'Gorman 19:03

Well, this is what the school I was teaching in the schools have closed down. Find it hard to remember, you know, they were they've been closed. Initially. Yeah, I think last March, just around Easter, they closed down for a couple of weeks. And then they opened up again, under strict rules about wearing masks and that. And then after Christmas, they closed down for another couple of weeks, but the young

people don't seem to be as susceptible. So, you know, even though they are mixing with each other, they might have to wear the mask in class, but they didn't wear the masks. Once they got away from the school grounds. They didn't seem to it didn't seem to cause too serious a problem. I don't know why he just didn't seem to spread the disease as far as we can tell. You know,

Fintan O'Gorman 20:01

So in the initial period, when the schools were closed, were they engaging in online learning.

Fred O'Gorman 20:07

Oh, yeah, they had a computer they had to go online, on the computer and do the home classes, state television, put on a lot of special things for more primary school kids, secondary school kids just went online with their teachers in their, in their school. And a lot of people have come to work from home. You know, most, most clerical work now is done, from people's houses. Like, office work is done online, from people's homes now. And it's completely I think, transformed working life for people now it suits a lot of married couples, with young kids, you know, because the crushes and that are working to take kids and the grandparents were afraid to take the kids. So it meant like, if you're the, the couple could, like share the childminding, like one would walk say Monday and the other would look after the kids and then another would work say Tuesday, Wednesday, and the other partner would look after the kids. You know, so people managed and kind of, you know, knuckle down and did the best they could more I can see.

Fintan O'Gorman 21:31

Um, did how's it affected the like employment situation of how has COVID affected the employment situation of people that you know, personally and sort of wider in the in the economy. It's funny, it has people I know, don't seem to have you been affected too much except, you know, having to work from home.

Fred O'Gorman 21:56

thing, depending on what industry you're in, you know, most industries have continued, people in building have been affected because the building sites were closed, for good, not a good per, not very good period of time. Essential building was allowed continue. So as it turned out some my brother and my nieces, husbands who are working on the building got jobs in the pharmaceutical industry. When the pubs and restaurants were closed, whenever you got into another pharmaceutical company a security. So, you know, the government and of course gave gave what's called a was was a pandemic, unemployment, payment PUP to get people over so between working at home and and if a partner was another partner was unemployed as a result of the COVID. Like people working in restaurants and bars and shops course, as they closed, the non essential ones. All of those were are given this payment. So the government has gone into a good degree of debt as a result of this, but industry seems to be, you know, maintaining its tax returns have been pretty good. So financially, the country hasn't been hit that

haggling by the COVID. And we're look, we're we're optimistic about next year as things open up. You know,

Fintan O'Gorman 23:37

of course, in the service industry, is that experienced? Would you say that the toughest challenges?

Fred O'Gorman 23:44

Well, I, banks have all stayed open. You know, they have suppose they've got people to try and do banking online. Definitely people are using computers more. Because if you go to the bank, you're queuing, if you go to the shops you're queuing that are open. So all of that makes you online shopping and all that have increased, you know, think whether we'll ever go back to it or meeting people like in the banks and businesses like we used in the past? I I'd say is it's pretty interesting what happens because it looks like like the computers that has been a bonus computer and online banking and online business. You know, that's what I would say, but who knows? I'm sure we're all looking forward back, getting back to meeting people. Because sitting in front of the computer wouldn't be my idea of enjoyment. I don't know. The young people can deal with it. You know, it must to be terrible. You know, you're in the house all day. And there's a lot of issues like you know, paying for your heating, like will you get money from your employer to pay for your heating, you know, because if you go to an office you get all of these things, you know, there's coffee machines on you know while your at home, you know, you, it's your at home 24 hours a day, I don't know how things are going to stand up for people that are, you know, become very claustrophobic,

Fintan O'Gorman 25:15

of course and have bars and restaurants that they've been like a lot of closings, it's been a big thing in the US, they

Fred O'Gorman 25:21

well you see at the moment, we don't know, because they're closed, and the employees and the government and the owners, I think are getting that the employees are getting the PUP payment from the government. It's not a lot of money. But it's, you know, keeping them going. The thing there's grants from the government for loans and things like that. But, uh, you know, it's when they open when the restrictions are, are lifted, and people can go back out to restaurants, whether they'll be open, whether they're reopen or not, is the big question now, because they've had, they've lost a lot of business, you know, but the government have been trying to reduce things like suppose what do they call it rates to shop in Ireland, the shopkeepers in villages and towns would pay would have to pay rates kind of evaluation based on the on the property, and they pay it to the local councils, so they think they waived things like that. So the these businesses wouldn't have had a huge expenses, except maybe maintaining the building temperature, so the pipes don't get burst and things like that, you know, but, you know, they've they've, they've managed to live on their savings. Now, how soon are we open up, the

better from their point of view? Some of them may never open up? We don't know, at this stage, you know?

Fintan O'Gorman 26:48

Okay. Excellent. A lot of great information there. So, next sort of set of questions is on sort of family and household, mainly, but how has sort of COVID affected your ability to associate and communicate with with friends and family?

