

# lee\_david

Sun, 8/2 5:50PM 38:08

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

students, folks, day, pandemic, university, closed, campuses, experience, restaurants, years, crises, question, kentucky, bit, pretty, thoughtful, people, western kentucky university, happening, terms

## SPEAKERS

David Lee, Harper Lee

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- H** Harper Lee 00:02  
Okay. Yeah. Okay, great. We're rolling. All right. Let's start off with Can you state your full name?
- D** David Lee 00:13  
Full name is David Daly and I am 71 years old. And I am currently in Bowling Green Kentucky, which is in Warren County and as of this morning had 10 cases of COVID-19.
- H** Harper Lee 00:32  
And you said this morning, What is today's date?
- D** David Lee 00:36  
This morning is March the 29th 2020.
- H** Harper Lee 00:43  
And so, first question, What do you know about the corona virus?



David Lee 00:51

I know that it's a respiratory infection that is highly contagious is transmitted in a virus. variety of ways that it seems to have originated in Wuhan, China is moved pretty rapidly across the globe in the last last several months. And several major countries, including this one, have almost totally shut down as part of its efforts to contain that virus.



Harper Lee 01:24

Um, how are you preparing for the shutdown or how have you prepared for the shutdown?



David Lee 01:34

Well, in terms of preparation, I work for a university and I'm semi retired. And I was already doing some of my teaching through an alternative delivery system because I had some students on campus I also had a student in Grantham, England. So part of part of what I've done is to simply expand the kind of delivery system quota A book that I was already using, to be sure to incorporate this student who was in, in Great Britain. What it mainly had to do is to, to change some assignments because the students don't have access to research materials, right limited access to research materials. So and to flip the nature of the assignment a bit, and it's less about research. And in fact, probably like a lot of faculty members have asked them to do more along the lines of preparing stored documents that future scholars might use to study this period. So a lot of the preparation I've done has been out of a professional responsibility to make sure that my students still have good learning experience this semester. Fortunately, we live very convenient to almost everything that's important to us and in a significant way. Hospitals about A mile from here grocery is about a mile from here. Most of the things that we do on a regular basis, we certainly can drive to easily could even walk to if, if we had to. So we've stocked up on a few items and anticipation of some shortages. And we've tried to minimize our trips out in public and make those very targeted to know exactly what we're going to do. And when we do those. I've been interested in how some stores have responded to this. grocery stores certainly in a number of ways, I mean, you can order online and it's there in the parking lot. You just drive by and pick it up. But I have a bit of an unexpected experience. The other day, I'm trying to work at home like varnish to do and my printer ran out of ink. So I wasn't at all sure that a place like staples would be open but I call them and they say sure we're open. So I went online and ordered a package of AIG paid for it drove out to the store, and they literally were out in front. And they handed it to me as I drove by, and I was on the way. So, so far, we've not really had any shortages or any serious inconvenience, like a number of folks would probably develop some technical skills that we didn't used to have. I never really used zoom before and now use it only for professional reasons, but also for personal reasons. And the Zune cocktail bar has

become a popular thing, a lot of folks probably particularly my age and my 70s. So, to the extent that we've prepared, we've tried to be thoughtful than what we need without hoarding or going overboard, overreacting to shortages. It's so far more perceived and real. And we've tried to adjust our daily lives to be sensible contact with other folks. But we've not isolated ourselves either. We've just found other ways to be in touch and to take care of some of the things that we really needed to address.

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Harper Lee 05:20

How many people would you say you're actually seeing on a daily basis?

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David Lee 05:28

Well take that question literally, how many am I seeing? Not sure I can give you a number, but it's a fair number of folks. See the neighbors pretty much every day. Something that surprised me a bit because I work at Western Kentucky University and University has been closed since about March the 11th. Something like that. Students went on spring break and we're essentially told not to come back somewhat later. But I see lots of students walking in the neighborhood. I'm not totally sure where they came from or why they're here. But I see a lot of student age folks, I see a lot of people out jogging. I'm not going to restaurants and seeing people, by and large, and avoiding the grocery store, but not completely. But in terms of just sitting out on the front porch being out in the yard, walking around the neighborhood, I still see a fair number of folks, automobile traffic is down. pedestrian traffic is certainly up. So

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Harper Lee 06:43

So let me ask that question again. And I'm kind of a more careful way, like, how many people are you interacting with in real life? Would you say on a daily basis, and then how many people are you interacting with, like through a screen on a daily basis? Would you say it doesn't? I mean, you don't know exactly, that's totally fine, but kind of a ballpark.

