

**Interviewee:** Sam Kuehn

**Interviewer:** Sarah Phelps

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**Abstract:**

Sam Kuehn is from Fall Creek, a small town outside of Eau Claire. He works part time doing small contracting jobs around his community and will soon be restarting a library position he lost at the start of the pandemic. In this interview he talks about his challenges maintaining relationships with family and friends, how he stays safe during Covid, and his stance on state and federal mandates. He also discusses his view of the media and how it affects the public's stance on topics like the coronavirus.

**Sarah Phelps: 00:00:02**

Okay, so this will be an oral history interview for the Wisconsin Covid19 archive. The date is May 4 2021 and the time is roughly 11am. The current cases for Covid are as follows: US cases is 32,200,003 Wisconsin cases is 599,576 and total vaccinations is 36.6% of Wisconsin population fully vaccinated in 46.3% vaccinated. Could you go ahead and state your name for me?

**Sam Kuehn: 00:00:39**

Sam Kuehn.

**SP 00:00:41**

Okay, how old are you?

**SK 0:42**

I'm 22 years old.

**SP**

Okay, can you give me your race and your gender?

**SK 00:00:47**

I am Caucasian and I am male.

**SP 00:00:50**

Awesome. So what are the primary things that you do on a day to day basis, what is your daily routine?

**SK**

Primarily, I go to school, full time at Eau Claire and that's pretty much it. I occasionally work once or twice a week.

**SP**

What do you study at school?

**SK**

I studied creative writing as a major and communications as a minor integrated strategic communications.

**SP**

So the exact flip of what Nick does that's really interesting, I didn't know that. Okay, great and you said you work, sometimes, what do you - what do you do sometimes?

**SK**

Ah, I have two jobs, actually. One of them is a subcontracting job, where I do painting and manual labor and the other one is working at the local library here in Fall Creek.

**SP**

Yeah nice, do you live in Fall Creek?

**SK**

Yep, I live in Fall Creek.

**SP**

What is it like to live there?

**SK**

It's nice, I like it - it's a good distance from Eau Claire, it's only about 15 minutes, so you know it's quiet, I like that a lot. But it's like if I need to go to Eau Claire to, like, get things I can't get here. It's an easy commute - I commute to Eau Claire anyway, I live in Fall Creek so I commute to class, I commute to work all that stuff. So it's - I'm always, you know, going from here to there most of the week, even if it's just for hanging out with my friends or something. I'm going to Eau Claire so it's like a nice balance between small town and city, I guess.

**SP**

Have you found that you've been in Fall Creek more than Eau Claire since the pandemic started or about the same?

**SK**

I would say a little more in Fall Creek just because all my classes are online, except for one. I would normally be going to campus every day, obviously for my in person classes, but just how it was laid out this semester, I had pretty much all online classes so normally I'd be going to Eau Claire pretty much every day. I end up still going to Eau Claire most of the time during the week, just to run errands or go skateboarding or other things like that.

**SP**

And just generally to kind of book end our talk about the covid pandemic what issues have concerned you most with the pandemic?

**SK**

Me personally? That's a - that's a broad question. I would say, primarily is like you know, the end of the pandemic, obviously, is in the forefront of everybody's mind, including mine. Also relationships with family and friends, because it's like after not seeing some people after a while it changes the dynamic of that relationship. Especially like family members, I have some grandparents who lived in Minnesota and the restrictions are much different here - or were much different or - sorry, there than here. For - for quite some time and they were pretty concerned about covid and, like, seeing other people, which was hard because we don't get to see them very much at all anyway, as a family. That's one thing that was affected so just like the relationships and like seeing other people interacting with other people. Friends of the family.

Even like my sister she's out in Colorado so seeing her - It's tougher now just because of the restrictions that were on. She's in the military so, but they had a lot of restrictions as to what they could do, and who they could see. So that's like one big thing for sure that I've kind of noticed. I guess living in a smaller town it's - it's less so, of a - of a like a conscious issue in terms of like, people being affected by it, because it's like you know there's - there's much less people much less activity everyone's spread out. So, you know. I guess that's less of a concern per se than if I was to live in a bigger city like even Eau Claire - Eau Claire is not huge but it's, you know, there's like other populous centers like anywhere in the cities or you know, Madison Milwaukee, anywhere like that. I have friends who are, you know, all they did was stay in, you know they were staying inside all the time they didn't hardly do anything at all and it's like. You know, they were telling me how they couldn't - they haven't seen their family or their friends forever or people who, like, live away from their family too. It's like you know people who are going to school right now and where your family lives, you know, halfway across the state or something. But it's kind of been like a mixed bag, I guess. In terms of issues with covid, other than. I guess like relationships with family and friends and like personal health it's - that's - those are the big ones I can think of. Not - nobody in my immediate family, including myself, has had Covid at

all, yet. So that's good, obviously. I thought I did at one point, but it was not Covid, it was in fact a sinus infection.