Fred O'Gorman 27:09

Oh, yeah. I suppose a lot really, because, like, I live on my own in Dublin. So it was nice for me to go and visit my brothers and sisters, you know, maybe 160 miles away. That means like, two people lose out, they're isolated a bit. And I might alittle so we're all a bit isolated, I think some members of the family find is a bit hard to cope with. I've been fairly lucky. I've also been anxious during the cold very well, I was actually very lucky. Because when the the restriction started, I happen to be in my sister's house, so I stay there. So that was fantastic. And I've just for me, but for my sister Tess, and my brother lives close by. And so we were able to communicate and visit each other. But we were extremely cautious like we, we we, we'd try and meet in the garden rather than in the houses. So you'd only wear the masks and all that. And its grand during the summer, I suppose was a bit more difficult during the winter. So, and winter tends to be a bit of depressive time here because we kind of get these long gray days. If you're probably remembered if you've been here, and yeah, you've probably got them during the summer. And so you restricted your movements, you kept the same number of people all the time. Think what saved us we could get out and walk and you know, in our own neighborhood, which was very nice and got to know our own neighborhoods very well. In fact, you kind of got to know some of your neighbors because they were around and they only outside activities they had was go for a walk so you kind of met and bumped into each other. So from that point of view that was one of the benefits but uh but I was lucky you know but I'd say some people say in the country in the rural parts of the country must have found it very difficult. And there is a lot of concern about people's mental welfare and all that maybe too much talk about it because they don't know you're going to kind of create a problem when there's not one there. But I suppose humans are very resilient. I used to say to people look, you know, we might have to COVID but at least nobody dropping bombs on us. We don't have to go into air raid shelters and stuff like that. You know, we might be under attack from the little virus but we're not sure military attack you know,

Fintan O'Gorman 29:43

of course Yeah. Um, have there have been any specific big challenges that that you have faced or people that you know, face as a result of the outbreak or are nothing, nothing too big?

Fred O'Gorman 29:59

No, I suppose the biggest challenge I think, for a lot of people would be their relatives in hospital. And they're the old in the nursing homes, they weren't allowed visit their relatives, and some of them didn't

see their relatives before they died. People when there was funerals, or weddings, the numbers attend allowed to attend were very low. So all that created, you know, problems for people and, you know, disturb people, but people who are amazing really, they, they, they obey the rules, you know, of course there were exceptions, but most of the people obey the rules and are very cooperative. And, and have, you know, even though dragged on so long, you know, they're still kind of, in fact, I'd say maybe one of the problems now, maybe, but people will find it hard to get back into social, you know, into interactions again, you know, sometimes you meet people on the road when you're walking, and it's like, as if you've, you've got leprosy, they walk around you keeping as far away as they can, you know, cause I suppose we just will adapt, we'll adapt once the sun shines, and we'll be out back out there and enjoying ourselves again, you know, I'm sure its been the same in the States, you know?

Fintan O'Gorman 31:21

Oh, yes, yes, to varying degrees. So, what have you and family and friends sort of done for recreation, during the pandemic?

Fred O'Gorman 31:34

watched a lot of TV, watch, watched a lot of programs, I probably would never watch, you know, things like moving house or moving Chateau de France, things like that, heading into Serious actually, I think, in some sense, it was a boom for some, some series on the TV, because during lockdown, people had to watch these, the episodes of various series, and they really got into them. And some actors became very famous during the lockdown, because everybody was watching these series, because they had a very little activity. Like in Ireland, like, you know, the entertainment and enjoyment kind of is always connected with that with the public, the pub, the pub, where the, alcohol and beer and that. So, you know, the music is always in the pubs. So because they were closed down, like people were stuck at home watching TV. And that, so I think that kept a lot of us going, and of course, reading doing crosswords much you know. But I think we were lucky in a way that the virus hit us coming into the summer, initially. So it kind of it made life easier, we were able to get out. And, you know, I think people enjoyed walking in the, in the local woods. And, you know, you know, I know, friends of mine and my brother Noal, loves golf, like he, he never was a walker, but he was walking by it every day, you know. So I think from that point of view, people have a greater appreciation in nature, they took a much greater interest. People are growing their own vegetables and things like that. It's almost got us back to our grass roots. And they make us appreciate nature and where the food comes from. And you know, so that from that point of view, suppose there was a benefit, you know, whether we'll forget it, I'll start traveling like mad, like I love to travel. And so that's one of the things I missed, you know, I like to go away. And as I said, I think I will if this wasn't recorded, but I usually go to Tenerife for four or five weeks in January. But this year, having gone to Tenerife, the government were discussing the idea of bringing in quarantine for people who were away. And then there was doubts about whether we could fly back home. Because if they brought in a full, you know, lockdown being an island, we could protect ourselves that way. And so we had to curtail our holiday, like was there three, three days into the holiday for expecting to be there for the next 35 days. And the hotel told us they were closing down. So there

wasn't communication from these countries, you know, to tell us that they may be closing down. So like we had to come back in a hurry, and you had to get COVID tests and all that that was a bit disappointing, but like it wasn't there wasn't a big issue, you know, with the hotels refunded us the money. So we lost the price of airline tickets and that you know, so for any days we canceled the car hire company, returned the money when we canceled for the next four weeks. So things like that we didn't lose too much and we had a week of sunshine. Week of sunshine. So, um, it hasn't been too bad. So their things thank god like we like, obviously, some people are very badly affected. Now they may have lost all parents and that there was some young hospital staff died. One or two doctors and things like that. Like, I wasn't affected that way. It's amazing like this virus is supposed to be what's supposed to be so dangerous, but it's funny how few people you know, you know, I don't know, like we didn't seem to get other things like flu and things like that during the whole lockdown is made because we were isolating and wearing masks and disinfecting our hands. And, you know, all of that probably protected us. Some people doubted the death race was up but statistics, you know, if they want to listen to the statistics, statistics show that but there was up, you know, that some people don't want to believe certain things.

