

Interviewee: Lou Ann Koval

Interviewer: Jack Wanner

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Abstract: Lou Ann Koval was born in East Lansing Michigan, and currently works for a company called Laird Connectivity. This company makes electronics, some of which were made to help keep people safe from COVID. Over the pandemic she switched between two companies, and shares some of the struggles of joining a new company without anyone being able to have a real social interaction with her. She also talks about the struggles of balancing a social life and keeping involved with her elderly family members. She also briefly talks about her opinion on the political actions taken to avoid COVID and some of her responses to stay healthy in this pandemic.

Jack Wanner 0:00

Okay. All right. I think we're good now. It should be good. Alright, so the date and time it is currently at 220. Thursday, April 22, 2021. My name is Jack Wanner. Your name is?

Lou Ann Koval 0:19

Lou Ann Koval.

Jack Wanner 0:22

All right, would you mind sharing some demographic information for the studies such as like your race, ethnicity, age, gender, stuff like that?

Lou Ann Koval 0:30

I am a 61-year-old female, white.

Jack Wanner 0:35

All right. And can your kind of just give us a brief summary of kind of your primary things you do on a day-to-day basis, like your activities or your job, stuff like that things you find fun working out other stuff like that.

Lou Ann Koval 0:50

I am at legal counsel for Laird connectivity. I started in March. So I am working. Right now I'm working full time at home. We're global business. So schedule is pretty flexible. Sometimes I have to get on later at night. So first time that I've done full time work from home. So in addition, I try to work out. I used to be an athlete for University of Michigan. So it's been a long time, but I do try to keep myself somewhat in shape. So I'm trying to figure out ways I would typically go to the gym. But that's changed a little bit with COVID. I still swim. But I'm not

spending time at the gym. So I'm having to figure that out. remotely doing remote classes and stuff like that.

Jack Wanner 1:47

So from what I understand, you also used to be an all American swimmer, not just a university athlete.

LAK 1:53

That's true. I did win all American. It was an all American level, synchronized swimming. And I swam for the University of Michigan on scholarship. Awesome. Well, that's

JW 2:07

really cool. I do want to briefly just take a step back you mentioned during the gym that it's kind of hard to go in and get an exercise because of COVID would you be willing to speak a little bit more to that and kind of the struggles that you feel that you've encountered when you've tried to go to the gym and kind of how you supplemented I guess getting a workout and elsewhere?

LAK 2:29

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that was really, really hard. I don't know if you were aware but when COVID First of all, I had a new job if you don't mind my sort of going back and address that to our holistic way you know, I started a new job and a week later COVID shutdown hits and so now I'm all of a sudden working for home from home for the first time. So that was a change. And then my normal workout routine where I had a gym that was open 24 seven for the most part other than the short time closed on Saturday nights for cleaning you know that was always available to me and then the other thing is that you know, outside we had Wisconsin has wonderful system of parks state parks and and what ended up happening in the next few weeks was even the state parks were shut down so all of a sudden the gyms are closed I was one of the last if not the last person of the gym that walked out before it closed and you know swimming which is my background swimming is safe from the COVID standpoint but that was all shut down along with everything else by the gyms then I was really frustrated with you know, alternatives Okay, you can go outside and walk well that's fine just get pretty sick of walking around the block after a while and I'm not a runner and that a it was especially even with my age, I was never a runner and then you know, it's not something my joints or anything appreciate. I don't have a good run. So it's actually there was a coach in my high school days that said, you know, please don't run or if you do have to run you run like a bird with broken legs. So it was it's not a pretty sight so you know when you're asking me about working out alternatives running wasn't there. I'd like to hike but light hiking was becoming less and less viable even on the weekends when I could drive somewhere and go so I did you know the gyms were just shut down. And then when gyms opened up, it was masking and There were some, some changes that went along with it. But even then people did not stay away from it just it was really problematic at the gym. So I really just swam. I just sort of said, that's it. I'm just gonna swim even when the gyms reopened and I don't even know when that was maybe January.

JW 5:20

Well, I mean, it's certainly frustrating that we do live in a time where that you're forced to stick to a certain you know activity because of how poorly The situation is and how dangerous it is for others to be interacting with each other. I am glad that you were able to find a certain aspects that you were able to still get in order to get into physical activity getting Rigaud,

LAK 5:42

well, and online yoga. I will have to be a big fan of it. And there were other online classes that again, it was, I don't know, I didn't do so. Well. I did well with the online yoga.

JW 5:55

[Chuckles] Okay.