**SP**

Did you have to get tested and quarantine for that?

**SK**

Yeah yes, I did. I was actually that - that proved to be an interesting experience, because we were actually on a road trip to Tennessee. We were - we were camping essentially so it wasn't like we were going out to this big thing, but it was - we were camping. And we were driving out to Tennessee and we were like halfway to Tennessee and I started feeling sick and I was like, "Hopefully, this isn't Covid." I'm like, the symptoms are there, so we stopped where we were and we were in a hotel and stuff so we - I was able to get a test within 24 hours. And then about a day later after that we confirmed the results were negative so that was a big relief, obviously, but it was like - we were acting like what if I had Covid, so it was more of, you know, hanging around. You know, we couldn't we couldn't change the fact that we were already on the road, and like in the hotel, but it was like I didn't go out or anything and I had to stay in the hotel all the time, and my parents were, you know, they were like oh, "we're gonna go like get some food for you" or whatever and stuff so. It was just that, like, short time period of- of even thinking that I could have had it was - It threw a wrench into whole - the whole situation, just because, like we were on the road. That - that really messed it up. But thankfully it wasn't an issue at all.

**SP**

How has that impacted how you thought about Covid?

**SK**

You know I would say I've always had this sort of underlying thought about it that's related in a ways that like, like I - I've - we've had like family, friends and stuff that have told us that you know relatives that there's had it or they had it, for example, my uncle had it, for example, and it's like to me it's like the common denominator between all those things like there's - there's gonna be some big change in their lives in some way. But more often than not I've heard, like, especially from other family members of mine that they had it and it was like just the inconvenience for them, more than anything. My uncle had it, he had no symptoms whatsoever, and he just simply had to stay home from work and he still was doing stuff around his house, which was interesting, to say the least. Then we had some other friends of ours, who had some relatives passed away because of Covid and that was more so, you know due to pre-existing conditions that they had, and they were much older, I would say. But I guess overall, my thought process hasn't changed a whole lot from - I would say my personal experience first and taking into account others who like I know friends, family etc. I suppose, you know, living in an area with less people in a smaller town it's bound to be that way anyway, just because it's like you're

sort of stuck in your - in your hometown or in a smaller surrounding area with less people less interactions less, you know, things like that I guess so. That's probably why it hasn't changed a whole lot I guess.

**SP**

You touched on your relationships with your family earlier. Would you mind telling me just a little bit more about how exactly those relationships have been affected for you?

**SK**

Yeah so like I said, my sister is - she's in college at the air force Academy in Colorado right now and she's been away at - she's a sophomore there so it's your second year at the Academy so she's been away for a significant amount of time already. And we've gotten opportunities to visit her in the past for like a few days. But one big thing that changed was like when the - when Covid got really serious this past couple, like, six months or so or more, my parents went out there to visit her. I could not go because of conflicts, but they went out to visit her and they - was they were - they made the whole trip out there, they drove out there. They were able to get on you know, on the Academy grounds, and then they saw her for like a minute, and that was it.

And it was just tough, because, you know, they were hoping to actually spend time with her and see her because she has very limited opportunities as it is to actually get off of the grounds and do things. She's incredibly busy, and the military is pretty strict with the scheduling even without Covid, so. The days that she can actually see her family are very limited so that was one thing that was really tough. She would call us much more often like via zoom or phone call or whatever. And because, like, kind of the atmosphere at the Academy was was a - kind of a down downhearted one. There were some - there's some students like suicides at the Academy, just because of the isolation, they couldn't leave their rooms for like, like a month or something, it was insane. It was - it was incredible and like, although I didn't experience that firsthand just hearing about it was that's incredibly like saddening and tough. So you know it was, like, obviously we were concerned for her and her well being there and she's - you know she's fine and stuff things are - things are much less restricted now than they were. But that's one example I guess for immediate family relationships, long distance especially.

**SP 12:05**

How often do you see your family or do you live with your family?

