

Transcript of Oral History with Anonymous by Anonymous Interviewer

Interviewee: Anonymous (Anonymous Interviewee)

Interviewer: Anonymous Interviewer

Date: 05/11/2022

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract:

An anonymous oral history about the experience of working in a bar during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anonymous Interviewer 00:01

What's up guys? I'm with [REDACTED] It is currently May 11, at 8:27pm. Before we start the interview, I would just like to ask for verbal consent to interview you and be uploaded and published to the JOTPY website. Do you consent?

Anonymous Interviewee 00:18

I do.

Anonymous Interviewer 00:20

Okay. Were your working hours affected by the outbreak of COVID-19 pan- of the COVID-19 pandemic? If so how?

Anonymous Interviewee 00:31

Yes, they were. I work at a bar. I'm a bartender, and working with the public, you're face to face with a lot of different people throughout the day. And because of COVID, our hours are restricted to just delivery or online orders. So my income was affected because I couldn't face to face with anyone.

Anonymous Interviewer 00:55

'K. Has your transportation method changed since the initial outbreak?

Anonymous Interviewee 01:01

No, I live very close to where I work. So most of the time, I would either drive or ride my bike. I'm self-sufficient, got myself to and from work. So that wasn't an issue.

Anonymous Interviewer 01:16

Did your employer reduce the amount of workers present at the workplace at one time following the outbreak?

Anonymous Interviewee 01:23

Yes, it was mostly... so where I live, it's a vacation town. So a lot of people leave either to go to their actual home, a lot of people who come just come to the summer, or they're in school, a lot of college kids work, where I work. I'm not one of those people. So typically, the only people were- that were there were the people who either could do school, online, or commute or were done with school. Or where the bar is, is their permanent residence. So most- there were- essentially, there were three of us because we were the only three that were able to be there pretty much any day, anytime.

Anonymous Interviewer 02:15

Were you expected to follow strict cleaning procedures like wiping down countertops, sinks, bathrooms?

Anonymous Interviewee 02:23

Um, yes, but it wasn't that different from normal, I guess. Because working with food and drink, you got to make sure things are clean anyway. So it wasn't that much different. I guess the really only difference was you were wearing a mask and occasionally wearing gloves, but other than that, it was pretty much the same.

Anonymous Interviewer 02:46

Did you tend to see an increase in sanitary awareness among coworkers?

Anonymous Interviewee 02:51

Yes, more bottles of hand sanitizer were around, more people are washing their hands. We- I work at a brewery so we have to we can around beer. Typically, you don't. Depending on the job, you're doing in the canning line. You don't have to wear gloves, but more people wear, and especially in the beginning people wearing masks, eye protection, all of that. So not so much now. But in the beginning, there was a lot of different cleaning protocols and sanitation protocols.

Anonymous Interviewer 03:25

Did the att- or the- did the tasks assigned to you at work change due to the pandemic?

Anonymous Interviewee 03:32

Yes, so everything we did was canned, or to go orders. So we fill like crowlers which are 32 ounce cans, or because it's a brewery, you can do flights, which were the five ounce tasters. We found a way to do that to go. So we had to package all that ourselves. Do the orders ourselves, package it ourselves, send it out ourselves, which we've never had to do before and haven't had to do since, but during COVID, Yes.

Anonymous Interviewer 04:07

Did you notice coworkers leaving or new workers joining after the outbreak?

Anonymous Interviewee 04:14

Um, new workers joining more so, but I don't think that really had to do with COVID. I think that just had to do with the nature of the job. Again, like I said, it's a vacation town. A lot of people come and go, you have the same core group of people. So there's like four or five of us that are constantly there. But over the summer, in particular, you get a lot of new faces.

Anonymous Interviewer 04:41

Were your wages affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Anonymous Interviewee 04:46

Yes. As a bartender, you work off tips. When everything's done online, there is an option to tip but not a lot of people do it. I guess because they don't realize what goes into fulfilling their order. So not a lot of people did tip, so it was more so just hourly wages as opposed to making tips, which is how we live.