LAK 5:56

Adriane

JW 5:57

[Chuckles] All right,

LAK 5:58

That's what everybody goes to

JW 5:58

all right. Um, well, I really quickly just want to ask a couple more base questions. You did mention something that I do want to go back to in just a second. But really quickly, so would you be willing to give us some some idea of where you're living and kind of what it's like in that area? And I mean,

LAK 6:20

as far as just geographic or my circumstances?

JW 6:22

Yeah, just

LAK 6:22

West Allis, West Allis, Wisconsin, which is an inner suburb of Milwaukee. Okay? West Allis is really named for Allis Chalmers Allis. Chalmers is a global manufacturer of all sorts of industrial equipment, many of which still operates today. And this town at one time, probably had the highest highest population of skilled blue collar workers like tool and die makers is such a in the world. So it's a it's an unusual, so you still have what's very interesting is grandparents, that still travel internationally to maintain, you know, giant ovens and such like that all over the world. So it's a very interesting, older inner suburb that is working to reinvent itself. Now. I live in a house built in 1930. I mean, do you want that kind of information?

JW 7:33

That's not as useful. I mean, you're more than welcome to share your houses history, if you'd like to, I was just kind of gonna address how it is. Obviously, there are some certain areas and cities in Wisconsin in the Midwest that are less affected by COVID, then say others, and I was curious as to where you think you may fall in that line, obviously, you're close to Milwaukee, which has been a very, very high concentration for that, I'm kind of wondering if you've had to worry about that interaction, or how you've dealt with that interaction or

LAK 8:07

absolutely. I mean, you know, I'm very lucky because I was able to work from home, most of my neighbors and everyone else here, you know, have jobs where they have to show up that would be considered essential workers, but it would be whether it's retail, or industrial, or, you know, grocery. And, you know, watching the missteps, and this understanding, you know, like a lot of grocery workers got ill COVID because the grown the managers and then employers are saying we're not going to let you wear masks or take simple, simple preventive measures, the same time the health care, there was no walk is a very segregated city. And we had Miss Alice, some ad administrators, well educated, pretty senior administrators who were black and went to the hospital with COVID and were not treated. Those are it's very disturbing. The missteps and lack of treatment that went on in my neighborhood, and I've talked to others since then not even in the neighborhood, but in the general area. I don't know that Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Area did a very good job in treating people with COVID

JW 9:38

interesting Well, that's certainly something so then obviously, you would say that you have to be, you had to be incredibly careful when, when going out in public or doing anything that revolves.

LAK 9:47

Well, super and, and you know, I have always had really good health and maybe been a little bit taken that for granted. But the guy I date was very, very, very concerned about getting COVID because of an asthma condition. So I was trying to be not even so careful for myself, but for him, and I knew my son would be probably fine, because initially he was younger, you know, and, and whatever. But at the same time, we didn't know. And I think that's the one thing that bothered me through this is, even if people say, Oh, no big deal, I'll get it. And it won't be that bad. We don't know what the long-term effects are. And you know, it, I find it very interesting. I keep reading up on it is this whole thing about I'm gonna call it chemo brain, but it's really a brain fog. And it's very similar to what people who've had chemotherapy go through.

JW 10:54

Yeah. So I am going to really quickly take a stop, I realized I did make a quick mistake, I want to follow after some how you feel about side effects, and then briefly go into your employment. Okay, I do just really quickly want to state the deaths and kind of cases in Wisconsin that we've all had, obviously, you've known as you're in a high concentrated area, but it is just something that we're supposed to be doing. So the destiny area or in in the United States are at 566,494

people do the COVID prices. In Wisconsin, there's been over 590,000 cases 592,888 to be exact. And in deaths there is been for Wisconsin alone. 6724 However, there is hope, as total people that are vaccinees that have been administered has reached a number of 219 million, which is very good for our population, and slowly booming, which is certainly great. Yeah, so anyway, I'm sorry, to, to chop that up right there. I should have added that in the beginning, it was a mistake by me.

LAK 12:11

No, don't apologize. I mean, it's very interesting, because I was just listening here about an hour ago, the fact that, you know, we have 50% of the population that's refusing to be vaccinated, and which is, you know, extremely scary, as well as what appears that children are now more and more susceptible to this latest virus, and the numbers are shooting up there. And then young people are thinking, Hey, no big deal and are refusing to sell. It's gonna be very interesting to see how we continue to manage it. I mean, actually, as of yesterday, I'm fully vaccinated. I've made it through my two weeks. So.

