

Transcript of Interview with Kevin Secker by Glenn Walborn

Interviewee: Kevin Secker

Interviewer: Glenn Walborn

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Location (Interviewee):

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Abstract: University of Wisconsin Eau Claire student, Glenn Walborn interviewed Tyson factory security worker Kevin Secker. In this interview Secker discusses how the pandemic has impacted his life. Secker is also a student and discusses how his classes have changed to accommodate online learning. Also discussed is Secker's new job as a plant security guard for Tyson factory in New London, Wisconsin. He discusses the changes that factory workers had to adhere to and their reaction to all those changes. He also discusses his opinions on government response to the pandemic and skepticism he experienced in the factory. He briefly discusses conspiracy theories he has heard and remedies that some factory workers have been sharing. Secker finished off the interview with hopes for the future and lessons he hopes we as a society have learned.

Glenn Walborn 00:03

So who are you? And what do you do?

Kevin Secker 00:07

My name is Kevin Secker, I am a security guard at fourth, [inaudible] at Tyson Foods.

Glenn Walborn 00:17

Alright, so how is the pandemic affecting your life?

Kevin Secker 00:23

Personally, it's just kept me at home a lot. And especially the plants put in a number of measures to kind of restrict entry into the plant and help monitor the spread of the virus. And they've been vocal stuff that's for [inaudible] a lot of extra paperwork at work.

Glenn Walborn 00:50

So you recently got a new job. So was that harder to get to do due to the virus? Or was that more pre-planned?

Kevin Secker 00:58

Yeah, I actually think that that it was contingent on me being able to get in for a drug test. And they sit there with the hospital team the way it is, they were unsure about how that wouldn't go. Thankfully, occupational health and everything like that was separate from the actual office.

Glenn Walborn 01:15

Right, so moving on to your college career. So what let's just start with just a background information, what classes were you're taking this semester,

Kevin Secker 01:25

This semester, I was taking pretty late load, I was taking college algebra and trigonometry with applications. And then psychology one on one.

Glenn Walborn 01:39

So I should just say that you're taking them at Fox Valley Technical College. So how was taking those classes changed? Since the outbreak?

Kevin Secker 01:50

What was my math class, it was mainly already an online class, we just had to be there in person to get participation and attendance. Psychology class has been the one that's been most affected by everything because we were an online, not online lecture class. So we no longer get participation points. There's no longer that reinforcement. We've just kind of been putting them into our own. And just recently, we've been doing online lectures on Reddit using a video chat.

Glenn Walborn 02:22

So how do you receive word that these classes would be changing? And do you remember what the timeline was, I assume this was in March that they changed to online only.

Kevin Secker 02:34

It was early March. It was partially via email. I've got a few apps on my phone that notify me. And then one trip in absence you go to class that was cut short.

Glenn Walborn 02:49

What was the your last impact Person class like?

Kevin Secker 02:52

It was actually, it was my psychology class. And it was business as usual. We didn't really talk about the virus we just focused on things in psychology

Glenn Walborn 03:07

how has going online affected your performance in these classes?

Kevin Secker 03:13

I've become more aggressive instead of having that class time where I even listen to the rest of your work. And my assignment is to get that stuff done and that kind of push it to the side.

Glenn Walborn 03:30

So how has any personal relationships that you've had with either professors or other students who have not been affected by the virus.

Kevin Secker 03:40

Um, didn't really have much socialization in my math class. I have definitely. I felt less able to ask my math professors questions on problems. And then psychology over there is the most sense to make friends but that was cut short by everything.

Glenn Walborn 04:06

So moving on to the effects of your workplace, how has the pandemic affected the day to day functions of your workplace?

Kevin Secker 04:15

With Tyson Foods? When truckers come in for the first time, I think we have a series of questions related to different viruses roughly, roughly determine if they have the virus or could be in a medical carrier. That's for agriculture, we contractors. Visitors, we have to ask them their questions their their temp is taken before they go in. And yeah, there's just we know as security have to keep our eyes out for symptom, we have to enforce the facemask policies have given anybody on site that wear face masks and so we can't just wear a scarf it has to be a face masks disposable one you know most people are walking

Glenn Walborn 05:12

So you reusing those masks or is it just like one go and throw away?

Kevin Secker 05:17

Yup, like typically with me being done in checking truckers I have almost no contact with people. So I don't want to face as much as I'm supposed to but up top of things checking contractors DMS and everything like that they wear a face mask at least once per shift.

Glenn Walborn 05:44

So what do you feel, how was it like to go to work now?