D

David Lee 07:03

I'm not sure I can be very specific about that. In terms of reacting through a screen, I'm reacting with interacting with my students that way. And I am interacting sometimes all at once, but usually piecemeal through a screen with maybe eight to 10 people. And ironically, some people haven't seen in a long time because they don't live here anymore. But we're all together in the zoom world. So in a sense, I'm, I've had some contact with people who've been friends in the past, but don't live here now. But I've seen them in the

last week or so as a consequence of observing in terms of face to face encounters, I mean, that really is tougher. Those are random folks in the neighborhood, I went to a donut store this morning. And I saw two women working at the counter and there was one other person in the store. And that was it. The folks at the counter know me a little bit and a little conversation, no conversation with the other customer. But it's it's that sort of very fragmented, very fragmentary kind of contact face to face.

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Harper Lee 08:27

Or you like wearing a mask or gloves or anything like that when you go out or you continuing to kind of go about your day, more or less the same way that you had kind of before the virus.

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David Lee 08:39

I go about my day, although I did decide that I needed some some money from an ATM machine each morning, and I used the bag to to operate used a bag on my hand operate the ATM machine. I try to be really thoughtful about what I've touched. picked up a package the other day and realized ironically that it had been mailed from Iran, which has had a tremendous outbreak of COVID-19. And I did kind of wonder in retrospect whether that was the best idea I'd ever threw on but but other than that, now that said, I'm married to someone who periodically has to go to the doctor. And she, she went to get an allergy shot a couple of days ago, and she did wear a mask. She she discovered in the basement to in 95 masks that she purchased a while ago when she was working with Roundup, and they were leftover from the roundup experience. So she pulled them out and when she goes to the doctor, she wears masks.

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Harper Lee 10:02

Are you? Kind of day to day? Are you? Do you feel more concerned that you will contract the virus are more concerned that you will unknowingly share it with others.

D

David Lee 10:14

I'm much more concerned about unknowingly sharing it. I realized 71 I'm in the age group, and I'm in a community with a university and we have a large refugee population here. So there's a lot of contact out of this community with a with a wireworld. a, an acquaintance of mine was the first person who was diagnosed with COVID-19 here in here in Bowling Green in Warren County, and he's made a successful recovery 73 years old. But But no, particularly worry about getting it myself. I'm married to someone who is intermitted

seven days, has recently had surgery and is diabetic, all of which make her far more acceptable to this time.



Harper Lee 11:03

So what other precautions Have you taken to kind of ensure that you know that you maybe don't track the virus into the house?



David Lee 11:14

It was I said, I try to be really thoughtful about where I'm going and I try to be really thoughtful about what I do when I'm there and minimizing those experiences. I wash my hands and sanitize my hands, pretty much, pretty much constantly. I have also begun to clean the screens on my electronic devices, which I've never done ever before. Try to do that pretty, pretty systematically anymore. Okay,



Harper Lee 11:47

I'm kind of switching gears just a little bit. How do you think this pandemic will change society or in how how are what do you feel like will stay the same



David Lee 12:00

Yeah, I do think a lot of ways that's the \$64,000 question What, what comes away from this long, long term? And obviously, I have no idea. But a couple of things that are kind of in my mind. One is that I do kind of wonder if it's only going to accelerate our use of technology and particularly, technology in personal lives, daily, daily lives, because that's become the way in which we communicate with so many people. That's a way in which increasingly, we're able to buy things that we can't just walk into a store and pick up. I've had to learn some things. In terms of technological skills that have been out there. I just have never really had any compelling need to use those those skills. So I've never developed them, but I've become more so in that regard. So I do think it is going to accelerate a a trend that's already very much out there. A piece of it that I, I'm just not sure about is Will there be any kind of long term sense of public health issues that develops more widely in, in American society? Are we going to be more thoughtful about disinfecting surfaces, keeping our hands clean? To do the extreme thing? Are we going to stop shaking hands and instead start greeting folks in some other way? I don't think that's going to happen. But I am intrigued, given all the emphasis that we've heard over the last several weeks about how to keep ourselves safe from this. When we take those lessons and apply those in some other in some other areas in some other aspects of our lives. Will

that be a kind of ongoing thing? I suspect not. But at the same Time, this has been a very hard lesson. And just kind of think that some of that is going to stick. My, my dread in some respects about this is that it's really been two years since we've had a pandemic of quite this order of magnitude that shuts it down quite the same way. What's the role between this pandemic and the next one? It was 100 years. Okay. But what if it's two years, three years, four years, and we're confronted with a challenge where we think we need to shut society down again, strategies using now probably not strategies we're going to be very comfortable using on a regular basis at short intervals. So that's, that's a piece of it. That makes me a little apprehensive coming out of this



Harper Lee 15:01

crises. Have you experienced and how did you handle those?