Fintan O'Gorman 35:59

Of course, yeah. Common theme. So next set of questions are kind of about the community. Community generally, but

Fred O'Gorman 36:12

but the community, like people still, you know, my sister test now was involved in bringing meals to people's houses now. And she was probably vulnerable, probably. Because iffy whether, she shouldn't be doing that at all. But people did that, you know, a lot of people volunteered, even for the vaccination program, there's a huge number of people volunteering to, to, you know, help getting the vaccine given, you know, organizing the queues for vaccination and that. And just helping out generally, I suppose. What else can I think of, you know, I think just people helped out, oh, yeah, to charities, like, even though they couldn't do fundraising in their normal ways, like having fun runs and sponsored walks, and thanks like that. The TV hosts like things like, these chat show hosts, organized musicians to come in and sing and opened up kind of a donation fund on there was great response, and people can see how I was responding myself. But, uh, but now that people seem to be very generous towards various charities, and people continue to, you know, operate, volunteering to do the things they always did, and even increased their their things. I suppose one of the other things is that the churches are on lockdown. Things like that, which is very unusual for Ireland enough. So that's about like,

Fintan O'Gorman 37:51

okay, great that, that's, that's all great information about, about that stuff. Um, so have you seen people, you know, around, you change their opinions about day to day activities or relationships in response to the pandemic?

Fred O'Gorman 38:09

Well, yeah, so one or two people would, you know, some people don't that this this thing is their at all. I suppose you're gonna always have that doubting thomas's, I suppose. But I think in a way, the people, probably people who haven't a balance, I suppose have maybe psychological problems and stuff like that, I think they probably you know, would create I hope, that doesn't annoy anybody. You know, we'll get more kind of hung up about things. I know somebody who, like now thinks there's going to be a food shortage and things like that. But they would be in line with their normal, you know, way of thinking they seem to have a negative way of thinking, and this probably hasn't helped, you know. And I suppose because government have to take more control. I think some people object to that. I suppose. You have to be careful. But I think, you know, you have to take a balanced approach, and you can't assume everybody's out to get you, you know. And it's all a hoax. You know, I think we were we were lucky we didn't have Donald Trump saying things like parozone would cure you and it's not their retirements, and the kung flu and things like that. You know, you have to take these things seriously, but in a balanced way, and on I suppose. That's all I can think of it.

Fintan O'Gorman 39:53

Um, self isolation and flattening the curve have been sort of two key ideas, especially here in America. That Kind of emerged during the pandemic, have you, your family, friends and the community ever said they responded to requests to self isolate and flatten the curve, I'm getting the impression of what you've told me that they have. But if you could speak more to that,

Fred O'Gorman 40:13

oh yeah very much people have been, I like really, you know, you might think of a totalitarian state or something. But like Ireland is very laxed, about laws even about staying at home, you know, like, the guards would stop people, but they weren't gettin handing out fines or arresting people, now they'd ask maybe to go home and stuff like that, when most people like, they might push the boundaries of it, you know, five kilometer, you know, that their allowed travel, it might go a bit further than that. But they were, you know, the first first lockdown, people probably took it much more seriously. And the traffic was very low in the roads, and there was very few people in going going into the shops. But as time went by, you know, people kind of relaxed, and the stock is second lockdown. I think people didn't take it as seriously. But at the same time, they didn't go mad, you know, the, they kept the mask they kept doing the , the sanitation, you know, the sanitizing the hands, and that didn't travel far, cut down the number of contacts they have, you know, and very, very conscious flattening. And I think people would be very interested in the statistics, every night, we got the statistics, number of deaths, the number of new cases, the number of people in intensive care units. And we one of the interesting figures we used to get was the number per 100,000, the five day average or something, all of those things people took a very close look at and you know, so it kind of kept us aware of how things were going, you know, sometimes certain regions got annoyed that they were mentioned as being having high levels, and they they wouldn't like that they were felt they were being taken to task and that they were doing the best they could, you know, there was all these things about people having parties in their houses and a certain

amount of blame game, with people not being cautious enough young people maybe having parties and things that are meeting up and having drinks and things. But generally speaking pretty, you know, people try their best and it worked. It seems to have worked, you know, and people don't seem to be opposed to take in the vaccination. You know, in fact. I think at this stage now we've got more vaccines than we can cope with. But it's not because people are refusing, I think there's something like, I heard a figure of 22,000 people in Ireland who are refusing to take vaccines. I don't know if it's true or not, but like judging by the queues at the vaccination centers, and its almost like, Christmas present of getting the vaccination, you know, people are joyful its almost like there's a party atmosphere, at the vaccination centers, because people are so delighted to be getting vaccines, and hopefully, they're successful. as, as, as we, as we think they are, you know, and I think we have to be optimistic, and no sense in thinking any other way really, you know,

Fintan O'Gorman 43:35

interesting. Um, so, as COVID changed, like, relationships with family and friends in the community, and the substantial ways that you haven't mentioned already. And I think that's question is meant more in a personal sense.

