

## Transcript of Oral History Interview with Kiersten Camby

**Interviewee:** Kiersten Camby

**Interviewer:** Stephanie Berry

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**Location (Interviewee):** Spartanburg, South Carolina

**Location (Interviewer):** unknown

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### Abstract:

This is an interview of Kiersten Camby about her experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kiersten is a fulltime wedding planner. She lives with her fiancé and two German Shepherds in Spartanburg, South Carolina. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Kiersten was temporarily furloughed from her job and spent most of her time in self-isolation. Her fiancé is an officer and continued to work. Kiersten was able to return to work 3 months after being furloughed and was able to slowly return to full-time status. During her time in self-isolation, Kiersten continued to be able to see her family to enjoy dinners and at-home movie nights. Kiersten and her family have taken the precautions to remain healthy and she hopes that life will one day return to normal.

**Stephanie Berry 00:01**

So, I have my recorder going, I'm going to also do it on my computer as well. Sounds good. Alright, so I have my computer recording, and I have my iPhone recording as well. Alright, so let's go ahead and get started. And for the consent form, did you consent for the Creative Commons or the second license the the one that gives full, full permission to the COVID-19 Oral History Project.

**Kiersten Camby 00:49**

The full permission, I don't want anything to stay anonymous or anything like that.

**Stephanie Berry 00:56**

All right, so let's get started. So, we're gonna start off with background questions. What is the date and time?

**Kiersten Camby 01:06**

It is July 17, 6:31pm.

**Stephanie Berry 01:13**

What is your name? And what are the primary things you do on a day-to-day basis? For example?

**Kiersten Camby 01:21**

I mean, find out if you're going to read the differences or not. My name is Kyrsten Camby. And on a day-to-day basis at plan weddings, I take care of two German Shepherds and just kind of go about day to day life things, grocery shopping, all the fun stuff.

**Stephanie Berry 01:40**

Where do you live in? What is it like to live there?

**Kiersten Camby 01:44**

Live in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It's wonderful to live here. It's a really good town. I love being in South Carolina. Its been crazy recently. But a really good town overall.

**Stephanie Berry 01:57**

When you first learned about COVID-19, what were your thoughts about it? How have your thoughts changed since then?

**Kiersten Camby 02:06**

I was initially concerned about just it being a virus in general, I didn't have overt concern as far as it making its rounds in the US the way that it has I knew that it would affect some but I kind of thought it was going to be more kind of like a flu pandemic. I didn't think it was going to hit us as hard as it did. So yeah, my thoughts definitely have changed. They're at went from you know, it's it's sad, and I hate that people are dying from it. And the general idea of it was just affecting older people to begin with to now realizing that it's affected so many people and that it's definitely dangerous and certainly take more precaution with

**Stephanie Berry 02:44**

What issues have concerned you are about the pandemic.

**Kiersten Camby 02:52**

I think just how it's generally affecting everyday life for everyone. Whether it be things like I'm always on regarding weddings or school for children or families being able to see one another and spend time with one another. Being in the wedding business, we have a floral shop on site. So even seeing things like on Mother's Day, people who have elderly mothers that weren't allowed to go see their mothers for Mother's Day, too. There was a huge spike in floral orders to be able to try to somehow compensate for the fact that everyday life has been disrupted.

**Stephanie Berry 03:25**

Alright, so we're gonna, the employment question is How has COVID-19 affected your job and in what ways

**Kiersten Camby 03:36**

It's heavily affected my job being in the wedding industry, it's caused many couples to postpone or cancel their weddings. It's cost people 1000s of dollars, it's cost our industry 1000s and millions of dollars vendors are being canceled a lot of catering companies or venues have had to be forced to shutdown not just temporarily, but completely because they can't afford to pay the bills and keep the doors open. So, I think the wedding industry as a whole took a really, really hard hit due to COVID.

**Stephanie Berry 04:07**

Has COVID-19 changed your employment status?

