

Haley Brinker: Okay, awesome. So, my name is Haley Brinker, and this is for the COVID-19 Oral History Project at IUPUI. And, I'm speaking with Jacob Lucas, and can you please tell me what the date and the time is where you are, Jacob?

Jacob Lucas: It is Thursday, April 16, 2020 at about 6pm.

Brinker: Okay, fantastic. And, can you tell me, like, what you do on a regular basis each day, under normal circumstances?

Lucas: So, before, I mean, I worked in public health previously, and that was back in December. Is that kind of what you want me to go into?

Brinker: I'm just -- what you were getting up to each day before you were, like, we started doing the social-distancing and the self-quarantining.

Lucas: Gotcha. Okay, so I had been unemployed for a little bit, and kind of looking for a new job, so it was a lot of just, like, job search stuff. So, whether that be going to interviews, connecting with folks; just kind of typical career development stuff. And, I mean, a lot of that was on the computer, but a lot of that did have to do with, like, going into offices and talking to folks and stuff like that. Just typical things like that.

Brinker: Okay, thank you. And then, so where are you currently living? And then, what is it like to live there?

Lucas: So, I am in Seattle, which is about 45 minutes away from Ground Zero. So, it's -- I don't know -- it's hard to, it's hard to say completely. It's very different, depending on where you go, and so I live kind of in the, the gayborhood. There's, there's shops that -- how to say this? There's a lot of businesses that have already, like, completely boarded up their windows. There's, like, places that, like, have been shut down for an extremely long time, but then there's also, like, a lot of places that are just, like, open and kind of going business as always. At first, I feel like there wasn't a lot of protective equipment used, and then, I want to say it was about, like, an hour or two after we got the CDC notification about wearing masks, we'd gone on a walk outside, and we were, like, the only ones wearing masks. And then, the next day, you kind of see, like, oh, it's about 50% of people are wearing masks or wearing gloves. And then, the next day, you know, you would see about 75% of people. And now, like, it's funny that we're talking about this. I can look right outside the window and, like, I can see my neighbor getting ready to go

outside, so he's putting on a mask. So, it is, I think, at first, I was, like, very astonished, coming from someone who does have, like, a public health degree, and, like, did work in public health and stuff like that, to see a lot of, like, people not really caring much. And, now, it's like, I think everyone that's taking it very, very seriously.

Brinker: Right. So, since you were so close to where, you know -- ground zero, like you said -- when you first learned about COVID-19, like, what were you thinking about it?

Lucas: It was, I mean, it was just so much mystery. Even, like, working in, you know, working in virology or working with viruses, like it didn't seem, it didn't seem like it would ever be this much. I definitely from the beginning. I was like, okay, everyone quarantine, self-isolate for a little bit. Let's get this handled really quickly, and then, like, be out and done. I knew that we would have to make lifestyle changes for sure. I knew that it was definitely going to be a lot of people. Like, I mean, simple things like washing your hands, and a lot of folks don't do, knowing that people are gonna have to pick up on that. And that, you know, maybe only go to the grocery store, grocery store, if you absolutely have to, and stop, like, eating out so much, so just typical stuff. I knew that life was going to change. I guess the shocking part is, you know, we're, two months or six weeks in, and looking at potentially more months. Some people have estimated even longer than that. So, I mean, at first, yeah, it was, it was just a confusing thing, because there wasn't a lot of information I felt like was coming through. Um, I was getting a lot more information from, like, friends in other countries, and I felt like I was getting from, like, the CDC website or from the media or anything. So, it's just like a cloud of confusion, I guess.

Brinker: Yeah. And, how have your thoughts changed about it since that's all started?

Lucas: The thoughts on the actual virus itself?

Brinker: Yeah. I mean, how have your thoughts changed just about, in general about COVID?