Fred O'Gorman 43:56

Well, I suppose the the only thing is that because like I said, the isolation for people, especially the grandparents, or the, the elderly, they had to know, they then then a lot of them, still minded the kids but I think if there was any outbreak then, they'd stop straightaway. And I think grandparents and stuff, found it very hard to say to their own kids, you know, I'm getting worried. I don't want to mind the kids anymore. It was a really difficult thing to say. But they they said it, you know, people, restricted their movements definitely stayed at home. You know, actually just on that, like, for the last since I retired, we've kind of set up a little group of us from the, the retired teachers from the school where I was teaching that we'd meet once a month. So to overcome that what we did when the when the restaurants closed and we were worried about meeting up we use zoom. So we're all zoom, conscious or whatever these different models chat lines that people go. So we'd meet every second Thursday, you know, on zoom, photos, you know, the invitation will come, you could join a zoom meeting or not join the zoom meeting, but most days, there was maybe six maybe might be a max of 11. Anytime anyway. So like, people looked at looked at other ways of keeping in contact, you know phoning each other and filming and things like that. So like, I don't class myself with the elderly, but actually, people like me, are probably got a little bit more efficient at using the computer, you know, except for DocuSign.

Fintan O'Gorman 45:41

Well, that's, that's interesting to hear, I'm surprised to hear that that makes total sense. The next questions I have are about kind of those healthcare issues themselves. And so have you or anybody, you know, gotten sick, during the covid 19 outbreak, people in your local community, how many have actually contracted COVID.

Fred O'Gorman 46:05

As I said, I know, I only know of one person, two people, actually, who got the virus, one by hearsay. And he was young, he knew he had the virus, because he couldn't smell or taste food. And he got over it, the funny instance, and he actually had an interview in the bank for promotion, and where he worked, and he had to ring up the interview panel, the bank and tell them, listen I've got the symptoms of COVID, you guys will have to go and get tested. And, as you say, a lady across the road, who's a grandmother, used to mind the kids, had to go into hospital for some problems with her lungs, nothing to do with COVID assumingly but while she was there, when she came back out, she discovered she had tested positive. So she she she reconed to pick it up in there or from our son's friend, they think the suspicion the suspicion she picked it up from her son's friend rather than in the hospital. Like I think the big issue here was trying to a lot of a lot of procedures in hospital are what had to be canceled, you know, cancer treatments. So that would have affected one of my brother-in-laws he had cancer. So he got his treatment much, much later than he should have. But we will never know whether that will affect his outcome or not, I'd say the big issue was trying to keep the numbers in intensive care. And that was another thing with the television every night, like you'd get the statistics about number of people in intensive care. So, you know, the people would be made aware how important it was to keep people out of the hospital for whatever reason, you know, for other reasons, other than COVID. And why people should be careful not to spread the virus because you will cause problems in the intensive care units and hospitals. And like everything else their was some problems with resourcing protective gear and that maybe the expensive buying it and that. You know, but I think the hospital seem to cope very well, in fact, say surprisingly well, really, because our medical system wouldn't be on par with the British medical system. We seem to always have long waiting lists and queues and hospitals, even before COVID. So COVID exacerbated the problem. But the staff in these hospitals seem to pull out all the stops and work around the clock and keep things going. You know? So fair credit. You know.

Fintan O'Gorman 48:56

Okay, interesting. Um, so my next question set of questions is on sort of where you have acquired information so what have your been your primary sources of news during the pandemic and information generally?

Fred O'Gorman 49:09

basically, the National station or RTE radio television. course we'd have to we'd have the british channels, so we'd be tuned into them. And we'd be looking at comparisons and other channels. But it was like a lot of a lot of effort put in, in interviewing on the TV, they'd be interviewing various experts in virology and the different universities. So it's basically I suppose I wouldn't be Look, I wouldn't be looking up statistics and in and things like on the internet, because there's so much false, I think information. And I think that's one of the problems I see now that I just mentioned there. On a Sunday. I knew I was sent you know, the conspiracy theories about this wearing masks and all that about whether it was a high rate of deaths. Maybe food shortages and all that sort of stuff. I think a lot of it is coming through the internet. Because people can say and do anything. But do you know, I don't know for sure.

But should we block these sites, but I think we might have to try and I don't know, make inform people how to use them better in some way. Because it's good to have dissenting voices. But I think, I think we trust our national TV, maybe it will be independent to government, we'd hoped we think, anyway, hopefully, I'm optimistic. Most most teachers are always conforming, to. So that's why I think the dictators get rid of teachers and stuff like that, because they uphold the status quo. But I think it's probably good to have the dissenting voices. And I wouldn't like to see the internet controlled. But uh, you know, they're probably, maybe could be checks on how, you know, how balanced things are, you know, the same, as in the national TV all the time given to different political parties is based on their vote, voting percentage. So so maybe the same could be done with the internet. But one of the big advantages is the internet, I think was everybody can access this, and you can say what you like, again, that creates problems of racism and that, but I think, you know, I would say, I got me information, I suppose, from the main TV stations, both nationally and internationally. And I think you get a more balanced opinion than you would on the news and the internet. And I would have read stuff, but I hardly read, the newspapers now it kind of depends on the television, not a good thing the poor newspapers are in trouble. Too much. Political ideas, there maybe. But I think actually, it's more on a general thing. I think it's, it's probably, you know, a problem for democracy. Because, you know, news media on TV, it can be limited. And we like the short instant, you know, television is kind of a quick medium to get it done. Get it said, you know, the internet is quicker, you know, they shoot things at you speeds at which things come to you, and you but you don't go into depth, you know, into enough depth. And then maybe when we're reading newspapers, I think we got more depth about news items. So, you know, I know this topic. And so it's a problem for democracy informed because he would claim in America, Donald Trump is after the smart comment or something, gets all the coverage, and we see is with Boris Johnson in England, that you know, kind of, you know, they not factually based comments and things that nobody checks them. It's a problem for democracy. Now, we hope. So I think just COVID was mainly of the TV information I got off the TV. Well, I think it was just in background there. I would have had background in virology. And I would be kind of pro vaccination, because I think things like, you know, where would we be with things like smallpox? You know, if we didn't have vaccination? Where would we be with diphtheria? You know, chickenpox, all these various things, the flu even, you know, people, you know, I noticed all the scare mongering things about autism and things like that, that I think are kind of unfounded or exaggerated, or that they're caused by, by by vaccination. You know, I know cowpox and smallpox was the other thing I turned into like a cow and things like that. So, the word vaccination comes from cows from the Latin for cow. So, you know, the, the, you know, those times when Jenner and those guys tried to bring in vaccination there was an opposition. And, you know, I think I'd prefer to get a vaccination than get the virus, because I think it would be far more damaging. So that would be my logic. And I think vaccination has done great work. But you see the trouble is, you know, people forget. You wouldn't recognize people in the past because they have pockmarks in their skin. You know, before vaccination came in, like even the wealthy and royalty and that. You know, so Henry the Eights wives and things like that, we're all disfigured by smallpox, you know? So people have forgotten that but that's the short, short sighted. Sorry, Fintan.