**Kiersten Camby 04:12**

It did temporarily. When South Carolina was under government mandates to shut down everything and not be in groups more than I believe it was it was 10. And then it was five and we eventually did have to shut down were a private own venue. But once it was a government mandate, or everywhere, then we did have to shut down and I was furloughed for approximately three months when everything opened back up. I was allowed to go back in and worked part time. And now I have finally gotten back to full time hours depending on what's going on within the week.

**Stephanie Berry 04:47**

What concerns do you have about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment and the economy more broadly?

**Kiersten Camby 04:55**

I think the main concern is the fact that people are having trouble staying afloat. I've seen it in my mind I have a business that I'm working at. I've seen it in neighboring vendors and venues, as well as just outside of what I do employment laws, the economy as a whole. People are really struggling, especially small local businesses to be open and be able to pay their bills and keep their feet on the ground without support from their community. And it's not necessarily that this community doesn't want to support them, it's just that there may be rules in place or fears in place that prevent them from doing so. So that would be my general concern.

**Stephanie Berry 05:29**

Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the employment of people, you know, and in what ways?

**Kiersten Camby 05:36**

Yes, it's affected my husband's, oh fiancé situation, he became an essential worker, he is an officer. So he was working longer hours, he's required to wear a mask them immediately when he enters the building, he's required to have his temperature taken every morning before he gets to lock in, and has to wear a wristband to show to everyone else that he does not have a fever and he does not have symptoms. So, that's affected his employment in that sense.

**Stephanie Berry 06:07**

Alright, so removing the family and household questions. Has COVID-19 affected you or and or your family's day to day activities?

**Kiersten Camby 06:19**

Yes. So, for me, it ended up affecting, you know, my situation was to go to work and to go to the grocery store to come home to cook dinner. So, for a couple of months, it was just me being at home and doing things from home, it affected my fiancé not being home as much because he was working longer hours. My father was an essential worker as well. So, he wasn't home as much and my mother was staying home. And then my grandmother said, she's older, she wasn't able to go out and be about as much as she wanted to, because of the pandemic and the concern.

**Stephanie Berry 06:59**

How are you managing day to day activities in your household?

**Kiersten Camby 07:05**

I think I've pretty much managed the same way. We didn't do the whole like hoarding the before the when the pandemic first hit, and everybody was in a panic, we got enough to get through the time that we felt that excuse me that we would need to get through but we didn't over hoard or anything like that. So overall, we made one two trips during the whole recall, you have to happier note to be on the road to get essential items, but day to day activities within the home and stay at the same

**Stephanie Berry 07:36**

Has COVID-19, errr, has the COVID-19 affected, affected how you associate and communicate with family and friends? In what ways?

**Kiersten Camby 07:48**

I would say no, because I was still working for them. Yet. Other than that, a couple of months that we were furloughed, I still saw the same people that I saw every day. And then my best friend doesn't live here. So I didn't see her to begin with anyway, or communications still is via phone, whether it be call or text. And then I still saw my family face to face. If one of us felt kind of off that day, we stayed home. But that's no different than if someone had had a cold or scratchy throat you stayed home and kind of wait and see where that's going. So, I don't think it really affected how we associated or communicated.

**Stephanie Berry 08:26**

What have been the biggest challenges that you faced during the COVID 19 outbreak?

**Kiersten Camby** 08:32

For me personally, it was just financial. And that may not just because of you know, employment status, just the fact that because we were furloughed or this and that the other being able to maintain the same amount of what we wanted to spend on groceries or to take care of bills and things like that. So, that was the biggest concern for me as a personal concern,

**Stephanie Berry** 08:56

What have you in your family and your friends done for recreation during COVID-19?

**Kiersten Camby** 09:03

We've relied on a lot of family dinners. So, since we couldn't go out to dinner or we couldn't go out and do as many activities we turned in a lot of movie nights at the house or we're going to cook out everyone come over and things like that. So that's become our, our time together. Same things that you would do out in public but just at home.

**Stephanie Berry** 09:27

Alright, so we're moving on to the questions about community. How has the COVID 19 outbreak affected your community?