**SK**

I live with my family or my parents, I should say I live with my parents, I have always lived with them per se my entire life honestly and that will change in the, let's see, after the fall, I will graduate in December and I will move out at that time. Or about then, I would say. I've thought about you know moving out. You know, Nic asked me to move in with him at one point and stuff and there were some other like friends of mine that were like, "Hey we should get a place," and,

you know, I thought about it but, at the time I just wasn't financially like ready to do that. And I was like you know, "why would I do this now, when I'm going to move out in like less than a year anyway, like why would I pay for that twice," you know? And it's like really there's a lot of, although there are drawbacks to living at home and having to commute to Eau Claire there's also a lot of benefits of it too. It's like I don't have to pay rent or anything like that. And I can make food anytime cetera et cetera. It's interesting I'm living with my parents, because, you know, it's like I - we - I - hey I spend time with them, obviously, a lot more than you know I would, if I didn't live with them, of course, and as a result, i'm also spending time with a lot of their friends were like close to their age as well, so it's like I'm interacting with older adults, most of the time, anyway. I hardly spend any time at school. I'm just online, you know, obviously, like I said so it's like - there's an interesting dynamic that's sort of different like my sister is out of the house and I'm just here, so I just feel like another adult at the house. I mean I am but it's -it's it's it's it's different you know what i'm saying. It's interesting, so I - I am spending more time with them and i'm especially like cherishing that. Because I know that there are people who are at school, for example, who are much further away from their parents and you know, can't see them, for whatever reason, if it's because of school or Covid or you know just distance whatever. So I'm appreciative of the time that I get to have with them and spend with them too. And you know they're older - they're older in age, and you know they're in the - well my dad is especially in the risk group it for age, at least for a for Covid so that's kind of put a spin on the whole relationship to it's like, although we haven't been affected by Covid at all it's just like thinking about the possibility of that too. It's like that's a possibility that we would have to reckon with if that ever came to be so.

#### **SP 14:58**

Would you say the same goes for relationships with your friends? Or how often do you get to see them?

#### **SK**

Yeah you know it's sort of been a toss up with that. Like there were times when - a lot of my friends were pretty cautious about hanging out and spending time together. Because like I had heard through them, you know that other people that we knew mutually had - had Covid, or got it or, or something you know. There was actually one time, where a friend of mine and I we went bowling like months ago, probably, and it was there was no, you know rule that said you can't go out at the time, but it was still kind of like at the height of of Covid cases and Wisconsin and stuff so. We were there - we were the only people at the bowling alley. And we left, and then we were notified after it was like "You possibly could have been exposed to Covid19," however, we found out later that it was like the time slot that, apparently, you could have been exposed to was not at the time we were there. So, thankfully, that was not an issue. But we were a little concerned about that afterwards, to say the least. We're like that's not good, but it was strange because there was nobody else there, so it was like well who could have, you know , had Covid

there? But anyway, so you know. And there's there's like some of my friends are much more like relaxed about you know how Covid is now, you know I especially, like some of my like less like - Like friends - like friends that i've gained in the last couple, like you, like your to not - not associated with like high school friends, because, like, I would say, my friend group primarily is is very like closely knit from like high school classmates I would say, primarily. But then I have a lot of other friends who are like you know I met through school to university or just out at the skate park or something like that. And that's an interesting dynamic to actually because, like when we're outside of the skate park, you know we're obviously we're outside and we're sort of distance from each other we're not like huddled up together or anything like that. But it's like just the weirdness of like "can I shake your hand and like give you a fist bump?" or like, "are we doing the elbow thing?" or like what's the deal with that? So it was kind of weird. For a while it's like some people were like "no way like don't stand next to me" some people are like "hey what's up bro" you know give it a high five type stuff you know. So it's sort of interesting to see that and it's like I think now - now it's sort of becoming a little more relaxed and everybody's kind of like - it's not like an awkward thing anymore to like wonder about that, like who's who wants to like hang out or not kind of stuff. I have some other friends who are still, you know, kind of concerned about hanging out and spending time. And I kind of go - I'm, I'm sort of you know - i'm basing my my judgment is as to what is, you know, appropriate and what's not appropriate mostly based on you know my own personal opinions, which are a result of the I mean they're affected by the State mandates, obviously. And stuff like that, and other you know national rulings as well. But I would say that amongst my friends and myself and those that know me I think we're all sort of going - trending towards a more relaxed state in terms of spending time together and like.

doing things together and - and seeing one another and stuff like that.

