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COVID Capstone

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Oral History- "Let's Talk March 13th"

Introduction: I chose to interview my boyfriend, whom I live with and moved in with just as COVID-19 began to affect our hometown. We are both 19-20 years old and had active social lives prior to the pandemic and worked full time at non-covid friendly jobs. We were both greatly affected by this pandemic due to this I thought interviewing a member of the younger generation would be a way to capture just how hard we were all hit by this pandemic.

Hunter: Hi, let's just start with an introduction. Who are you and what do you remember about March 13th?

Jacob: Well okay, Hi my name is Jacob im 20 years old and March 13th was a Friday. Friday the 13th, ironic now that I think about it. It was also the day our governor issued a statewide state of emergency, and issued a lockdown/quarantine to help prevent any large spread of the CoronaVirus. It was only supposed to be two weeks or so I think. So at first i wasn't too worried. I was working as a tile installer and we had been given permission to finish any projects we still had open and then to isolate after completion. Most of us only had maybe 2 projects open so I worked for two-three more days and then thought I was going to have a mini vacation.

Hunter: It didn't end up being just two weeks though. Because as those two weeks came to an end Governor Sisolack announced a 90-day “Social distancing” mandate and set in motion a moratorium on evictions/foreclosures for both commercial and residential tenants.

Jacob: Right. At this point though people were kind of just enjoying the “quarantine traffic” and super low gas prices. Masks had not yet been mandated, but I remember all the movie theaters closing, restaurants starting closing their dining rooms, we spent a lot of time outside and at parks. Which at the time sounded like a fun change in scenery, but then they closed the parks, took down the rims on basketball courts, closed down hiking trails, it was honestly kind of frightening once it hit mid-April.

Hunter: There were a lot of protests and backlash towards Governor Sisolack about the Las Vegas shut down, even our own mayor, Carolyn Goodman, came out and spoke against the shut down.

Jacob: **Laughs** Yeah..yeah people weren't too happy, I remember us mocking Goodman because in an interview with Anderson Cooper she kept telling him she wanted us to reopen and that she apparently offered the entire city of Las Vegas up to be control group **laughs** I didn't know she could just volunteer us like that **laughs** Anyway, I don't think I noticed just how hard it was hitting everyone until we moved downtown.

Hunter: Yeah I had just lost my job because the restaurant I worked at closed down. We were both unemployed for the first time since... what? We were like... 17? It was super bizarre. But we had moved just down by Fremont Street, and seeing all the lights off at all those casinos, the number of homeless people, although I'm not sure I would blame that on COVID or if I was just too sheltered before and didn't notice our homeless rate was high.

Jacob: Yeah it was wild. But I think we saw first hand how many people were really affected when we started working at the Testing Clinic for Sands Corp.

Hunter: Yeah definitely. I don't think we knew just how many people worked in the casinos and entertainment.

Jacob: Yeah... We started doing that in I think the end of May? We were working 12 hour shifts three-four times a week. The Sands employees couldn't go back to work unless they got tested. I remember the first round of testing the employees were allowed to bring in their household members to get tested and that was a nightmare. We had 24 testing stations and each had a minimum of 200 people tested each day. But it was worse in August when they phased their reopening and all the housekeepers came in. There were only 6 stations at that point because they downsized us and we were seeing upwards of 500 people per station. This was only the staff from two casinos/hotels, I can't imagine how MGM was doing their testing.

Hunter: Okay so now it's the beginning of December. We are still on a mask mandate, no large gatherings, 25% capacity in all indoor settings, a lot of small businesses have closed down due to these new regulations, and we just found out that the company that made the COVID vaccine offered more supply to our President and he declined it*citation 1*, how do you think our government has done in terms of aiding the pandemic decrease?

Jacob: Honestly? I feel like we should be the country best suited for this!

Hunter: I would agree, given how over the years we've experienced the Spanish Flu during 1918-19, or Ebola, or H1N1 virus. We had many scares you would think that we would have had a handle on this.

Jacob: No seriously. I think it's mostly at the fault of our government. There are so many times we could have just issued a lock down, and we didn't. Instead we did a racist travel ban with little regard to the people who are already here with it [covid-19]. Not meaning immigrants but like American citizens already had it.

Hunter: Ah perfect time to throw in a comment about corrupt government! In our American Horizons book there's a section dedicated to the Watergate Scandal, and this to me relates dramatically because our government was in a political standoff back then and they still continue to be hesitant and, for a lack of better words, they fumble the bag! We had so many chances to try and make this right, to shut down for the scientist recommended 6 weeks, or to put in place a travel ban for our citizens who don't need to be flying to New York “Because the airfare is so cheap!”.

Jacob: You're absolutely right, I remember when Trump was getting impeached and everyone was comparing it to WaterGate, there was this article I read (wrvo.org- full citation at the end) that was talking about how Trump's response to Covid-19 made Nixon look like an innocent human error example. No one died due to Nixon's ignorance, or at the hand of the Watergate scandal. Many peoples lives were changed and jobs were lost, I'm not excusing what he did. But hundreds of thousands of people have died from lack of initiative on our Governments side.

Hunter: Okay well let's wrap this up by telling me what you think our future generations need to know specifically about 2020 and the Covid-19 Virus?

Jacob: They need to know that our government could have done better, we as a society SHOULD have done better, to the toilet paper manufacturers; i apologize, we should never have

been allowed to fly cross country during a global pandemic, and people should have stopped complaining and worn their masks like they were told to.

Hunter: And with that, I bid you farewell.

Works Cited

Visser, Nick. "Trump Administration Declined Summer Offer To Buy More Of Pfizer's Vaccine: Reports." *HuffPost*, HuffPost, 8 Dec. 2020, www.huffpost.com/entry/trump-administration-pfizer-vaccine_n_5fcea29c5b63a15345430c0.

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