JW 12:56

Good to hear that's really awesome. Congratulations. So I do want to briefly talk about you mentioned earlier, in terms of employment that you started working kind of during the pandemic. And I'm kind of curious that it's obviously nice that you do have a very good job and a very good grounding and a very good base that you're able to work. Well, some people aren't. My question is, are there any challenges has, has COVID affected your normal lifestyle when it comes to working in any other way? I mean, I don't know if you would know solely because you started during a pandemic, but how do you think things maybe would have been differently or done differently? Or,

LAK 13:37

oh, we've that we've actually my boss and I have talked about it. You know, the plan was when I started, I mean, one of the strange things is I went to a management and sales and management meeting before my other employment ended, there is an overlap there. And it's because it's only done once a year, and my prior employer allowed me to do that, which turns out it was critical, because it was the only time I got to meet people face to face. Okay. So that was helpful. But the plan was, once I started, that, certainly within the first year, I would have visited each of our locations, including our location in Malaysia. And to build the relationships since I'm the only legal person and person representing the legal department in the company, it was essential for me to meet with all of these folks face to face and develop relationships because it's, you know, I, they don't report to me, so I have to work with them really based on the quality of our relationship. Okay. So that was a critical part and that was what was planned. All of a sudden COVID shut down, travel ban everything else. I'm brand new. And now I need to build all those relationships and somehow be able to deal with compliance and no, just all sorts of things and actually repair some of the relationships with the legal department because my predecessor was an issue and had damaged a lot of relationships. So now I have to do all that. from home using electronic media. That was frankly, new to me. Okay, though, everything was

new, the company was new, the media was new, no face to face. I think I do build relationships. Well, but that whole communication, nobody is stopping by does see me there's no personal chit chat, unless I really reach out and create it and has to be done electronically.

JW 16:10

Well, okay. So yeah, so you've had- you've had quite a few challenges coming into a new company, especially one that requires I mean, yeah, I can understand that. Having or being part of the or representing the company on the laws front would require you to have a decent relationship with a lot of people. I mean, it's it's obviously good that you did get some interaction with people face to face. But would you say that COVID certainly challenges you in that aspect of it.

LAK 16:33

Yeah. I mean, what I had was for one day hope.

JW 16:36

Yeah.

LAK 16:37

I mean, you know, and it was still limitations, you know. And so and, and even so one of our VP of Sales I had very little communication with because she was very, very sick. Oh, well, I wonder what she probably had. And before there was testing for it.

JW 16:54

Yeah, that's certainly kind of something to worry about.

LAK 16:57

Yeah. I was glad she was stayed upstairs, and I didn't get to see her very much.

JW 17:04

Well, I mean, at least you avoided the situation, you know, there could have could have been worse. I do want to quickly address another part about the employment How do you think COVID has kind of been on your company's economy? I obviously there are companies, each company is affected differently. And I'm kind of curious to know as to what

LAK 17:23

Its effect it was very interesting, because, of course, our program so we produce antennas and modules that facilitate and communicate as part of the Internet of Things, the various types of equipment. Okay. So it sort of is a connector. So for a portion of our business is called cold chain. Okay, cold chain is modules that measure temperature and make sure that say shrimp always is frozen at each step of the distribution chain, and it doesn't warm up and spoil. Okay, so that then you'd have bad food. Okay. Well, obviously that services, industrial food, a lot of restaurant, schools, etc. The LDAP shut down. So that business is gone. I mean, it just totally

gone. We the same antennas and modules, service medical equipment that talk to one another and, you know, talk to to the network's in the hospitals, etc. Obviously, the demand for that went through the roof. Our production facility is in Malaysia. Oh, Malaysian government shut that down early on. They were in Asia, they were affected by COVID. Early. So now the medical equipment that we have a lot of demand for we can't get product because our production manufacturing is down. Wow. And it opening up has to be negotiated with the Malaysian government. Well, now there is another little wrinkle here. We used to be owned by a British conglomerate. Okay. We're now a US conglomerate. We couldn't get in front of the right people, the right power centers in Asia to get up the plant open. Until once we figured out that, oh, there was a consortium of US companies that were negotiating, and we are now a US company instead of a British company. And once we join that Consortium, it still took a long time, but we were able to communicate with the government and get the approvals and then investigations and all that kind of stuff done so that finally we're able to get the plant open at least at 20% level, eventually 30% level on then, you know, I'm not sure we're fully open yet, but we at least have gotten some flow so that we could keep, you know, the ventilators going and, you know, services to a bunch of protocol companies. That kind of what you wanted to know.