Lucas: I mean, I think it's, we've seen that it's not -- I think the biggest part of, like, so the severity behind COVID isn't as much the actual, like, severity behind the pathogen itself. I think it has to do a lot with, like, American healthcare infrastructure. I think it has to do with the fact that we weren't ready to deal with something like this. I think that, yes, the pathogen itself is terrible. It can harm a lot of folks, especially, you know, immunocompromised, older folks, stuff like that. But, I think the biggest thing that this is showing is kind of, like, our failure of the healthcare system. Both in, like, the capacity, like, you know, as far as it goes with staffing and equipment, but also just lack of testing,

all of those things. It's stuff that, like, you hear about, and we talk about, and it's in discussion, but until it's actually, you know -- it took an international level pandemic to see all of this stuff.

Brinker: Right.

Lucas: So, that was pretty eye opening. I thought that was, like, it's hard to deny that there's, like, a problem with our system now.

Brinker: Right. And so, aside from just, you know, the general unpreparedness, what issues have most concerned you about the pandemic?

Lucas: I think about how many people were missing. So, when we're talking about, like, reporting and stuff like that, even though we have these high numbers, I know that, like, Seattle's not number one anymore. I think New York, right now, is kind of the epicenter with the most new cases, the most ongoing cases, and all of that. But, I mean, the fact of the matter is, is, like, we don't know what the real numbers are, because we're not testing folks. That's my biggest concern, because, I mean, when we're talking about this years down, and we're studying this, because this is, you know, one of the biggest things that ever happened in my lifetime, we don't have the full story. We can't really paint that picture, because we're not really finding out. I mean, you can turn on social media for the first couple of weeks that COVID was really, you know, we were really, really hearing about it. In late February and early March, there's all these people who have all these symptoms and stuff like that, and they, they went, they went to go get tested, and they get turned down, because "Well, have you come in contact with someone that tested positive for COVID?" And they say, "No, because I don't ask everybody that I come in contact with," so, then they just kind of sit at home, wait till they feel better, and then continue. That's one of my biggest worries due to that, from, like, an epidemiology standpoint, those numbers are extremely important, and it's just really unfortunate that, basically, the entire United States has failed to capture that. In Washington, I had to go to the emergency room in the midst of all this for something unrelated, but we were told that in the entire state of Washington at this time, they only had 100 tests available to give per day. And so, when you have more than 100 new cases, easily, in Washington, those hundred, those hundred tests just aren't really cutting it. And so, there's a lot of folks that are getting missed out in the data.

Brinker: Wow. So, you had mentioned that you had, you were unemployed at the beginning of the year. Has your job status changed?

Lucas: No. I was in the midst of an interview, or I was in the midst of an interview process. It was between me and another candidate, and, basically, it was through the health department here. And, I think kind of, collectively, they just agreed that right now wasn't a good time. So it was, like, it was like a disease investigation role, and the reason they were even hiring so quickly, I guess, is because a lot of folks who are working in that field had to leave that job to go work specifically with the COVID Response Team. So, they were initially working in sexual health and tracking the epidemiology of things like HIV and syphilis and whatever, but we weren't prepared enough, and so, those people had to be taken from that job to start doing work with COVID, specifically, and that was like pretty early March, mid-March, maybe; I don't even think mid-March. And, I think, as, you know, the interview process took a couple of weeks, and I believe that it just kind of, they realized that yeah, we want to fill this position, but stay-at-home order's more important. We really need to just go ahead and do that. I actually got an email today a couple hours ago about, "Hey, we'd like to have you come in and interview and a few weeks or months or whatever," so, yeah, being unemployed or being hunting for a job in the world of COVID is a really interesting time.

Brinker: Yeah, I can imagine. What concerns do you have about the effect of COVID-19 and just the economy more broadly and your employment?

Lucas: Yeah, I mean, that's the -- the wild part is I was on the hunt for a job before all this, and then I watch countless people saying like, "Okay, I'm laid off. Okay, my company shut down. Okay." You know, like, we look at the news today about the, the money that the US government had to spend on small business bail out and is completely gone. Like, we went through that in a couple weeks. And, I know for a fact, there's still small businesses out there that are struggling to just, like, get by. And, so that's more jobs that are going to be missing and that's more people that are going to be looking for jobs elsewhere. And, so obviously, it is going to be a tough market; you're going to have to be more qualified than ever before. But, and going back to, I know I mentioned about, like people from other countries mentioning, like, what their media is saying and everything, and, it's really interesting that a lot of other countries are being like, "America very well might lose its status as one of the national, one of the big powers, and that their economy potentially is not going to ever recover." I know it, it should be a concern. Surprisingly enough, I think economy is, like, one of the least things I'm worried about. I know that we're going to take a dramatic hit. I guess, I just, my concern more is with the actual virus itself and the health of the nation.