Fintan O'Gorman 55:15

no problem. So, in what ways did COVID-19 affect people's mental health? Did you notice?

Fred O'Gorman 55:23

Well, I think people who were a bit like looking at members of the family, who were probably a bit isolated before the vaccination have started before the virus COVID epidemic, pandemic, I think they found life harder, because of isolation, they would have been a bit isolated in the past. You know, because of their own kind of nature. But I think, because of COVID the fact they couldn't travel and go visit people, which they would have been kind of a relief for them to do that and get to talk to somebody else. And, you know, I think they would have felt they were missing out on life a bit more, you know, because it was like, socially, we are deprived now because of the lockdowns. And we've had a lot we've probably had the longest lockdown probably in the world, I'd say. But, but again, you know, some, you know, if you're, like, I say, myself, like I I can find life can be, I had depression, and I was quite worried about being on my own. And as I said, earlier, I was lucky that I was in with my sister in Cork, when that first lockdown came. And after Christmas, this just gone by, because I had gone away to Tenerife, with a friend, Michael, Michael and myself stayed together for the last couple of weeks. I just came back for one week and check the house out to make sure. So I was about done. I was down in his house for about six weeks, with one week break here in Dublin, come back and check the house was everything was okay. So I was lucky, very lucky. But at the same time, before I went to Tenerife, like I had, I had been on my own in the house here. And I coped very well, I was very happy, I didn't have to increase medication or anything like that. And I suppose because I kind of kept, I think we learned tactics, you know, the TV had all sorts of exercise programs on to help people keep mobile, and exercise is good. And I've been in the habit of walking, you know, every day, I probably go for two walks every day, say one in the morning. And it would be longish walk, I probably take about 40 minutes at a good pace. And it will along a river, and you know, tranquil and the weather was fairly good. So it was able to get out most days. And before sunset, I go for another little walk. So I try not meet up with somebody in the day for maybe a coffee. So like I even though it was the same person. You know, it was John Endoglin a friend of mine, and Michael in Navan, where I'm staying in his house. So we we go somewhere go for a little drive, but we'd stay within more or less or five kilometers. And we wouldn't really meet up with anybody. And we kind of do our shopping and stuff like that getting the groceries and that. So like just keeping keeping active, getting out getting a bit of exercise and probably tidy it up things in the house and got a few things done. That I might have put off for another few years. All those things helped, you know, and people were very good. They kept in contact, you know, even though we couldn't meet up friends rang or family rang. I found and I think that's I think for people coming from families was okay. But as I said earlier, I think I said it before we got started the interview for people in an isolated areas farmers and our home on our own in isolated rural areas, then would have been very tough for them. You know, and I think there is a serious concern about the, you know, the the effects on mental health and a long term consequences of that, you know, for for people like suicide rate, things like that, and for the ability of the medical service, which hasn't been good at looking after people with mental problems. Like, there is a higher instance, Well, as far as I know, there's a high incidence of suicide.

And, you know, sometimes you wonder, are we doing is interesting, there's a charity called pieta house. And it was trying to fundraise, they will at this time, from what, from darkness into light, kind of a sponsored, walks at dawn to fundraise every year. But because this year, they couldn't do it outside because of the restrictions, because you couldn't get large gatherings. People are restricted to small groupings and things like that. Even outdoors, they couldn't do normal walks. So they kind of put it on...Ryan Cattery he has this chat program on Sunday, on a Saturday night. You may have heard the Late Late Show, he was kind of Gay Byrne in The Late Late Show, I don't know. But it's that he's his successor for Gay Byrne on that show. And he made an effort almost every week when he had the show one to use it as a means of fundraising for some charity. And this, this group here house looks is kind of a charity to look after people, families who have lost loved ones because of suicide and help out and try to help people cope with with depression and stuff. And they are fundraising. Were trying to raise 4 million over the weekend in order to raise something like 7 million euro, you know, and it's still rising. You know, and, you know, people are, I suppose, again, responding in a positive way to the issues about, you know, isolation have caused, you know,

Fintan O'Gorman 1:01:45

okay, thank you for answering that question.