JW 20:26

Yeah, yeah, that's very interesting. So obviously, you didn't struggle as much as say some companies would that didn't have any, I guess appeal to the the medical market. But obviously, they're even even for a company that, that engineers and creates and makes and manufactures, tools that are useful in a pandemic like this, it seems very interesting that you still had to jump through some hoops. And there were still some challenges, even being kind of in all the right places. I mean, you mentioned that obviously, you are a US conglomerate. Once you move to the US conglomerate, you're still able to finally negotiate, but it still took a long time, even though it was a medical manufacturer. Right. seems very interesting. Okay. Interesting. Wow.

LAK 21:11

So on balance, on balance, we had to lay off all of us took two weeks unpaid furlough.

JW 21:19

Okay.

LAK 21:21

- And that probably saved the company a couple million dollars. You know, but in the long term, I'd say we came close to making our budgets etc.

JW 21:37

So Oh- that's so- I mean, it's quite interesting that you didn't, you weren't punished. I think I punished is the wrong word. But you certainly didn't struggle as much as other companies did. And it still seems that you obviously had some challenges to get through COVID still presented some challenges for Radek already. Wow. Very interesting. So you mentioned obviously, that you work in home, and that you try to get some physical activity in your day to day lives. I kind of want to dress, the family and household aspect for you, and just kind of so obviously, you

mentioned to me in our pre interview, and I know personally from from our experience that you've you've kind of worked at a company for a long period of your life. How has your schedule, your daily schedule kind of been shifted? Right? Because obviously, now you're at home? How do you self regulate? How do you do these things? I mean, I assume you have- do you have an ani- or a pet there with you as well, that has to-

LAK 22:37

I have my son's dog here. That's her thing. I mean, usually, she wouldn't be let out every morning when I'd go to work and stayed outside. She's getting older. So for her COVID has been great. You know, on those super cold days, she didn't have to stay outside. And she's getting older. So that's probably good. The whole staying at home, it has been a very interesting thing. First of all, when I would go into the office, and especially given I never knew if I would be going into a legal office with lawyers, and there's just different dress codes. I always wore nice clothes, professional clothes, as I call them pretty close now. So all of a sudden, I'm working from home, there's no need for me to wear any pretty clothes. A friend of mine, who also was a lawyer said, All he does is he's wearing the same shirt and pants for weeks on end, which was kind of scary. But I didn't have to be near him. So I didn't have to smell that but, you know, that just isn't good. But it was very strange. I'm getting much more sleep up as early. I've been grateful for not having to go into the office during snowstorms. So I can let the snowstorm sort of continue. And if it ends at noon, I go out and run the snowblower at noon. Or, um, because we're a global company, you know, the timing and have Asia facilities. You know, sometimes I have I don't have that many calls at night, but I will get messages and if I can get right back to them. If it's something urgent, you know, I just walk over to my desk and do it.

JW 24:32

Okay.

LAK 24:33

You know, the big thing is I don't have young kids. I mean, if I had younger kids, I don't know, I don't know how I could handle the drawing to help with right I can barely handle technology for my job, let alone trying to handle the technology for other learners in the house or-

JW 24:51

Oh, okay yeah

LAK 24:52

Yeah, I mean, and and I don't know, you know, and keeping them entertained and then feeding them and oh my god, I'm I mean, it's just been this has been a big change, but it's just me.

JW 25:03

Yeah. So it's a good thing your son's not coming home. So you don't have to deal with him yelling and screaming playing video games and all of that. [Laughs]

LAK 25:12



Well, usually he's sleep. I probably wake him up.

JW 25:15

Okay.

LAK 25:16

So even in his teen years, you know, and moving into his early 20s, he likes to sleep at that.

JW 25:24

Okay. All right. Well, that's, that's very interesting. I mean, so it seems like there were some slightly decent things that came out of COVID. I mean, working from home, certainly, obviously. I mean, you mentioned earlier on that. It, it presents its set of challenges in terms of technology, learning everything. And I think you obviously you mentioned to a little bit that, it seems to me that COVID because of COVID, and you being a worldwide company, you don't really have set work hours, as much as you just have, if it's, if it's an important thing, you have to get to it when that email comes in. And when that that message gets comes in. I mean, I personally can relate about the clothes thing I haven't put on real clothes, other than maybe going out for dinner in like, three months, give or take

LAK 26:11

One thing I did notice, sort of when we there was COVID. The hard lockdown. And then there was a little bit of an opening is how many of my colleagues put on serious amounts of weight. And that was one thing that I did is I did not wear sweat pants are pants that had a whole lot of gifts. You know, I did gain weight. Probably a pound the two probably consistent two pounds, but I still was wearing at least jeans that were somewhat restrictive. So I couldn't go nuts.