**Kiersten Camby** 09:38

I think it's affected our community very, very hard. So, our Spartanburg has some of the highest case numbers. We're reaching over 1000 cases a day on Sundays being diagnosed in our upstate area and that includes Spartanburg, Greenville, all that kind of stuff. We actually have a correctional facility down the road from where we live, not the one on that my husband works at a local one, that they have multiple inmates who are being diagnosed with COVID. And it's become a huge political thing here. People are saying, you know, going into rallying, even though they're inmates, they still have rights because they're not being properly treated or taken care of. And it's just spreading rampant throughout the correctional facilities. I think it's had a really large effect on the community.

**Stephanie Berry** 10:26

How are people around you responding to the COVID 19 pandemic?

**Kiersten Camby** 10:32

We've had a pretty good amount of calm you've had you have a couple of people who are more panic than others. But we have a pretty respectful mass population, we don't have people who are overdoing it or things like that. I think they're responding well.

**Stephanie Berry** 10:50

Are you seeing people's opinions, day to day activities or relationships to the pandemic, in response to the pandemic?

**Kiersten Camby** 10:59

I think the biggest change that I see for people is people who may not have been generally as combat and to where they they maybe do wear masks more often, or they wash their hands more often, but not a major change now.

**Stephanie Berry** 11:16

Self-isolation, flattening the curve, having two key ideas that have emerged during the pandemic, how have you and how have you, family, friends and community responded to the request to self-isolate and flattened record?

**Kiersten Camby** 11:33

We completely self-isolated when that order was issued, we went nowhere. for a really long time. Well, I think we took two grocery trips, and that was in masking sanitizer after everything was touched in all that fun stuff. So that's, you know, while we weren't possibly making them, the biggest effect, it was our part in helping to not spread

**Stephanie Berry** 12:02

Has COVID-19 changed your relationships with family, friends and community?

**Kiersten Camby** 12:10

I don't think so I think it adds a little bit more stress on everyone, people tend to get frustrated when you do have to go out now because things have changed so much. But I don't think it's changed the relationship; it's just added more stress to everyday life.

**Stephanie Berry** 12:26

Alright, so we're gonna, the health questions. And I didn't say that before. But if you do feel like uncomfortable with like these questions, you don't have to answer them.

**Stephanie Berry** 12:42

Have you or anybody, you know, gotten sick during COVID-19? What has been your experience in responding to the sickness if anyone has?

**Kiersten Camby** 12:52

Yes, [redacted] actually ended up getting it and to self-isolate in their home for the two-week period. And we were there was no face-to-face involvement during that two-week quarantine. And actually, a couple days after that two-week quarantine, due to them both having that.

**Stephanie Berry** 13:19

In what ways do you think the COVID-19 is affecting people's mental and or physical health.

**Kiersten Camby** 13:26

It affects their physical health in the fact that they literally drained you. I mean, getting up to walk from the bed to the bathroom was enough to just be enough energy for them versus the day they spent the full two weeks in bed. And so that in turn helps with the mental health. It just makes you depressed. It's no different than when you don't, you can't do go anywhere or do anything. So, you spend all day at home, you tend to get depressed.

**Stephanie Berry** 13:57

Alright, so we're moving on the information section of the questions what have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic.

**Kiersten Camby** 14:10

I think a variety of just being as honest and transparent as possible. Being a Southerner, I tend to lean away from more of the left geared news sources and go towards the right gear news sources. But I don't think either one is overplaying the safety measures that you need to be taking. So, whatever was providing the most information on how to protect ourselves as well as to prevent the spread to other people has been where I'm relying most on my news

**Stephanie Berry** 14:50

When you said talked about the new sources, so I think we can do you want to skip that? Yeah, I can answer that one. What do you think are important issues that the media may be, or may...may or is not covering?

