

Covid-19 History Submission

As the Covid-19 pandemic swept across the world, we locked ourselves away for protection and safety. However, as the quarantining and self-isolating increased, there was a specific group of people that were left behind – essential workers. As I grew into adulthood, I came to realize quickly that I lived a moderately privileged life. I never had to worry about homelessness, where to find my next meal, or if I could afford health care.

As an essential worker who had to put myself through college, I was suddenly shifted to a new reality as my perspective was forcefully altered. The Covid-19 pandemic forced everyone into their homes except those deemed too “essential” to lose the labor of. Essential work became akin to becoming a sacrifice for the greater good. Frontline workers were forced, not given an option, to continue showing up to work and exposing themselves to a potentially deadly and life-altering virus. This callous disregard for the wellbeing of millions of Americans became an eye opening example of how little people truly care for essential workers. We are viewed as less than human; we are nothing more than robots who make your food, pour your coffee, and die gasping for air.

This harsh reality began to create tensions between myself and those around me who had the privilege to quarantine. There were close friends who I believe to be good and honest people that now had the luxury of staying at home, relaxing, and collecting unemployment benefits at a staggeringly higher rate of pay than what I made in months. I was infuriated and envious. At the same time, I was ashamed to begrudge these people for taking advantage of the safest situation for themselves.

In the end, when the world views you as sub-human and exploits you for your labor, they will literally put your life at risk to ensure they can still order a delivery pizza. I was exposed to a lack of privilege that millions of people still experience every day. This humbling epiphany opens my eyes to the nature of the world, yet darkens my eyes to the cooperative human experience.