JW 26:47

Okay, interesting. So, I mean, do you think that do you think maybe the the fears and the in? I think fears is the best phrase or the best way to phrase it? Do you think the fears of working out in a gym and being physically active around large groups of people during this pandemic might have also influenced that? Or would you think that the lockdown kind of helped influence people to gain weight in a separate way?

LAK 27:12

Oh, no, I'm sure it was just that we're less mobile. Okay. I mean, you know, it was I wouldn't go out and do those things. And even if I was hiking on the weekends, and really may found, you know, there's a couple of federally controlled trails that you could go on and avoid the Wisconsin State Park. Shut down. I mean, yeah, I am an expert. Okay. And I mean, I would still do that. And even so, I was still struggling, you know, because I've never worked from home. So I've never, you know, it's just way too easy to walk downstairs to get a cup of coffee and then have a cookie.

JW 27:50

Wow. Yeah. I mean, that makes a lot of sense. I think that's also a pretty difficult part. If you're, if it's right there. You know, it's always tempting you it's not like, I mean, I know personally, when I'm in class, if I don't put my phone in my backpack, it's always the more boring the class gets, the more heavy the phone gets in the pocket. So I can absolutely relate.

LAK 28:08

Yeah, and if that phone delivered calories to your backside, you can imagine what the backside look like very true.

JW 28:17

Would you mind kind of giving me a rundown of how you interact with you know, your friends family, you said you mentioned your dating how, how you're dealing with, with that during the pandemic? I mean, obviously, there are there are new things, you have to be worried about elderly use and, and certain aspects like that, how,

LAK 28:31

yeah, well, you have to you had to create your pod, okay. You know, now-

JW 28:36

Can you elaborate more on just like a pod and what you mean by that?

LAK 28:39

Yeah, a pod or your own little group of people that you trust, um, that will be taking that will be careful and not infecting you, especially when we didn't know anything. And so really, I mean, at that time, because you had no testing. I mean, that was one of the huge failures and all of this, if we just had testing, it would have been a different story. But, so my boyfriend and I, that was the pod and and my son to the extent, you know, and even that was tough, but that was a choice I made, I was willing to take that risk.

JK 29:20

Can you kind of explain why it was tough and why you why you felt that that might be hard to include your son in that group?

LAK 29:27

Well, because he's coming in out of college.

JW 29:29

Okay. So there's-

LAK 29:33

That's when there was a potential risk there. But I'm going to take that risk. But the problem is, it's not just my risk, it's just then I'm introducing that risk to my boyfriend. So that's the whole circle. And so actually, it was good that we had two houses, because I could tell myself when

you're just cooped up, and you can't go anywhere, Oh, well, I'm going to his house. Now, that wasn't new or really that different, right. But it felt like it was somewhere to go.

JW 30:11

Okay. Yeah

LAK 30:12

Other than my house where I spent all day. So I was wrong. [Interviewer talking at the same time] My luck, huh?

JW 30:18

I, no, excuse me, I'll let you finish. I just suggested that it wasn't walking around the same block.

LAK 30:23

Right. Yeah. I mean, you just- and so I would take the dog and I would go to his house, and I'm sure it was the same for him. You know, after a while, he gets like, Oh, I have somewhere to go. I did a lot more cooking, you know, because you couldn't go out to restaurants or anything. I mean, after a while, some of the restaurants got into takeout. But even so.

JW 30:44

Okay, well, yeah, that makes it makes a lot of sense. I mean, it's, it's nice, that doesn't seem to be a good. A good position you were in. I mean, obviously, the two houses is great. That you're able to get out even like you said, it's just just for a brief moment of saying, Well, I have somewhere to go. I'm not I'm not stuck here. I have this opportunity.

LAK 31:05

Yeah. So we just go there. And all we did was go back and forth between our two houses, but somehow that made it you're almost tricking yourself into making it a little more.

JW 31:17

Okay, that's, that's very fair. How do you necessarily deal with interacting with family? I mean, are you in range to see any of them? Are you? Are you able to see any of them? How does that

LAK 31:29

Yeah, you know, of course, in the perfect world do we'd have family zoom calls, but no, I don't have family zoom calls. My brothers, they live farther away. So just connect via phone. So that didn't really change anything. When there was the shutdown, when I had the furloughs, I decided to go and see my mom, my mom is 86. And she just shut down completely, she would go to the grocery store. But that was it. So she hasn't been down to eat. And she's still that way. Well, for those, she's fully vaccinated now. So I don't know, maybe she talks to neighbors a little bit, but I don't think she's gone out or done very much. But when I did go over to see her, and that was risky. I mean, I had to at the same time, I mean, I was so limited and so careful. But it would have been nice to be able to take a test, you know, like you can now before you go so I stayed the week. And so I got her out. That was the real focus is I would drive and we would go

places just even in the car, and the weather was good and would walk around and a couple times we ate outside at restaurants.