Brinker: Absolutely. So, in regards to your household, you know, how has that changed your guys' day-to-day activities?

Lucas: So, I mean, I haven't – so, I have an apartment down south, about 45 minutes south of here, but, basically, when I had gotten laid off from my position, I basically, like, had lived up here in Seattle with my partner anyway. I was here maybe, like, basically every day, but, kind of as we saw the closure getting more serious, I started, like, really seriously kind of living here. And, so it's, it's nicer, I will say. You know, there's bigger windows, which helped because it does suck to be locked in, locked up all time. He is able to work from home, so that's pretty good. Yeah, it's just, like, a matter of being cooped up constantly, which isn't, like, that big of a deal when you see the benefits of it. But, I will -- I mean, yeah, that's really the only thing it's, like, going stir crazy. We're lucky enough to live in, like, a downtown-ish, metro-ish area, so, we don't have to really do traveling. Like, if we need anything, you know, it's, it's available. Yeah, I don't know how to answer that question.

Brinker: No, that was, that was great. That was great. So, you said you're really cooped up. What have you guys been doing just to stay from going totally stir crazy? Any, like, shows that you guys are watching, games, books you're reading?

Lucas: Oh, well, I mean, as you'll probably hear, a bunch of Animal Crossing. I don't know. I feel like it's gonna be in history textbooks, so talking about Animal Crossing, and the fact of, like, how much stuff has gone. It's a perfect game for it because, I mean, you have like your own little world and everything. TV shows? Yeah. Real Housewives of New York has been, has been taking over life. I don't know. We're watching – Jeffrey, did we watch anything else?

“Jeffrey”:
Besides what?

Lucas: Before Housewives?

“Jeffrey”:
Tiger King.

Lucas: Tiger King. Yeah.

Brinker: Of course.

Lucas: Of course. Tiger King was another one that, like, everyone watched. But, yeah. Right now, it's definitely Housewives; it's a lot of Animal Crossing. My partner has been baking a lot, which I've seen is, like, an extremely popular thing to do in quarantine apparently.

Brinker: Absolutely.

Lucas: Oh, he started before quarantine. Sorry, I forgot to mention apparently it's, apparently it's relevant. Yeah, between those, like, that's keeping us sane. I think a lot of social media

Brinker: Oh, yeah.

Lucas: Yeah.

Brinker: So, what have been the biggest challenges that you faced during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Lucas: The biggest challenges... Realizing how, how often, like, a little bit of, like, a little walk, or a little, a trip to the store. I think just yesterday or two days ago, I had mentioned, like, how much I just kind of missed going to dinner. Like, the idea of just kind of, like, go, sit down get served food, pay my bill, and leave. It sounds amazing right now. Like, it's sad that, like, how much of these little interpersonal things that we do, we take for granted. There was just little things. I had to, my, one of my friends had a friend package dropped off at his house. He needed someone to go sign for him, whatever, so, I stayed at his place for a few hours while he was at work. Just giving him his package, like, literally having to set a package down, and then, like, take a few steps back so he can pick it up. And, then we can, like, wave to each other from six feet away and be like, okay, I'll text you. Like, it's little social things that I think I've taken for granted. Hard.

Brinker: Absolutely. So, you had mentioned that you said there were some businesses that are just boarded up, because they just don't see themselves reopening. How else has the outbreak affected your community?

Lucas: Yeah, and I don't know, I don't know that they're concerned about, like, whether or not they're gonna be able to reopen. I think this was, so our governor -- I don't remember

when he announced, like, the stay at home order, and, it was, like, the next day. And, I think that these people were more concerned about, like, looting and more concerned about, like, the havoc that might come from that. And, what was the second part of that question?

