

## **Transcript of Interview with Maria Simpson by Caitlyn Daugherty**

**Interviewee:** Maria Simpson

**Interviewer:** Caitlyn Daugherty

**Date:** 09/20/2020

**Location (Interviewee):**

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Abstract:** This interview is conducted by a college freshman who interviews another college freshman about her experiences during lockdown. It covers how she dealt with isolation, how her high school experience had changed, and all the emotions and nuances that came with this strange new COVID-19 reality.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 0:01**

Hi, can you please state your name and today's date?

**Maria Simpson 0:05**

Hi, I'm Maria Simpson. Today is September 20, 2020. And it is 11:50am.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 0:11**

Perfect. Before we get started Maria, do you give consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 Archive Project?

**Maria Simpson 0:18**

Yes, I do give consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 Archive Project.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 0:21**

Perfect. So let's get started here. When was the first time you were aware that COVID existed in general, and then just within the U.S., your community?

**Maria Simpson 0:32**

I think that the first time I realized that COVID was an actual thing was coming into my [unintelligible] class one morning, and someone had mentioned it, like, I don't know, and how it was affecting them because their family was from China. So I think that was the first time I realized, like, "Oh, this is like a big thing." And then within my community. I remember that the first case in Virginia was in the area that I lived. However, it was pretty far away on like a military base. Like, I remember my whole school freaked out. And then like the previous week, a lot of students attended a mass or a gathering, where the priest ended up having COVID. So a lot of the schools within my area had children that had went to that. So that was when I realized that it was really in my area.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 1:16**

Oh, wow. Um, so in terms of the timeframe after you found out about that initial case and with the priest, how soon was it until things like your school shut down, it became like a big concern, like, when did that all happen?

**Maria Simpson 1:30**

It all happened within a week, two weeks of being there. I think that the first week was we had that one case, and then it went to two. And the next week, it was all the private schools in the DMV area, because I'm from DC, Virginia, had shut down because kids were at the gathering. And they were being in quarantine because they were suspected to have COVID. And I know some people from my school had went. But it took my school about a week before days after that to fully shut down.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 2:01**

Do you remember when you found out when your school was shutting down? Where were you?

**Maria Simpson 2:06**

I remember being in our senior lounge, and we were all listening to "Don't worry, be happy". [song title] And we were whistling as we were walking out with the entire grade. Like it was this really weird moment, we were whistling as we were walking to the assembly that they had called. And we all knew that school is going to be cancelled. Of course, at the time, we thought it was gonna be like a one week extension of our spring break. But it was like a very strange and like, kind of unifying moment that we had.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 2:34**

Yeah, I totally get that. Um, so then after that, when did you start to realize that this was going to be a long-term situation, instead of just a one or two extra week spring break?

**Maria Simpson 2:46**

I think that around, probably two weeks of being in there. Like being an isolation, all that stuff. I realized it was going to happen for a while because Virginia was one of the first states to have a mandatory shutdown of all like, not opening back up shut down of all their schools. And I remember all my friends were freaking out because no other state had done that. So we knew school was going to be canceled for the rest of the year before everyone else did kind of; there might have been one other state that canceled it before. And they were like, "This is so premature," and I remember thinking this is gonna last the whole school year, it was smart of him to do that.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 3:22**

Right. I totally agree. Um, how was your isolation experience, your quarantine experience?

**Maria Simpson 3:29**

At the beginning, it was okay, in the sense that I had one friend who was under like, strict quarantine too. And since we had been friends since we were about five years old, we had known each other pretty well. And we would kind of go off by ourselves because we felt safe with that. But after her sister came back from Australia, because she was doing a study abroad, I couldn't see her as much and being stuck with my family, although I love them, drove me insane. And I had to like do car rides by myself. I do like distance things with my friends in parking lots. Yeah.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 4:09**

How was that, um, the friends in the parking lot seeing each other? Did you feel like that was a suitable social interaction? Or did you still feel like very isolated, lonely?

**Maria Simpson 4:20**

It was okay, in the sense that a lot of my friends were allowed to do that some of them weren't even allowed to meet up socially distanced. And that was kind of tough because, like, I missed my friends, but it kind of felt normal almost for a second when you were in those situations. Until like, you started thinking about it, or something would happen where you'd be like, "Oh, I would have run up and like picked up your thing for you," or something like that if something fell.

**Caitlyn Daugherty** 4:49

Absolutely. And especially because quarantine kind of began around the end of college admissions decisions being released. How did that affect your decision day process? And how did you end up choosing Northeastern?

**Maria Simpson** 5:04

I'm not gonna lie, I chose Northeastern because I had planned to revisit all my schools or even initially visit all my schools after I got acceptances because I didn't want to spend all the time and miss so much school for schools I wasn't even sure I was going to get into. So I had visited Northeastern before and the other school I was choosing between I visited that school as well. But I just kind of took it off of the vibe I got from the 15 minute tour I had here like, that's why I chose the school, no clue if it was the right decision, but I'll stand by it.

**Caitlyn Daugherty** 5:40

Um, I know we were speaking previously, before this interview about you wanting the decision day to get pushed kind of back. Do you think that you felt rushed in any sense to make a decision, especially with everything going on? Like was that a hard choice for you to make?

**Maria Simpson** 5:56

I think at the time, I would have appreciated it being pushed back. I'm a very big procrastinator, so I made my decision the day that the decision was due. But I would appreciate it being pushed back because I had wanted to know more of what schools were doing for their plan with COVID. And I didn't want to spend so much money on an education if it wasn't going to happen in person. However, that information wouldn't have been released within a month. So I don't think it would have affected my decision. But at the time I thought that it would have.

**Caitlyn Daugherty** 6:26

Right. Well, that's good to hear. Um, so then decision day happened, how was it with your school? Did you do anything fun for decision day, anything interesting?

**Maria Simpson** 6:36

I went to my cabin. And on the car ride there, I was like, “I need to submit a deposit somewhere; I hope the connection doesn't go out.” And that was my decision to- I got all my friends to vote on which school I should go to; it was a very, very last minute thing.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 6:53**

Oh, that's fun. Um, so then you knew what you were going to do for college? And then how were- how was your final month of school? How was graduation? How did that go for you?

**Maria Simpson 7:03**

My school actually canceled their in person graduation, their socially distanced, in-person graduation, although all the schools in the area, kept it. But we did do a drive by parade, which really was an experience. I actually just got the photos from that today. So that's fun. I don't know, it was a little strange. I think that in a sense, I wasn't too upset about graduation being canceled, because I felt like that was more for the parents. I was kind of sad for my parents not seeing that. But I just wanted closure, they pushed it back to like December. But at this point, I kind of just don't want it to happen. I want to move on from high school.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 7:43**

Yeah, I can totally see how that would be. Um, okay, so wrapping up here. Do you have any final thoughts or concerns about how COVID has affected you and will continue to affect you?

**Maria Simpson 7:56**

Um, I'm concerned that I'll be more apprehensive- I mean, I guess that's not a bad thing. But I sometimes will get more like anxiety at big gatherings just because, I don't know, big gatherings overwhelmed me to begin with, but then the thought of like, I've never been scared about catching like COVID myself, it's always been more about like, if I'm at home and I give it to my parents, I would literally like, I don't know what I would do. Because that's like the worst thing ever like, for me to imagine. So like my concern is just keeping them safe. So in return when I'm near them, I have to be like, extra cautious.

**Caitlyn Daugherty 8:34**

Of course. Well, thank you so much for your time.

**Maria Simpson 8:36**

Of course. Thank you for interviewing me.