JW 32:57

Okay, so now that's about it. All right. He obviously seemed very limited. Um, you mentioned briefly, sorry, I, I'm still trying to process so you obviously you have to be very safe there. It's nice that there were opportunities for you to take her outside and get her just out of the house. Even if it wasn't, like you said to a destination, you were still able to trick your brain into believing that there was something? Yeah. In terms of safety. She's She's elderly, she's elderly, and she apparently didn't go out during the pandemic very much. What did you have to do to kind of prepare for that? Did you have to limit yourself at all when you went out to see her? You know, in terms of -

LAK 33:34

Oh Yeah, Yeah, I did. Absolutely. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have talked over this. I gotta learn better on zoom that to interrupt people?

JW 33:43

Oh, no, not at all.

LAK 33:46

Yeah, I just was super careful. I wish I would have had a test to be sure. Well, actually, the first time I went over, I took the boat over. Oh, wow, the fairies. So that was another potential exposure. Um, and my brother Brian picked me up. So those were all chains. You know, we had to really, I had to have that discussion with him. How safe was he? You know, are we would I be picking up something that I would- could then share with my mom and you know, would likely kill her? So? Yeah, there was a lot. There's a lot of there's some kind of difficult conversations.

JW 34:29

Yeah. I mean, would you be willing to obviously, if it's uncomfortable, I, I'm not gonna ask you to or I'm not going to pry too much into that. But would you be willing to kind of explain a little bit more of that the uncomfortable side of that aspect. I mean, the harsh reality of you going to interact with family, even during that time, even when you're well prepared.

LAK 34:48

Well, my brother Brian, who's going to pick me up. I didn't know what kind of work he doesn't have an outside employer. He does. work, so I wasn't sure about that. But I was more concerned actually about his wife, who is a college professor. And I think at that time, they were still maybe going in, or they were, you know, they there was some a bit of in person meetings in the cetera. And that's where, to me that was the weakest link of where. And then also they two of them were meeting her daughter's extended family and boyfriend's family working on this house that they bought. So again, there's another group of people that I was uncomfortable with what were the you could be working very closely together, working on a floor putting up a wall or something. And I was pretty sure that they weren't being masked and weren't taking care of it.

And so I had to ask that question to my brother, Brian, and really push to say, how safe is this? When was the last time this happened? You know, how, how careful? Can we be, you know, I'm uncomfortable. And so maybe the answer was going to be that he's not going to pick me up from the boat. And I'm going to have my mom come and pick me up with the boat. And if that means I sit around and cool my heels somewhere, you know, I'll just have a bigger, bring a sleeping bag or whatever, stay warm and wait until she could get there. At the end of the day. Brian's wife was able to get because she was a professor, she was able to get tested pretty gosh darn close to when I came over. So she tested negative, that gave me more comfort that it was okay for my brother to pick me up. And we frankly, just spent most of the time outdoors. I was still very careful during that day. And my mother came and met me there at his house. So there wasn't a ton of exposure. But that was that difficult. It's always, you know, not easy to ask somebody about well, is your wife being safe? You know, I mean, it's kind of-

JW 37:14

Yeah no, very, very fair. Out of curiosity, since you're talking about exposure. Have you or does anyone anyone, you know, have they gotten sick from COVID-19?

LAK 37:26

Yeah, yeah, Shawn the boyfriend, the boyfriend got sick from COVID, which, like, it was 10 days after he got the first vaccine. So he's one of the very few that had a breakthrough. Got Pfizer. So a very unusual breakthrough. situation. I tested five days after his positive test, which I understood is what the suggested I do, even though my doctor, frankly, wasn't asking for a test is as well just see how it goes for the next five days, say quarantine? Well, it wasn't too hard, right? Because I'm working from home with the dog anyway. So it was just me and Maddie, the dog, so Oh, but after five days, I realized became very apparent, my friends would not see me ever even outside for a walk unless I can't get a negative test. So I found a free public PCR test, because my whole thing is I didn't want a false positive. I wanted to make sure I was really accurate. So I went and did the PCR test waited a couple days, and it came back negative. So that the question is, How did my boyfriend get exposed when he was so So? So hyper careful, hyper careful. Interesting. I don't know. And obviously, I was with him when he was positive. And I didn't get it.

JW 39:03

Wow.

LAK 39:04

What's that about? I don't know.

JW 39:06

incredibly lucky, for sure.

LAK 39:07

Yeah.