Fred O'Gorman 1:01:49

No bother.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:01:51

The next the next couple questions I have, and we're getting towards the end here specifically, actually. So do you think there are any important issues that the media may or may not be covering? In Ireland?

Fred O'Gorman 1:02:11

I tell you, you know, what, the only immediate I would say was, we were inundated with information 24/7, it became depressing, nearly. But if you were to listen to it all the time, you know, you know, you'd have one program on and they'd be discussing COVID, and vaccination and the virus and pandemic and all this and the statistics, and then they're would be a change of program. And we we seem to rely an awful lot on phone ins and to the radio. And as a result is the same thing was discussed on a sequence of programs during the day, repeatedly, you'll have say from so 8 to 10 in the morning, you'd have a discussion about COVID, from 10 to 12, more discussions about COVID, you might get an hour's music, and then you'd be back to more discussion about COVID. So basically, my way of coping was I kind of I wouldn't say it was the only person I thought the people who mentioned this, I kind of restrict my listening to the news to the main news, maybe at six o'clock in the day or 9pm at night. Because you just got an overload, and it would it would kind of depress you, you know. So all I did was I switched over to an alternative station that played more or less classical music all day, they might give maybe a quick news, snippet once an hour, but it was only be a minute or two. So you wouldn't be getting all this analysis and, you know, different people's viewpoints and conspiracy theories and all the

various things and, you know, complaints about people not abiding by the rules and regulations and the government chopping and changing and political parties criticizing the government. And one of the things I'd say there's the initial coalition governments seem to be more successful, with communicating with the public in the first lock down. And I think the fact that didn't kind of try to predict a month ahead, they only kept it short two weeks at a time, like what would happen for the next two weeks and what would happen for the next two weeks. You know, they'd only give you what was going to happen on sort of, for short term, and I think that kept our spirits up. When the new government came in. They seem to want to look at a longer term like a month, and I think people found it a little bit more oppressive and depressing. I should say. So, and then the opposition parties used to, question everything and you know, you're kind of set why don't, we shut up and just, you know, let's knuckle down and do what we have to do and stop criticizing and get this over with, you know? So I don't know if that answers the question. But I used I don't know, if I made the point exactly I switched over then to a TV or radio station that I listened to the music rather than have all these comments development, and just restrict, maybe maybe half an hour a day to listening to the news about what's happening around the world and what's happening at home. You know, just leave it at that. Because, you know, that's what I could cope with. And so Very good job. Very good job, I think, with the statistics and analysis and stuff like that, that they gave us, I think, you know, one criticism, I will say that our of our own national station, I think they must think we're slow or something. Because when the news would be on, you'd hear the same thing, three or four times repeated at different times in the news, over a say maybe a 30 to 45 minute time, you're going to say we heard that already, I don't know what the objective was, but that was the only comment I'd make on that. All right. Fintan.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:06:29

Great, I was just gonna say that, it sounded like you'd found like some much needed balance, just after all the days of the pandemic is it kept progressing?

Fred O'Gorman 1:06:38

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah. But you just you, I suppose we, you kind of, you know, you're supposed to be fun strategies to cope or whatever, you know, humans are adaptable. You know, I think I said, I don't know, this is in the interview. And I said, like, we were lucky, they were dropping bombs on us, you know, like they had to do during the Second World War funny like, this is like the anniversary of the 100 years of the First World War. And I suppose the, you know, what people have to endure during the wars. You know, ww1 was far worse, than what we've had to endure. And we were lucky, we have certain good things, like we have, you know, we have good medical service, we have the cooperation among scientists to focus on the vaccine, and we have the internet, all that, which has helped you know, we've coped with things. Are you falling asleep Fintan?

Fintan O'Gorman 1:07:34

Oh no, I'm wide awake, don't worry about it. Now we'll just we'll jump into those those, those government questions. And I know you've spoken a lot of detail about that already. So we can we can go

through it. And you can be as verbose as you'd like, or say as little as you'd like. So I was just gonna ask, how have municipal leaders and government officials in the Irish community respond to the outbreak?

Fred O'Gorman 1:08:03

Generally speaking fairly good. I think they made a big mistake, maybe a little slow at the start and getting things going, hoping maybe we might get away with it. But I think we made the government made a big mistake at Christmas, when they allowed people to come home and visit for Christmas, you know, Christmas being the time it is the family time of year, unlike say, what you call it in America. Thanksgiving would probably be the bigger thing. And I don't know whether in America, they you know, people travel I think they did. I think that was another issue in America. And I think the government, you see are trying to balance. They're trying to keep industry going and the shops and pubs open. And they're never under enormous pressure from various interested bodies. You know, who self interest you know about the Pubs in particular, trying to maintain business, but the government had to try and balance the health issues and safety of people with the business men, I suppose pushing for businesses to be kept open, the shops being kept open. And that so I think maybe they listened to too much to the the vested interests at Christmas when they decided before Christmas to open, to lift the lock down a bit. A lot and created, you know, and I think maybe, I don't know, people whether people will hold them account for that because they know we can't predict the future and we did the best they could try to you know but in hindsight, they probably made a mistake, letting businesses open for Christmas like letting people go shopping and things like that. Being alive for Christmas was more important than getting a Christmas present. You know? My opinion?

Fintan O'Gorman 1:10:08

Of course, of course. So do you have any thoughts on how sort of how different you know, this I should clarify this question have have different local state and, and federal like, like leaders that they've responded and to the crisis differently have they said and done things to varying degrees depending on their, their locality?