Anonymous Interviewer 05:11

Did it become more difficult to juggle both personal and professional life during this time?

Anonymous Interviewee 05:20

Um, more difficult? Yes, and no, I mean, I didn't see my friends as much as I wanted to. But most of the friends that I have down here I work with. So the only time I really interacted with my friends was at work. But because it was such a small group of people, as opposed to what I'm normally used to working with, like different people rotating every day. I didn't get to see a lot of my friends as much as I would like to or outside of work like I normally would.

Anonymous Interviewer 05:55

Where are you forced to rely on government subsidies such as unemployment relief?

Anonymous Interviewee 06:02

No.

Anonymous Interviewer 06:04

Do your work become more difficult due to social distancing and mask use?

Anonymous Interviewee 06:10

Yes. Again, working with public, you work off tips, you work with people ordering beer, there was none of that. In the beginning, it was all no one was allowed in the brewery for a long time. So it was much more difficult.

Anonymous Interviewer 06:29

In your opinion, did the work environment become less friendly and interactive after the pandemic?

Anonymous Interviewee 06:41

Yeah, I would say so. More so in like, again, most of this is, it's been two years now, so things are changed a lot. But in the beginning, I think a lot of people were just angry that they couldn't be out doing the things that they, you know, they would. Right now, things are, in my opinion, where I work, things are pretty much normal. So. And the sort of, you know, especially during 2021, like, the rush of people who were just so eager to get out was very extensive. So you had people very demanding. So in the beginning, there was pretty much- what little interaction there was, was pretty much kind of hostile. And then, in 2021, it was more impatient. And now, they're kind of back to normal.

Anonymous Interviewer 07:39

Did you experience an increase in stress while working during the pandemic?

Anonymous Interviewee 07:45

Yes, absolutely. People were, like I said, impatient. Everybody wanted what they wanted immediately. We were short staffed, compared to the influx of people that were coming in, especially when we started to open up again, we just couldn't sustain the volume of people coming. So yeah, people were kind of angry.

Anonymous Interviewer 08:14

Did you experience a lack of motivation to work or even keep your job during the early months of the outbreak?

Anonymous Interviewee 08:22

A little bit, I didn't find that my job was essential. And I was also in school at the time. So I thought that that took precedent, and that and keeping my other family members safe, I thought, Why did I have to be out, essentially filling beer orders when I had more important things to worry about.

Anonymous Interviewer 08:42

Do you feel the masks and the mask and vaccine mandates were handled well, and should they have been used to determine employment eligibility?

Anonymous Interviewee 08:53

Um, I think it could have been handled better. At the beginning, it was just us in the building. So that wasn't really an issue. Everyone- there was only like five of five or six of us at the time, and everyone wore masks. Then when we started to let people in, we had a couple of people who refuse to wear it. And we were met with anger and hostility when we told them they couldn't come in if they weren't wearing one. And then maybe this is just a personal preference or anecdote, but I would feel it was unfair that I had to wear one for- my shifts are like 12 hours long. I had to wear one the whole time, and

these people didn't have to wear one at all. I thought that that was unfair. Because regardless, they could have it be spreading it all over, and I'm still going to touch the same surfaces. It doesn't matter if I have a mask on.

Anonymous Interviewer 09:52

Did your family experience hardship as a result of job loss or other pandemic complications?

Anonymous Interviewee 09:59

Um, not to my recollection, we pretty much bared the wealth, or most majority of the time my parents are retired. So that wasn't that big of an issue. It was just me and my siblings who are working. And the money kind of just went to its same allocated spots. My bills, my parents' bills, and then whatever was leftover, I saved or spent on trivial things, but nothing really out of the norm.

Anonymous Interviewer 10:37

And lastly, do you have any questions for me?

Anonymous Interviewee 10:41

No. How do you feel about COVID, and how it affected you and your work and your school?

Anonymous Interviewer 10:50

I felt great.

Anonymous Interviewee 10:52

Okay.

Anonymous Interviewer 10:53

All right. Thank you very much.

Anonymous Interviewee 10:55

You're welcome.

Anonymous Interviewer 10:56

Talk to you later.