**Kiersten Camby** 15:10

I think the I mean, they're covering everything in general as far as like the big topics. But I think as we're going to see more and more, as you know, as we're coming into testing, we've seen a lot of new new things kind of popping up on the minor radars of new sourcing on whether or not some of these tests have been getting there, people are getting false results. So, we've had several plate people in my county or South Carolina in general, who went to get tested and signed paperwork, but then decided, oh lines too long, we're not going to stay. But then a week later got a positive confirmation for COVID in the mail but didn't get tested. So, I think that's the whole like, not necessarily a government conspiracy, but just maybe pranksters, or whatever, I think that's going to be coming up on the radar soon as because people prey on weak during this time period, how it always works, I think that's going to be an issue that's going to hit the media thing.

**Stephanie Berry** 16:04

So, we are the last section of questions, and they pertain to the future. Has your experience in transformed how you think about family, about your family, friends and community?

**Kiersten Camby 16:24**

Absolutely, I think it's, even though I don't have children, it almost instills a parental viewpoint is you feel the need to be protective of everyone around you. So you stop and you think, you know, maybe when you have a cold, you think I'm just gonna go out, it doesn't matter. But now I had the mental process of thinking, "okay, well, I have [redacted] and she has asthma, and she has lung issues I would hate to know that someone would be as blatantly disregarding as to go into public knowing they were sick and not be mindful of her and people like that at home spreading things around. So, for me, I think of myself in that situation, others so even though I'm not crazy about wearing a mask, it's hot. We live in South Carolina, it's 95 degrees every day, I still wear that mask, because I would hate to know that I was not thinking of someone else's family member, and with cause be the cause of their child or their elderly grandmother, their wife or husband getting sick. So, I think that's changed my view in that point.

**Stephanie Berry 17:25**

How has this compared to other big events happen in your lifetime?

**Kiersten Camby 17:33**

It hasn't, there's no, there's nothing to compare this to immediately when it happened. Everyone started comparing it oh, this is going to be like swine flu. This is going to be like bird flu. And it's not swine flu. And bird flu was something that for a month, people talked about and then kind of died off in the media and in middle school kids crack jokes about and this has been truly a global pandemic and nothing like we've ever seen. So, I think it's it's definitely historical as how we're seeing it. It's not something that my generation has had anything to compare it to.

**Stephanie Berry 18:06**

What can you imagine your life being like in a year?

**Kiersten Camby 18:11**

I definitely think we'll still be taking precautions, maybe not as to the extent that we are now and maybe not being as you know, on top of things as we are now. But I do think that you will have some businesses that say, "Hey, you know, let's just keep it some of these precautions in place to prevent anything like that." And I don't think if a vaccine or anything like that has not been established for the said virus, and I don't think everything will have gone back to normal. And there will definitely be some changes that we follow. I think people will still be wearing masks just out of whether it be fear or precautions, things like that.

**Stephanie Berry 18:52**

What do you hope, life will look like?



**Kiersten Camby 18:57**

Life will you know go back to the quote unquote, normalcy that it was I I really hope that we don't have to worry. We everyone can see it worried in the fall and the winter about flu season. So, I hope my biggest thing and I hope that we don't end up with a situation to where we have to worry for years to come about not only flu season, but about COVID coming back every year during certain colder seasons and hitting hard and continuing to be a virus that's around I would love to see that eradicated.

**Stephanie Berry 19:31**

Knowing what you know, what you think individuals, communities, or governments need to keep in mind for the future.

**Kiersten Camby 19:41**

I think it's something people need to stay ahead of. We said for weeks even when it first hit the radar is like this may possibly be an issue for the United States, I said as if we need to get ahead of it before it's an issue. We need to make sure that we're not waiting until it's too bad. And things have gone too far to be able to get ahead of it because then you can't get ahead of it. You're always going to be one step of hot behind and saying, "Oh, I wish we had." So, I hope that future generations or even a couple of years from now, God forbid something were to happen. People immediately take action instead of waiting around.

**Stephanie Berry 20:21**

Well, that concludes our questions. And I wanted to say thank you for taking the time to answer them. I'm gonna go ahead and stop recording. At the moment it is 6:51pm Perfect.