David Lee 15:07

Well, I've never experienced a crisis of this, of this magnitude by by any means. I spent most of my professional career as a as a dean and as a provost. And if I were still in those roles, I obviously would be spending a whole lot of time trying to figure out how to to deal with this. I suppose the the connection that came to me a bit belatedly that I got to thinking about stopping with my students yesterday, and one of them is a graduating senior. This is his last semester. And he talked about how he felt like his last semester of his senior year had been ripped away from him. And it got me thinking about another girl somewhat similar time, but in the same sense a very different time. That happened on American colleges can't college campuses. Ironically, 50 years ago this spring. I was a senior at Miami University that spring. And that was the the spring in which student protests against the war in Vietnam absolutely bubbled up. It was only accelerated by the tragic killings at Kent State and a Jackson State in May of 1970. And campuses all across the country just closed. We were basically told to leave campus that day Miami University was closed and I recall for about 10 days now before it reopened. So the cause was was very different than what we're looking at now. But the disruption to the academic experience was was very similar. And campuses closed and students were sent away. And questions about how you maintain the learning environment in such a disrupted situation. what's fair in terms of grades, what's fair in terms, of course expectations, what's fair in terms of evaluation of faculty performances. So I found myself thinking a good bit about that spring from from 50 years ago. And the disruption that came out of that, and even though that wasn't fostered by a pandemic, I think there's still some parallels with the situation that certainly students and faculty members find themselves in right now.



Harper Lee 17:42

In your mind, what are the lessons of that time for today?



David Lee 17:51

don't engage in unwise foreign wars. Don't I don't know that I wouldn't really know what the lesson would would, wouldn't be from that. But I do think that maybe the campuses that whether that experiments the best 50 years ago, were campuses where there was more open discussion among faculty, staff and students, some effort to bring alumni, especially alumni from many years before, along with the experience of why students and faculty felt the way that they did at that at that time. But I think an openness and a willingness to hear other folks talk about their worries and concerns. Contribute to healing in that in that time, over a long period of time, probably. And I do think now that there is some emphasis of we're in this together. We're taking actions that may or may not benefit us personally, but benefit those in the wider community net commitment to the wider community is a very important thing. Governor Bashir here in Kentucky i think is a Trump to considerable national attention with his candid way of addressing issues, but also his insistence that, that we share this with here, again, the responsibility for fixing this. And we share the loss that comes from from from folks who are dying and losing other experiences as a consequence of this. So I think I think maybe, from them that applies now, is that there were those who tried to heal and build community in that time. I think those would be better strategies this time as well. Um, this is sort of kind of A related question



Harper Lee 20:02

would you have ever no ever expected anything like this to happen in your lifetime? And I asked this because just a couple days ago, we were talking about my grandmother and how I think you said she would have been like for the flu pandemic of 1918. Yeah. I mean, so, could you ever have imagined that you would that you would see something like this, like not being able to go to a restaurant, having to stay six feet away from people not being able to shake hands like could you ever have anticipated this in your life?



David Lee 20:40

No, never. And that applies even up to just a few weeks ago. And over the years, we've had university life disrupted by weather, usually by snow, but our university experienced a terrible hailstorm About 20 years ago that did an enormous amount of destruction, multi million dollars worth of destruction was very disruptive. But we've never had anything like this. And I've certainly never anticipated anything like this. What intrigued me a bit about

the pandemic of 1918. So I remember, I've been working on a nub the history of Western Kentucky University, and I got curious about the pandemic of 1918. And what it did here, across Kentucky, 14 million Kentucky, 14 million died of the flu. And approximately two thirds of Western Kentucky State Normal School students they're contracted the flu.



Harper Lee 21:51

And that institution is the predecessor to Western Kentucky.