JW 39:08

So since he had it, what was kind of the experience that he had? I mean, you don't have to if he obviously you feel he wouldn't be comfortable with you sharing this? I know.

LAK 39:19

Some of his family is in the vaccine medical world and they did a quick analysis when they found out he was positive and they said, well, you'll have less symptoms and you know, you're you should be, you'll only have three days of sickness. And that's really what it they were exactly right. He was sick for three days. The top and then and then you know, ongoing after effects of being tired. Of course the worst one is the loss of taste and smell. And that's still going on. It was you can taste salt now. Sort of salty sweet is able to smell like a faint smell of cinnamon today for the first time. But he's at least three weeks out of his four days. So it's it's long.

JW 40:16

Wow. Yeah, that's, that's wild.

LAK 40:21

I mean, he's still not there yet. I mean, he's just just baby steps.

JW 40:25

Wow, that's crazy. I mean, I think it shows that even like in this in this situation even being hyper careful can still unfortunately get you put in that situation and it doesn't always it definitely is a struggle if you get it, obviously. I mean, some people recover faster than others, but your boyfriend clearly seem to be very careful about it. And he ended up still suffering pretty heavily because of it.

LAK 40:53

Yeah, I mean, it was like I said he was like an Uber Fauci.

JW 40:58

Yeah. Wow

LAK 40:59

And then Okay, then do you want a funny story? Are we short on time?

JW 41:04

No, we have we have all the time in the world. I'm not gonna rush you.

LAK 41:07

Well I don't know, this is more a funny story. So that because he does- didn't- couldn't taste anything. But he needed to eat. And he was to be you know, he wasn't cooking very well or eating very well for himself. So I made things like a pasty and other things. However, the, the dough, I'd taken a pasty class and the dough was frozen. And I was supposed to use it in three months. And that was back in 2018. And, and so I rolled it all out. And it seemed to be okay. And

then I took the ground beef that was in the freezer. I mean, it was fine. But it might have, you know, been a little off labor, right? Because it had been in there for two or three years. And I cooked all that stuff up. I made it farm and you know, he had no taste.

JW 41:59

So it just didn't bother him at all?

LAK 42:00

Right? So. [Both Laugh]

JW 42:01

Wow

LAK 42:03

So with the pasty, actually, I made two of them. And I said the goal is, after the one eight, I said Sunday when you taste and smell our back, we will both taste the other one and see how bad this thing really is.

JW 42:21

You guys put some serious stakes on that one.

LAK 42:25

So I tried to use it as an opportunity to you know, clean out my freezer of old food

JW 42:32

All right, well, that's certainly a creative way to use something that is taken over your life. I will say I'm want to kind of move a little bit more forward here. And just kind of briefly touch a few other points and then we'll be able to wrap it up. I've only got a couple more for you. One of them being you mentioned, obviously that you're fully vaccinated as your boyfriend fully vaccinated by this point.

LAK 42:54

Yes, as of today.Yeah.

JW 42:55

Okay. Well, congratulations to both of you. Kind of just I want to really know, do you have any concerns about the vaccine or kind of what you think? I mean, you mentioned that you don't know the, the future effects of, of COVID. Are you concerned at all about the future effects of the vaccine? Any Chance of anything-

LAK 43:15

Not, not really, I did have bad, pretty bad reactions, especially to the first one. Okay. Till the first shot. And so, and that was my doctor, my allergist and it really it triggered a a nasal congestion, you know, my typical allergic reaction, which is allergies to you know, hay fever reaction. So, I

had a lot of sinus congestion and stuff like that. And it just took me by surprise, and I ended up with a sinus infection, which always happens when that happens. So it was okay. Eventually, but I did seek help and with the concern being okay, how can we prepare for the second shot? Which we did, we did, you know, do certain I did take some really strong and I somebody, decongestants and stuff before the second shot, so that, you know, the facts weren't quite as bad. So

JW 44:22

Oh, all right. That's-

LAK 44:24

I you know, I'm not an anti-vaxxer. I remember actually questioning the doctor when my son was born and oh, should I be concerned? And man, I can still see the anger and intensity in his eyes right now about how, you know, there is, you know, the scourge of these diseases that these vaccines have helped prevent. And I think we're seeing that again right now in our lifetime. I mean, polio, all of these things. He says, you know, you just don't even understand, and you know, the way I view it now is I just say their magic. I said vaccines are magic.