Brinker: Oh, just how do you think this outbreak is affecting your community right now?

Lucas: Yeah, we were kind of wondering about that. We were walking down the road, and we saw this new cider place that opened up. And, you know, like a little bar-and-tapas-type thing, and they had just opened up before the COVID thing. And, like, in Seattle, restaurants are like, you have six months to prove yourself, and you have six months, like maybe six months, to, like, get a fan base going and get, like, a lot of customers in, or you can't pay your rent because it is so expensive to live here. It's so expensive to have a business here. And, so I was thinking about, like, places like that. You know, you invest all this money to start this restaurant up or whatever, and then, like, this COVID thing hits. You're not going to have people who are like, "Oh, I know this place. Let's get that place for takeout or whatever." And so, like, I can almost guarantee when everything is said and done, like, that place won't be there anymore. Restaurants come and go here pretty often if you're not able to, like, sustain, if you're not able to, like, get a good crowd going. And, I think that, like, most of -- we don't have, like, franchises as much as like -- I know this from when I lived in the Midwest -- like, we don't, you can't really walk and see, like, a McDonald's or a Subway. A lot of these places are, like, smaller businesses. And, I really do, like -- I don't see a lot; I see a lot of them having to shut down. My partner mentioned the other day that one of the biggest Seattle restaurant people, he has, like, nineteen -- how many restaurants? Thirteen restaurants or something like that. And then, so, like, one of them is called Serious Pie, which is, like, a really big deal in Seattle, I guess. And, he's saying that he might not be reopening any of his restaurants, and, he's like, he's got thirteen restaurants out there. He's, like, you know, one of the big hitters, and, if he's not able to financially recover from this, it makes me worry about, like, the mom and pop shops that are, like, down the block, and how they're supposed to manage, to survive with just their one restaurant. So, it's, it's a concern. Yeah, it's definitely... It's gonna be interesting.

Brinker: Absolutely. How are people around you responding to the pandemic? You'd mentioned that, you mentioned the masks, but is there anything else that you've noticed that's different than normal?

Lucas: I mean, we definitely see a lot less people. I would say I wish people were more, like, observant of the six-foot thing, but I mean, like, I think people are doing pretty well here. Every business for the most part. Like, all the restaurants and all the whatever; any

business that we're going to visit has, like, tape or chalk or something on the ground to show like, "Hey, these are six foot increments," and so everyone does stay six feet away from each other. That's pretty convenient. I would say, at this point, it's over 75% of people that we're seeing with masks. When you're in the grocery store, you definitely see everyone wiping down with those Purell wipes on their cart and on their baskets; people wearing gloves; stuff like that. People, I think, are responding pretty well here, but that's more-so just, like, in comparison to, at the very beginning, when everyone was kind of like, "This is a hoax. This is a sham. Who cares? It's just the flu. It only kills 1%," whatever, all that stuff that people, all that rhetoric that was going on. I think since then, it's improved drastically. I think that people are seeing how much more serious this is than we did, than we originally thought.

Brinker: Right. So, would you say that people are taking the self-isolation and flattening the curve ideals, they're taking those more seriously now?

Lucas: Yeah, I think, like, a higher percentage of people are -- I definitely see there's a lot of people out there that are still, like, deniers or for whatever reason. They're like, "No, we're not going to stay inside." I feel like the West Coast, we're doing fairly well here. Midwest is over there talking about reopening already. Like, I don't know about all that. There is a couple businesses that are reopening. There's, like, a factory that's reopening here in Seattle, like, on Monday or something like that, and, that's going to put, like, 27,000 people back to work, but, like, I don't know. It's kind of early for that, in my opinion. I'm not, I don't know.

Brinker: Oh, yeah. And so, how has this pandemic changed relationships with, like, family and friends and the community?