Fred O'Gorman 1:10:36

Well you see, be totally different situation in Ireland to America. America like is almost, you know, it's, it's the, it's the United States and it is states and the states have very much self control. Whereas like, Ireland is very small. So we will only be a fraction of some of the states in America, if not a fraction of all of them. in size, so like, it didn't arise here, really no, everybody follows the same hymn sheet, now the government made the decisions, and that everybody followed them, like we've got one police force, we don't have different police force in different states. And also, we don't even have our Lord Mayor, someone like we have in the States, we may have two cities, with Lord Mayors, as far as I know, and they're only they've only just started, just probably in their first term. So it doesn't arise really, in a country as small as Ireland. You know, I think everybody pulled together. And it was probably a bit harder for people living on the border, because they were kind of subjected to two different set of rules. And if they didn't like the rules in the South, they could go across the border, no, nobody's policing the

border as such. There's no checkpoints or anything that's created struggle, because they're the regulation different. So you can cross the border, have drinks, whereas here in the south at the present time, you can't. So you know, there's criticism of some people going across. But like, that's not a new because people always kind of, you know, because if something was cheaper on the, on the northern side of the border, people who go out there and shop, you know, for the last 20/30 years, or 100 years, you might say so, no, no, there's always been criticism of people crossing the border. But there's due to COVID or not due to COVID with some problems with spread, you know. So, that's about all I could say about that. Really, I don't think it applies so much.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:12:51

Oh, yeah. Okay, interesting. Yeah, definitely. very key difference there. a united front in the US that we don't always see. So now the question is, I'm going to ask you, you're just going to be about like, what the future is looking at? We're getting towards towards the end here. Just last couple questions. So has your experience transformed? how you think about family, friends and your community? And in any specific ways?

Fred O'Gorman 1:13:21

Yeah, I think, you know, the fact we have to isolate a bit kind of made you think this is just a thought, crossing my mind, the last few days like, life has become almost a bit of a rush, we're trying to do things all the time, like meet up people, you know, we're on the go all the time. Now, we're in the car going here going there. You know, and maybe a lot of the times, we don't need to be going to these places. So we don't need to be going to the shops and stuff so much. You know, we've put a lot of pressure on ourselves, I think that'd be we've kind of thinken and now we might take life a little bit easier. Maybe it's some things we need to slow down and enjoy the moment. And we had to, we had to we had the time. So we made use of it to enjoy life a bit in isolation. Now, we weren't able to travel abroad and things that all those, like so we had a quieter life, and maybe we're doing too much. And maybe we're doing too much damage to the planet and in the process, but I think go step back into our old ways. I'd say we'll slip back into our old ways. We're all waiting to get into the pub or all waiting to get out and travel go away someplace. You know, I suppose the big thing at the moment here is will we get summer holidays, you know, will you be able to go to Spain or will we be able to go to Portugal. You know, we'll be able to go to the US actually I've booked to go to Florida. Sometime sometime before the end of the summer, we were going to go before march or something but we're not too sure not before March before May or June. But I don't think so we opted to just get a voucher. We had booked the flights for three months in advance or something like that. So we've I think, booked, we've got a voucher now. So we're waiting to see, I'd rather go there when things are a bit safer. Because I like everybody, there's not enough people vaccinated yet. So I think like, we're talking like people are thinking like we'd be able to call maybe abroad in July, August, maybe September, hoping, you know, but I don't think we should shed too many hairs. But unfortunately, that's going to be bad for the planet. One of the good things about the COVID was all this travel, cut down the travel and the carbon carbon footprint and all that. And our industry will

have to gear up again, I suppose. Because now that travel and work will have to get back to normal. So all those things, so go on is that answering the question again? Remind me what the question was?

Fintan O'Gorman 1:16:04

Oh, no, that answered the question perfectly. But my next question is just going off of that, how does the pandemic compared to other big events that have happened in your lifetime? Are there are there any big events that it really can compare to?

Fred O'Gorman 1:16:18

But the only thing I can remember was, there was an outbreak of polio. In Ireland, I'd say, must have been some time I was born in 1952. So I'd say about maybe when I was about eight, maybe six to eight. And that was the last thing I remember, we have to get vaccinated with the doctor come into the house. And we're in a large family that was nine kids and mom and dad. So I think we're all went in one in one by one entered the sitting room to get a vaccination. I can't actually is one of my earliest memories. So I suppose on that on a medical level, well, that's about the only thing. I know, I don't think we've ever experienced any thing like a lockdown before. But wasn't that major event really, I suppose. as things go. I dont think it was life changing. I don't think....we'll forget about it in a year or two. It's just one of those things. You know, same ways people have forgotten about the Spanish flu in 1918.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:17:26

So what can you imagine your life being like, in a year from now?

Fred O'Gorman 1:17:32

Probably back to what I was doing before, meeting up with people traveling more, driving the car more, going to the shops more doing things I probably don't need to be doing meeting up with too many people, maybe we've got too wide a circle of friends. And then I suppose that's natural, we kind of go through phases that are restricted in your movements, you know, kind of gone mad when you get a chance, you know, and then you've got your kind of cop on and then, you know, you start taking life a bit easier, and not rushing about trying to do too much, you know, that comes with age as well. So both of those things will cause those changes. And maybe it's because I'm aging and I'm enjoying that bit of peace and quiet. And I'm able to cope with it. Whereas maybe 20 years ago, or 10 years ago, I'd be going out of my mind if I had to stay at home so much, you know.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:18:30

So next question is what do you hope your life to be like any in a year? I know you mentioned some of this already. Do you hope that people that are conscious of these things that you mentioned previously?