Kevin Secker 05:51

it's just more of a hassle because because I can come through a number of stages with the Coronavirus support [inaudible] for a tent to [inaudible] is that they can take temps outside the factory virus will be attached to the front door that was almost immediately vetoed is still in the parking lot though. It was initially we have a waiting area behind security that's where they were taking temps and now they've set up a cameras to measure temperature down the hall turnstiles so my daily routine is I come into work and got myself I got to face mask so halfway down the hallway give me a thumbs up and we do about faces and go back that's about

Glenn Walborn 06:44

So why was the use of this tent vetoed?

Kevin Secker 06:49

Apparently it's because nurses thought it was too cold outside even though four space heaters were also provided for this.

Glenn Walborn 07:00

So because it was vetoed they just decided to move further and further inside so right?

Kevin Secker 07:05

Yup, to try to get less and less people involved in things started out with there was gonna be four nurses out of the tent and then we had four nurses in waiting rooms they were in close to them and now it's down to one person's approach turns on a blocking way to the corporate door and the waiting room in general and now someone's standing right behind them

Glenn Walborn 07:39

So have there been any virus scare so far?

Kevin Secker 07:43

There's been a lot of people that they've come in wearing hats their forehead and heated up to oppose the temperature outside we've had a couple of events with the new system with them walking down the hallway. We haven't been posted any errors or anything that definitely whenever you're in the waiting room there's definitely a couple words like you need to go outside.

Glenn Walborn 08:12

Just within your own colleagues that secure a toss and there have been any virus scares?

Kevin Secker 08:19

I mean yes and no? Maybe a little bit later on in here. We've got several people who are definitely high risk for the virus and they've had one of them has a heavy smoker so she has a heavy cough already. And she has asthma she's just hacking all day at work. You watch the guys go wide. as shes talking to them, yeah. There's been a couple of scared but thankfully no ones [inaudible]

Glenn Walborn 08:54

you know what? You don't have to be accurate but what would you say to the demographic of your colleagues I have securitas is?

Kevin Secker 09:05

Majority late actually retirement age. Past 55, [inaudible] by weight your customers are past retirement [inaudible]

Glenn Walborn 09:26

So, do you know how the pandemic has affected the plant in general so how it's affected to Tyson employees?

Kevin Secker 09:34

The Tyson employees, they don't have to repeat the whole time. Regularly sanitizing their hands. [inaudible] that way there's not that close and that really just been that. Heavy facemask use, temperatures before you go in [inaudible]

Glenn Walborn 10:08

So, what kind of face masks are they using? They have to wear the more formal disposable kind right?

Kevin Secker 10:16

Yea, I think its N95, blue masks and they are disposable

Glenn Walborn 10:21

And how are they taking temperatures?

Kevin Secker 10:24

They started out with the ones that rolls across the forehead. Or can be applied on the temple and now they're using infrared temperature and thermal imaging

Glenn Walborn 10:38

So have you heard any rumors or just possibilities at any point in the last few months about the plant plant having to close?

Kevin Secker 10:46

No this is, no matter how many scares they've had [inaudible] inside the plant and Tyson cooperate [inaudible]

Glenn Walborn 11:08

So do you think there's been a lot of employees have been staying home out of fear the virus or just been the usual amount of people still showing up to work?

Kevin Secker 11:17

I think there's just more people that ride the clock I know. I know it's dry cough from weather. smoking but I don't want to come to work today so I can call.

Glenn Walborn 11:38

So, lets segway into that into that picture the poster from a few days ago. So it it said yeah, it said that it will grant a \$500 bonus for employees who had been working in April who had no no call no shows plus another another \$500 bonus for all those working in May and June under those same circumstances. So in your past experience of working in industry do you think many Tyson employees will actually be eligible for that money?

Kevin Secker 12:09

Um the plant just wants people [inaudible] paranoid or they're I'm coming in to work no matter what so I think yeah, there will be a number of people claiming that \$500 but they actually you at this time better than I did I just stick to the truth because security does not get any of that

Glenn Walborn 12:33

Right so Securitas is not giving any wonderful benefits for those right?

Glenn Walborn 12:45

So this is my question I should have asked earlier but do you know why? This Tyson plant hasn't been featured in the news for having just an exponential amount of cases like the Tyson plants in Green Bay.

Kevin Secker 13:01

I think it's just because you [inaudible] is not a high traffic area. As we plant, I was aware of [inaudible] and they've been [inaudible] and the plan is just so far out of the way people mostly from notice

Glenn Walborn 13:22

How many cases did you say that we're in New London?

Kevin Secker 13:25

Last I checked which was beginning of April two cases in London that was there

Glenn Walborn 13:38

As a Tyson employee, are you subjected to the same level of scrutiny as one of these Types employees has to go for all these security precautions?