Lucas: I think that, like, the only people I've really stayed in contact with would be, like, my closest friends. Like, my acquaintances, I feel like I've had -- okay, like, my, my recent acquaintances, I just kind of, like, not really had a lot of conversation with, but, like, my close friends I still, you know, we have group chats and we still stay in contact with each other. Family, I've actually, I feel like, connected more with lately. I've definitely talked to my brother more. He's considered an essential worker, so he still is, like, at work a lot, but, like, like, my sister-in-law. He got married, so I have a sister-in-law now, and, like, she plays Animal Crossing, and, like, we've been bonding over that, which is really interesting. And, having, having the opportunity to kind of, like, reach out to people who maybe you've, like, not talked to in a while, because you're like, okay, well, I'm, I'm on the couch, okay, I'll have nothing -- like, there's nothing to do. And so, you're kind of, like, racking your brain. You're like, oh, yeah, these people, like, still exist. That sounds like a read to you, and it's really not. But, it's just, it's different because, like, originally, you just

kind of, like, run into your acquaintances or, like, see them on the street, and then, like, you don't really have that anymore. So, it's kind of, like, keeping your close friends close, I guess.

Brinker: Absolutely. So, has anybody that you know gotten sick with COVID-19 during this outbreak?

Lucas: I know of one person who had COVID, and I think that's the only person. I mean, there's a lot of people who, like, suspected that they had COVID, and they tried to get tested and weren't able to. There's just one person I know of, and they were lucky. I mean, they had the resources that they were able to get tested. So, one confirmed positive; a lot of other, like, suspected positives,

Brinker: Right. What was their -- are you privy to, like, what their treatment was, you know, what they were expected to do after testing positive for it?

Lucas: I have no idea what the actual treatment was. I know they just stayed at home for a while; they're still at home. But, yeah, I'm not -- that's, like, a friend-of-a-friend type situation, not like me, like directly. I mean, I know them. But, I don't know, like, if they took medication or what it was, but I mean, they did. They were, you know, ordered to stay at home, sign a thing that was like, "you legally have to stay at home," and then they are still at home.

Brinker: Alright. So, in what ways do you think that this is affecting people's mental health?

Lucas: I mean, I think people are like -- if you have anxiety, if you have any type of, you know, predisposition to anxiety or depression or isolation or anything having to do with mental health, I think this is just intensifying it. I feel like there's probably a small subset of folks who are, like, benefiting from this maybe, from kind of, like, that mental break. I think it definitely -- like the first couple weeks probably helped a lot of folks, because it's like, okay, I don't have to like rush to go to work anymore. I like, I can kind of, like, take things at a different pace, and kind of that homebody lifestyle for a little bit really helped. But, I think, as you know, we're moving into week six, week eight, whatever we are on this quarantine, I think that people are really starting to, you know, miss social interaction. People are probably missing vitamin D from that sun because we're sitting inside all the time. Like, I think there's just a lot of a lot of folks who, especially again, folks who have, you know, anxiety before, depression before, and it's just kind of worsening it. I also wonder about folks who are like, so using, like, some type of chemical, some type of

medication for treating those, how, going about getting that? Seeing a doctor to get those three month prescriptions refilled or whatever. If a lot of people are avoiding doctors, if they're like, "Oh, it's just mental health, I don't want to risk getting the virus." Like, that's kind of the thing that I rack my brain a lot is, like, are people avoiding? "Oh, I don't want to get to get my mental health stuff taken care of or these other medical-related stuff taken care of, because I don't want to risk coming in contact with COVID." Because, I mean, I had a pretty, I mean, I had a pretty severe, like, a medical thing going on. And, I was like, I'm probably not going to go. I'm not going to go to the emergency room, because, like, that's where all the COVID is. And so, it took me two or three days before I was like, okay, I went to the urgent care, you know it's a little bit less busy than the emergency room, maybe I can just kind of get in, get out and get my medicine, whatever, and go on. And they were like, "No, you have to go to the emergency room," and I was like, damn. But I mean, that was for something fairly serious and I still was like, no, we can just, we can just not go there, so I wonder about that for people.

Brinker: Right. Yeah. Just to kind of pivot in a little bit of a different direction, what have your primary sources of news been during this pandemic?