David Lee 21:55

Yes, that's a that is a predecessor institution where one's now Western Kentucky University. The university was closed for a month or was in Western Kentucky State Normal School was closed for a month. The Public Health Department across Kentucky closed churches closed amusement centers. The Society was shut down in ways very similar to what we've seen now. And yet, in going back to the university's archives, I found virtually nothing about any of this. We still have a connection. Oh, just one second. Okay, I have you back. And looking back in the archives from from 1918. I find virtually nothing. I found a few letters from the president. When she talks about it, but just very briefly and essentially saying, this is a terrible experience, lots of people including me are working day and night to take care of the sick is this is a very hard time for for us. And of course at the very same time the Battle of the Oregon forest was going on in World War One. So that October 1918 was a truly terrible month in in the history of our of our country. I don't know any other time where Western throughout history back to 19. Six was closed for a month. Whatever what I find intriguing is found very little about that. There is a very detailed history of the universities published in the 1980s and we have all the note cards that Professor Harrison used to put that together and they run to thousands of note cards on absolutely everything. There's not a single note card in his collection about the Spanish Flu There was another very detailed history of the university was done in the late 30s, only 20 years after this, it also makes no single reference to the Spanish flu. So, when you ask me if I ever anticipated anything like this, no, absolutely not. But I am intrigued that we have had this experience before it has absolutely gone down the collective memory help. So I, for example, I'm asking my students to prepare materials. Students hundred years from now might be able to see this experience a bit through their eyes. We have not worked one about students said about their experience, even though most of them were sick. Probably several of them very seriously sick. Apparently the school had no deaths, but the Spanish Flu hit Kentucky Warren County. Bowling Western Kentucky State Normal School very hard. And we do not have nearly the kind of information about that experience we'd like to have.



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Harper Lee 25:11

Can you speculate on why that might have been? I mean, not at the time. Why do you think no records were really kept that?

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David Lee 25:23

Well, of course, partly it was a, it was a different time. And probably in year. One speculation that we've had is that at that time, the school had what was called chapel every day at 930. So as a consequence, there maybe was not the need to put out written documents the way there is now. Because people were literally all in the same room together every day. And if there were announcements, they made those announcements that that maybe part of it but even at that, it still looks to me like it's It's very, it's very scarce. And as to why why does going down the collective memory hole? I don't know. But this is an off the top of my head thought that there is a tendency in this country to think science will try and avoid diseases. And so while we see wars and we know wars are likely to repeat, and so we tend to keep track of those perhaps healthcare crises, we tend to think, perhaps who are aberrant or unusual or out of the norm or not likely to recur like this ever again. So they don't stay with us in quite the same way because we expect that experience to be part of our experience going forward. That's a pretty big theory, but I am really intrigued that something that was so devastating is not is not really much, much a part of our collective story. That's fascinating.

H

Harper Lee 27:16

So, the kind of change gears again, um, as you have been kind of cooped up at home, are you taking on any new hobbies? Are you reading any great books? Have you seen any great movies? Kind of anything like that while you've been in house?

D

David Lee 27:34

Well, I do feel like that even though I have an enormous amount of time. It's not structured. Like as productive as I ought to be. I do feel some I can't really spoil I can't explain part of it. I have filled too much of my time, I suspect like a lot of folks have with social media. I am constantly looking at Twitter because the latest information I'm going to see about what's happening particularly here locally. If other cases have been diagnosed, something's happened with the university or student body. I've always tended to kind of flip through, particularly Twitter and other social media sites. But I'm spending much more time on those. I'm not particularly posting anything I have. I have posted some documents that I've found about the pandemic of 1918 and gotten some surprising

response to at least, at least one of them. The President comboni picked up for his own feed. But, but I've spent too much time with that. I have tracked down some books to read and I've started with that. I have watched a movie or two. We have streaming services. So I'm streaming a few things. But I do have some some writing projects that I'm working on. So I don't sit here and stare at a blank wall. But I'm sort of filling my time in several different ways.

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Harper Lee 29:10

I saw the other day that the World Health Organization is now recommending that you really maybe look at the news like a couple times a day. Would you say that that's true for you? Does looking at the news or Twitter as make your anxiety spike? Or are you not really experiencing any of those kinds of feelings

D

David Lee 29:29

over the news a couple of times every half hour? I mean, I couldn't I couldn't do that a couple of times a day or even three or four times a day. I don't think it feeds my anxiety. I'm just curious about this. And particularly right now. Things are happening so fast, and things that a few weeks ago, I've accepted a couple of reservation, a couple of invitations to go out. have lunch well Two days later, when it was time to go to lunch, a guy who invited me and I both agreed, it's not a good idea. We're not going to do this. But that's and then a couple days after that all the restaurants closed. So things have just moved so quickly and change so rapidly, that I feel the need to pay a whole lot of attention. Just to keep up with news. That's that's pertinent to me.

H

Harper Lee 30:27

So you mentioned earlier that you had you had a close friend who had been diagnosed with the coronavirus that correct.

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David Lee 30:34

Well described as a close friend, but he's certainly an acquaintance.