Fred O'Gorman 1:18:43

Personally, I think we'll get over it. It's it's people like it was no vaccine for the Spanish flu, you know, people died, unfortunately, huge numbers, I don't, hopefully, like the world would be a better place for

the poor, especially places like India and stuff. You know where there's big problems, and now we see there could be other outbreaks in other parts of the world Brazil and that. So hopefully, like we have a vaccine and we're lucky like I thought we hope the vaccine works and that people get cured and that we cope if there is outbreaks and that the world would share and I think maybe it'll make us one of the benefits I think will be that the world needs you know its own little planet, how much more can we dump and pollute and you know, overpopulated because maybe these things are, you know, being brought on by ourselves and not and that's already saying deliberately or anything like that. But you know, when you put rubbish in the bin and things like that like I'm one person and all these people are putting more rubbish in the bin, painting my doors there recently. And like the smell of that led in the paint and the smell of the turpentine. You know, and then all the dumping of the old stuff that you take out, putting in the new stuff. And I think maybe COVID has made us realize that, you know, we've got one little planet, and we're all on it together. And we need to look after each other, you know, and I'm glad like to see that, if we have access to vaccines, we're going to send it out to other world countries where they need it, you know, for free, and there's even charities now we saw on one of the islands here, off the coast, Aran Islands, small little island, they started some sort of fundraising or something for euros to sponsor UNICEF, vaccination program, you know, small little gestures to help other parts of the world, its not new I suppose news items now and into media and all that you hear about these things. And so I think, you know, maybe we'll realize how interconnected we are and how we have to look after each other. I think one of the first things I said about the charities, you know, the National station, trying to help promote charity, so they could get funds to do the things that they normally do, but couldn't fundraise because of the restrictions, how people come up with ideas to get money and look after people and maybe, like, we've got a whole thing, migrants and traveling and trying to get into countries because they're much better off. And like we in, what we call the developed world, how lucky we are, you know, if we keep going on the way we are going, you know, we'll probably have more of these epidemics, and more pollution and more climate change. And that's one small word. So we'll just look look after each other. Think about what we're doing.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:21:52

And my my final closing question, related to what you were saying. So knowing what you know, now, from the pandemic, what do you think that individuals communities or governments need to keep in mind for the future?

Fred O'Gorman 1:22:08

Well, I know, the talk at the moment about lifting the patent. so that everybody can get access, access access to these vaccines, they see the trouble is a commercial world, capitalist world, you might say, and producing vaccines, vaccines, and it's probably happening because of HIV, we've learned a lot, because we're dealing with an RNA virus. And, you know, all the scientific research and money spent in universities how important it is. And, you know, to be...what am I trying to say? No, we, we, you know, I actually is a top tier field, science is very important, and research is very important. But it's expensive. And, you know, if businesses is, you know, business are going as in the past, I think scientists were

more altruistic, unfortunately, and other scientists have become, I suppose, maybe I'm being critical there, but not hoping not being too critical, and more interested in kind of making money out of their research. But research is expensive. So like, we need to support the universities on a national level, so that the research is done. And that creates that should the individual then who does the research get rewarded rather than the population, you know, that we, that, you know, that I know, we have to probably have businesses to support, like, you know, the pharmaceutical companies and have to have to be able to make profits. And if, if there's no profit, why will they spend money on those areas? You know, and, and this, this is a big issue, like we, again, it sounds like us in the first world, we're living well, but I expense to the third world and for countries like India, who are desperate, and countries like Syria, and the Sudan and where there's conflict and conflict, probably in a large sense, influenced by the Russians and the Americans and the British and the larger Iranians and the larger countries to try to look after their and the Chinese are going after their own interest rather than looking after the individual world. Human interest. And also, how do you balance where the money goes and the research goes and who makes, a non basically what you want is nonprofit research tool and patents probably not a good idea. But you know I hope that that makes sense.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:25:14

Ya that does make sense.

Fred O'Gorman 1:25:16

You know?.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:25:17

But yeah, that's my concluding question is there anything that you wanted to add to the anything else you wanted to say? You covered a lot good stuff.

Fred O'Gorman 1:25:28

I'm exhausted. I'm sure you must be as well. That's what says it. No, I don't think so. Not at the moment. Anyway. I'm actually just initially when you told me you wanted to do this, I said, Jake, what kind of say because I know, my memory is not great for things like I'll forget things. You know, numbers I thought you might be asking me numbers and how the lockdown went, and different things. It's kind of hard to recall. I find it very hard to recall events. Like I'm here now. And I remember things. And I remember things yesterday, but to have gone back a couple of months. You know, actually, when you retire it even gets worse because you don't have a routine. You know, I've gone into work in our consciousness, Sundays and stuff for say, going to church on a Sunday. Like nearly forget it was another week gone by and I think with the with the lockdown, like we've never thought we'd be still in a lockdown almost 14 months after this whole thing started and thank God we didn't, we weren't that pessimistic, I think it will go on that long. We probably never have coped. But, you know, you kind of lose contact with reality to some extent about what they are in and stuff like that. You know, so, you know, and so I actually was surprised that I kept keep talking. Alright, it was nice talking to you.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:26:54

Yes, I learned a lot of great information about....

Fred O'Gorman 1:26:57

you can turn off the recording now if you like.

Fintan O'Gorman 1:26:59

Yeah, of course. I was gonna say...