Lucas: Source of news? A lot of, I have, let's see. So, CNN, NBC are both on my phone; I get notifications from, but I also have app. I don't check CBS; I have that, but I don't. CDC has some stuff up. WHO, so World Health Organization, has some stuff. AP always is kind of, like, the Associated Press is kind of, like, the go-to for anything, just because they seem the most unbiased to me. So, I'd say those are the major ones. I think I get the most notifications from the CNN app, though, so, I think I see those most often. I'm always fact checking through CDC, WHO, and AP.

Brinker: Yeah. Have your news sources changed during the course of the pandemic? I imagine you're probably not checking the CDC under normal circumstances.

Lucas: Yeah, I'm not, like, constantly like, okay, CDC, like, what's up? What are you saying? Yeah, so definitely changed. I mean, I guess I checked it a little bit back then, just because, like, the public health background, and, like, to keep up to date with anything going on, but I definitely check it more. I also, like, catch myself falling into, like, maybe, like, take a break from the news for a second, because like I said earlier, like you don't have much else to do so you just sit on your phone or do whatever, especially being someone who's unemployed, And, yeah, I would, I would say not. Yeah, like, the sources change and, like, the habits behind checking news changed quite a bit.

Brinker: Right. What do you think are the most important issues that the media may or may not be covering?

Lucas: Oh, good one. Some important issues... Going back to, like, kind of our healthcare infrastructure, I think it's kind of hard to face this pandemic and not talk about that. I think it's, not to, like, dwell on negatives, but it is important to, like, kind of talk about the fact that there are so many folks out there who are like -- I don't know if they call themselves non-believers or whatever -- the people who think this is like a hoax. The conspiracy theorists who think this is, like, this completely, fake virus; there's no such thing as COVID; that this is a plot to destroy the economy. Like, I think these are really real things that we need to be talking about because, we, I mean, I have people on social media that I see who are, like, out and about; have not changed their lifestyles at all; potentially putting people at risk for infection, because they simply do not believe this is a thing. Yeah, again, healthcare. I think lack of testing needs to be talked about; I think that our news is not covering. Not to just, like, completely, you know, insult America, but not covering the great successes of other countries and kind of seeing how they're going about things. I think those are things that I would like to see in the news. I'd also like to see be replicated by our own administration. But, yeah, talking about those types of things, I think there's just a lot of misinformation out there. Yeah, I think that's about it.

Brinker: Okay. And then, so you mentioned this administration. So, how have municipal leaders and your government officials, specifically in your community, how have they responded to the outbreak?

Lucas: Yeah, so we have Governor Jay Inslee, who was a presidential candidate for a little bit, you know, ran heavily on climate and things like that. And, I say he's been doing really, really well. I mean, not, not throwing under the bus. I think that, like, leaders in New York have definitely done better. They kind of, like, stopped, started social distancing, and started socialized-isolation quite earlier, but, I do think that Washington's done a really good job. I do think that they've made it very, very clear, and pretty quickly, about like, "Okay, these are what we're deeming as essential businesses, these can stay open." Making sure that people are protected, I mean, as much as they can. I feel like, on that level, they've been doing pretty well. It is difficult when, I mean, you also at the same time have Amazon being headquartered here, and all the problems that Amazon has had when it comes to COVID. But, I mean, even there, like, comparing Seattle to other places. Seattle had one positive, Seattle Amazon had one positive COVID case. And then, next day, everyone works from home like that. That was kind of shocking. I didn't expect that from them. But, so far, I mean, I feel like we've had pretty good, pretty good responses from our leaders here.

Brinker: Okay. And then, so to kind of expand out from just your community leaders and your governmental leaders in Washington, what are your thoughts on how federal leaders are responding to this crisis and how would you like them to respond to it differently?