JW 45:07

All right. Well, that's, that's good to hear of in terms of vaccines, and they're distributed in their distribution and kind of your access to getting them. I was curious as to kind of, if it was a first office struggle for you. And then furthermore, how you think any of the how you think the government officials on any form state, local or federal, kind of how well they handle the pandemic and getting out, you know, information about COVID you know, providing vaccines, stuff like that. Obviously, we can take-

LAK 45:38

Well with the whole COVID thing and the misinformation, the confusion lies, it's been horrible. And I, you know, I kind of agree with Deborah Burks is, you know, the, the the amount of deaths should be at 100,000, not 500. I thought those horrible numbers you just rattled off 506 communication was horrible. The politicization is horrible. I mean, they're now looking back. And, you know, those sort of Republican base and Trump's Republican base, frankly, would have all supported a masked mandate early on, because they wanted to keep their businesses going in the "politicalisation". And that split is just been tragic. So that's really sad. You know, getting the vaccine. I mean, it's, I think it's amazing. The fact that is now starting to drop is terrible. But I know I was, you know, in there trying to figure out how to get in and get my appointment at Walgreens and such like, you know, everybody else, but I really think the rollout in I think Biden, Biden knows how to run, you know, his past and the government and this, this is what governments are for. And I think people don't realize when you have to do this, this is what governments are for.

JW 47:04

Interesting. Okay. Yeah. Wow. I mean, so then you would- you would, you would agree that for you- I mean- obviously, with Biden's health and pushing of mass production of these vaccines, it



was fairly easily accessible, accessible for you even in an area that has been known for constant or for high concentration of COVID cases, was it not too much of a struggle for you to get a vaccination? Oh, it

LAK 47:27

wasn't an actually in some of the really, areas of Milwaukee where they really, really suffered. The federal government came in early on with buses, I mean, with vaccines and whatever, and kept it open to anyone within that zip code. So there, I think that it went over and above, you know, it was still a little hard to get, but I mean, I wasn't 65 so I was kind of pushing you know?

JW 48:02

Okay yeah, that's very fair. Our- my final question for you, my final point that I kinda would like to address with you is just kind of the future of, you know, after, after this. I, I don't know if you've experienced any other pandemics? Truthfully? I certainly hope not. But I mean, now that you've kind of experienced or now that you are experiencing what we you know, this pandemic, this COVID vaccine, or COVID, COVID pandemic, how do you think it's transformed, like your viewpoints on you know, work spending time with your friends, and even interacting with family members? I mean, do you think it'll be? I mean, do you think you'll ever be going back into work again, since you

LAK 48:43

No, that you're, you're absolutely right, I will probably request, I will likely request to continue working from home. Again, I have small kids, that would be a different story. I don't have even teenagers or whatever, I don't have any distractions at home. So that works for me at this stage of my life. That will change. You know, we'll I'm, I'm very involved with going to the theater and the ballet and also to cultural events and being involved in business organizations with a ton of events. You know, I keep a wide network of referral sources and build that up over time as a lawyer. I think that's important. I don't know especially given my age and the pandemic hitting at the same time, will I maintain that large group and and how will I maintain those connections? Some of them I will, um, I think that younger professionals are going to have a need to get back in the office or do something because men terrain and the things that you learn. By watching more senior people in action, there's just so much stuff you learn. I think they will- they won't get that unless they figure that out. Do I need that? No, because I'm at that sort of end points of my career. So for me again, I'm lucky, I don't I have a lot of those networks already established. If I pick up the phone and say, I'm blue in cobalt to sell and sell in, they'll say, Oh, I'm blue, what can I do for you blow up? Okay, I've already established that relationship, that's going to be tougher for people coming behind me.

JW 50:33

Okay

LAK 50:33

That COVID will have changed that. I think we're not out of this, you know, India just said that India is on fire with COVID. And these the additional variants that are going to come out with it,

and I think it's going to, hopefully force an understanding and doing this and climate change that the globe, we're all in this together, not just the country, but a whole world approach. And and that's huge. They do, it's gonna it's going to take some kind of calamity like this, I think, for us to get there. I'm not particularly optimistic at the moment.

JW 51:22

All right. Well, there it is. I mean, that viewpoint, I think kind of, I would, I honestly suggest that it highlights a lot of people's viewpoints. I mean, there's a lot of problems and struggles currently in the world. And I mean, it's interesting, obviously, that you are you're going to be able to take advantage and take control of some parts of your life. But obviously these others are still unfortunately being struggled with. I think that's kind of all the questions that I really have for you. Okay, are there any you really have to ask for me or?

LAK 51:51

No, I hope this project is enlightening, and-

JW 51:57

It certainly was well, awesome. Thank you so much. I do want to stick around after the recording, I can really quickly just get a post interview with you everything like that should be-

LAK 52:08

Okay. Thank you.

JW 52:10

Yep, thank you.