Kevin Secker 13:47

Yep. Yeah. Like this is huge [inaudible] that are on disposal and even though I my employer [inaudible] if I get terminated [inaudible]

Glenn Walborn 14:14

So what so are the plans the same for Securitas employees as Tyson employees if what you or someone that you work with gets the virus?

Kevin Secker 14:24

If someone in security gets the virus I do not know what the plan is. I don't have someone who's positive. I don't know what I wouldn't do with the [inaudible] shut down but again, that was my manager.

Glenn Walborn 14:51

So moving on to just reactions of employees what has been the reaction of Tyson employees to these new measures?

Kevin Secker 14:59

Um, there's been some disgruntle, especially when they reinforced, first it came out as anybody who's revered in general would say, I'm not going to wear it. [inaudible] Then once there was potential punishment in place, if you're not wearing a mask, then they started wearing it [inaudible] in general, just doing both

Glenn Walborn 15:39

Then what has been the reaction of your colleagues to? What's been going on?

Kevin Secker 15:45

Anywhere from complaints to indifference. And I'm in the indifference, so.

Glenn Walborn 15:50

And so what do you say most people are just acting like usual under this just with more burden, shall we say? Or?

Kevin Secker 16:03

For anyone who works with the employees for them, it's mainly business as usual, with some thing on my face.

Glenn Walborn 16:16

So what has been your grand perspective of this event?

Kevin Secker 16:23

It was poorly handled. We had the opportunity to be prepared better than we were. Yeah.

Glenn Walborn 16:35

So that's a little vague. So what? What level? Are you talking about? What just be just your low? Just ties in general are the state government, the federal government,

Kevin Secker 16:47

Would you like to reveal who that person is?

Kevin Secker 16:47

Federal government, I'm a little upset with how the federal government is handling it especially with the delegation of privileges and opportunities to reopen the state. And then there's something in our current needs to say, you need the economy, we need to open now as opposed to need to take care of our citizens and make sure they're safe. [inaudible] lockdown, few weeks few months. Particular person in federal government I'm not too please with, with handling this situation?

Kevin Secker 17:26

That would be Donald Trump.

Glenn Walborn 17:35

So then, actually, before I asked his final question, do you have just any stories you'd like to share about your experiences at Tyson?

Kevin Secker 17:49

Were you talking about the truckers?

Glenn Walborn 17:51

We can talk about whatever you want to as many stories

Kevin Secker 17:54

hey, a couple. There was one lady at the plant, I won't name names or position. But um, she called off for a number of days. And [inaudible] she had a number of symptoms that would have warranted a test with any other doctor. She came back with none. That was one of the things they definitely you were having more symptoms, just for diabetes, to never test. She took off twice for similar health issues over and over again, and still she has not been tested. Another story, there's been a number of truckers claiming to have cures or information found on their dark website where there's little inter site, one gentleman said that onion, silver, aka mercury, could cure the virus. And that every day he took a tablespoon of liquid silver and put it underneath his tongue and then just the gentleman yesterday. And he said this is virus is a biological attack on the United States.

Glenn Walborn 19:13

So have you heard any other conspiracy theories that you would like to share?

Kevin Secker 19:22

There's been some well this wasn't from someone at Tyson, this was a biological agreement, sent to Wuhan from South Carolina in a biological weapons plant or then we have a high, high population of Asian workers at the plant. There was a rumor that someone thought it was true that they all went back to Asia for the Chinese New Year and go to these exotic markets and were sleeper cells when they came back to the states. [inaudible] need to introduce the virus into the population yeah, that's all I can think of [inaudible]

Glenn Walborn 20:18

So is there are any other interesting reactions like that that you've noticed ever from Tyson or Securitas employees? Right.

Kevin Secker 20:36

It's been a roller coaster story. reaction. I've gotten everything.

Glenn Walborn 20:43

Then lastly, is there just anything else that you'd like to say? So anything seemingly random that you'd like to mention or just anything that you might have forgotten from an earlier question?

Kevin Secker 20:58

[inaudible] could have been properly handled the proper steps taken months and months ago and even now be handled.

Glenn Walborn 21:09

So just for the future generations watching this, do you have any thoughts or opinions on what those steps should have been?

Kevin Secker 21:17

It could have been either a more coordinated effort not just in the States but federally globally, having better stockpiles is just not. This isnt a media stunt [inaudible] seriously, and in future anything like this. Take it seriously. serious action and with a united front not little squabble, civil wars breaking out over this. actually take some liberties will probably have to be sacrificed [inaudible] its all i got

Glenn Walborn 22:12

All right, well, Kevin Secor, thank you for doing this interview.

Kevin Secker 22:17

Thank you.