Lucas: I think the biggest problem, when it comes to federal leaders and this pandemic, is how it was dealt with early because, this has gone, it has gotten to a much more extreme place than it ever really needed to be. I guess, so not looking at, you know, today, April 16, but, looking at, like, the end of February, or even earlier, I would have liked to see this treated with, you know, the respect and the severity that it really was, and not to be, like, laughed at, not to be like, "This is a hoax. This is not real." Okay, you know, a few weeks later, "Well, we have it under control. We have some cases, but, you know, this is, this is as bad as it's gonna get." I would like to see things taken more seriously, early on. The reason that I went into the work that I did is because I believe that prevention is a lot more successful than taking care of a problem that's, like, already developed. I think it's easier to stop something, it's more effective to stop something early on with preventative measures, than to try and do what we're doing now, which is literally, I mean, not literally, but really is just putting a Band-Aid over a gunshot wound. So, I think, like, the early responses would have been more important. Looking at today, I think that this talk, this talk of having the country reopened by May is ludicrous. I don't think that we're ready. I think we're still seeing a bunch of new cases. Okay, so we're at the 16th, that's two weeks away. This entire time, you know, people, patients are asymptomatic for up to two weeks, yet we're still talking about opening it up in two weeks. I think that's absolutely ridiculous. So, I would like to see, as much as this quarantine sucks, I hate it as much as anybody else, like, I'm tired of being cooped up. But, if we're just now flattening the curve, if we're looking at, like, right now to, like, next week-ish being where we're like finally flattening the curve, maybe let's not have everyone get released and go rush to the streets and start a bunch of new stuff, start a new a bunch of new infections and transmissions. That's personally, like, what I would like to see happen on a federal level. I'd also like a Pandemic Response Team back, that'd be really great if the United States could have one of those. I would love one of those. But, other than that, no, I think we're good, you know.

Brinker: Alright. So, looking to the future, how has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends and community?

Lucas: That's a good one. Okay, not, not taking socialization for granted; not taking little, like, hangouts for granted, the importance of supporting small businesses. And, family, I don't know about that. Just, if this ever happens again, to not be, like, a panic buyer. I mean, I wasn't a panic buyer. I wasn't one of the ones with, like, all the toilet paper, and, like, all this stuff, like, stocked up and ready to go. But, yeah, knowing the difference between being someone who's prepared and being someone who's panicked. Yeah, and just, like,

really, really understanding, like, how important human connection is to, like, making you feel like a human, a human being. Because, I mean, like I mentioned before, like, we live in a metro area, like, enough to the fact that, like, I can look out the window and see, like, other people's apartments, I can see, like, other human beings. It's still like a mild sense, in a weird way, like I'm a bird in a birdcage, but I can still see my owners outside type of thing. And so, like, but if I lived in the country, if I lived in the middle of nowhere in some rural area, I'd be done by now. So, just understanding that, like, how important those, like, little human connections are.

Brinker: Absolutely. So, just one more question for you: knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals, communities, or governments need to keep in mind for the future?

Lucas: That prevention is key, and that our healthcare needs completely reformed, that we need to work with, when especially, when it comes to something that is a pandemic, something that is international, that bashing other countries and comparing, I guess, comparing ourselves to other countries, isn't really going to do anything. Working together. Like, for once, can we just, like, drop the guns and just, like, work together. This is something that has spread to, I believe, every country; I don't know of a country that doesn't have a case of COVID yet. But, just the importance of working together, and, I mean, that's on a federal level, as well as, like, community level, as well as, like, a personal level. Like, just kind of working together, as wild as it sounds, as, like, Kumbaya, like, hold-your-hands-in-peace type thing, but, I mean, really, how much we could have benefited if it wasn't this, like, dog-eat-dog type world once COVID hit. If it wasn't people, like, like I mentioned before, going to the grocery store and, like, stocking up on everything, so then, these other folks, who maybe don't have a bunch of leftover money, and they had to wait till their paycheck came to stock up, but, they don't have a single roll of toilet paper because someone went out there and bought 5000 rolls. I think the importance of us, again, like, on a personal community, federal state, everything level, just working together for the greater good. It sounds like this, like, beautiful, peaceful message and like, "Oh, it's super unrealistic," but, like, I think that we could have saved a lot of lives; we could have saved a lot of money; we could have saved a lot of resources if people stopped looking out for just themselves, and started looking out for, like, the health and well-being of this entire planet, honestly.

Brinker: Thank you so much. I really appreciate you speaking with me. I'm gonna stop the recording.