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Harper Lee 30:38

And did he have very serious symptoms or mild symptoms? And was he did he have access to an actual test? And do you know anything about that process?

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David Lee 30:48

I don't know a whole lot about it. He's a local attorney, and he is the big personality kind kind of guy. And so he's given some interviews about this. He's Make no secret about his his name. He is 73 years old. He had been skiing in Colorado and had sustained a concussion. God knows how he did that. But he thinks that he picked up the coronavirus while he was in Colorado, but he was he was diagnosed with it and was was hospitalized with it for for a few days and has since been released and is pretty open about talking about his experiences. Something I'm not clear on is how many folks have been exposed to Fox he was associated with. I do know that his his, his daughter is in quarantine, who practices along with him. And probably some other folks connected with his legal practice as well but i don't i don't know that

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Harper Lee 32:02

Um, those are my questions. Dad, do you have anything else that you'd like to share? Or? Wait, I have one more now that I think about it. Um, I know that you had a vacation coming up a big trip planned? Um, are you? How are you feeling with that on the horizon? And now you probably can't go?

D

David Lee 32:23

Well, that's true. We're planning a trip up the Danube to Eastern Europe in in late May. So far, that's still scheduled, but I am pretty confident that that's not the that's not gonna come off. It probably would not be a good idea right now. Anyway, that said, I'm disappointed but as disappointments go in this crisis, that's a pretty small one. And I hope to be able to do that again, sometime down the road. But I think it's important to be pretty sensible about those kinds of things right now.

H

Harper Lee 33:00

Have you done? Have you taken any steps to be supportive in some way in your community? Have you given money to any institutions have you been trying to order takeout to support restaurants you care about anything like that?

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David Lee 33:15

We've tried to do some things specifically with that we've, we've had takeout from a couple of restaurants so far. One is a a restaurant downtown, that we go to a lot. It's something by a Bosnian refugee, and we really enjoy it. There's another restaurant that's

brand new in our neighborhood, just two blocks from our house. It's also owned and operated by a Greek immigrant. So we're trying to make a point to support those two those two restaurants in particular, we've ordered from both of them. The donut shop that I mentioned earlier, is also operated by immigrants and it's a very popular place we go there, there's a coffee shop downtown that I try to poke my head into and buy a cup of coffee a couple of times a week, you know, it's a kind of a mixed thing. In the Are these all crucial trips to take? No. At the same time, we're trying to do sensible things that are that are supportive. We're also active with with the church in this community, and I have made a point to send them money because they're not collecting offerings right now. So we are trying to and we have season tickets to a fine arts series here. Sky pack Performing Arts Center, and I don't intend to ask for a refund for any of my my tickets and I sent him an email and said I'd like to ask for this back. Use it however, would Be a benefit to you.

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Harper Lee 35:04

Come to find out I actually had quite a few additional questions. There's one more sorry. Can you think back? I was trying to do this the other day and I'm finding that I can't really can you kind of think back in your mind and kind of kind of put your finger on the last day you remember being like kind of a normal day that you were out and about? Do you remember what you did that day? Anything like that? And how long ago was that?

D

David Lee 35:36

You know, I would need to I need to pull a calendar out. Look at that. Um, I'm gonna guess that maybe a last kind of normal day would have been some time around the 17th or 18th or So, something like that. And probably what I did was go to the grocery store and buy a few things. I just did a few odds and ends, few chores, nothing, nothing special. And certainly at no point Have we ever gone charging off someplace and said, Oh, we got to buy everything we can find this side of the other. We've never felt the need to do that. So we've probably made a few provisional purchases just to float us. But I have any particular memories top my head of the last kind of typical day. Okay.

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Harper Lee 36:44

Well, that that really was my last question. I don't have any other. Do you have anything else for real this time that you would like to share? Thoughts you've had? Maybe something I didn't ask them to kind of wish that I had anything like that.

D

David Lee 36:58

I think we've covered pretty much so What I anything that I have to say about it? Fortunately, we've my experience with this has been inconvenient, but no more than that. And it's as a consequence, I have a small window on what's, what's happening here but I, I saw a picture the other day of a very popular local doctor who was dressed up to visit patients, and you could not have identified her in any way. And I certainly feel a lot of sympathy and a lot of respect for folks who are trying to deal with that.

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Harper Lee 37:47

Well, thanks, dad. That's that's all that I have. I really appreciate it.

D

David Lee 37:52

All right, my pleasure, Harper and anytime.

H

Harper Lee 37:56

Okay, I'm going to stop the recording now.

D

David Lee 38:06

Okay,