#### **SP 18:44**

So, how did the -the bowling alley experience - so you were contacted after that you were exposed. How did that possible exposure kind of influence how you view other establishments like are you still comfortable just going out?

#### **SK**

It depends like there are - there are - there are establishments that I'm like I would not go to, just because of the amount of people there and it's sort of a case by case scenario. I would say, like I would feel more than comfortable with going to the skatepark like outside you know. I feel like that's a safe decision. But like going to say, like a bar on a weekend with a bunch of people. I mean for one I'm not really into that, I don't really go out that much. But at the same time, especially because of Covid I think that's kind of a concern. Not just for me, but for other people it's like. I know other people are definitely more concerned about it than I am. But, knowing that I know there's a lot of people that are have zero concerns whatsoever, which is like, you know, I- I would put myself somewhere in between that spectrum. It's like I don't have zero concerns but

also it's like I'm not hyper aware and super concerned about absolutely everything related to Covid. Just like a very simple answer to that question I guess um.

And you know it's like there are a lot of like, there are, there are other things too that's like I - I would go to these establishments, whether or not there was Covid just because of like -like church, for example, that's a big thing in my life is important to me. You know, I don't see if a bar is open for people to go to the bar, then I don't see why the Church shouldn't be open for people to attend church, with some reasonable precautions. Like -that's that's my view of that so. It's like, there are things that I would choose to go to or taking like a leisure activity, say like skateboarding or hiking or something like, that or camping, and there are things that are much more like important to me, like church, or say like visiting family socially distanced or what have you. Things like that, so there's a contrast there I guess.

**SP 21:26**

Yeah, so you have a more moderate stance on everything?

**SK**

Yeah in terms of Covid yeah, I mean, I would say I'm being cautious. But I'm also trying to be realistically optimistic about the whole situation. Not to say that, like, it's not an issue or it's not a problem for other people, or you know anybody at all, because obviously it is clearly. But yeah. To simply answer that I would say yes i'm sort of taking a more moderate approach to that.

**SP**

You mentioned at your church - how long - has that been opened at all, or has it been closed the whole time?

**SK**

It has been open, there was a time where it was closed and we watched church service via Facebook live or whatever it was. Which was a different much different experience, especially because as like a Catholic -I - you know partaking in the mass and receiving holy communion is a big part of the service and it's like, you know, actually being there and receiving communion is much more different than, you know, saying a spiritual communion prayer. Because it's not exactly the same thing. So that was kind of a tough transition from, you know, at the beginning of Covid, going from there was no problem to all of a sudden, we have - we can't go to church.

And it was very frustrating to me when there were other establishments that were open and churches were not open. That was - that was - that was something that I was frustrated a lot by because I felt like that was sort of unfair in terms of just the like priorities of you know. Whoever was mandating that these - these establishments like these establishments for open while with churches were not opened or other other establishments we're not open it's like just the disparity there was kind of frustrating, as somebody who is you know - who goes to church



regularly and stuff in parts of their faith. Now we are open, which is great, and I know that there are other parts of the United States that are not open or the churches aren't open I should say. And I have a couple friends, you know across the nation, who have said, you know it's like it's hard for us to like find (cough) - Excuse me - "it's to find like a mass to go to." It's like sometimes they'll go to a different church to see like you know. Maybe they're open or maybe the restrictions are more or less or what have you, which is interesting to note as well. Like there are some local parishes that are much less restrictive than certain other ones, which is, I think, interesting too, because then people can choose based on whether they want to like you know have those restrictions in place or not, or to a lesser extent, I should say. And you know it's - it's - it's good now that we have the churches, like the church attendance is open and stuff. Which is nice. But there's also been a lot of like, there's been a lot of other issues too, with just like you know every like Covid is affecting you know, businesses and things like that and and the churches is not exempt from that either. Because it's like we're still struggling to get back to where we were, and you know, be able to fund the things we need to fund and pay, you know, the people that work there, and things like that. So yeah that's kind of -

**SP**

Do you know if the mandates for church closures are from like the state government or if they're from Eau Claire itself?

**SK 25:54**

Well, from what I understand, this can be completely wrong, but the mandates that are in place or our from Eau Claire county because the mask mandate for Wisconsin was struck down, I believe, or like the continuation of the mask mandate. And that's just one aspect of it, I guess, because there are other counties in the surrounding area that have, you know, little to no restrictions or mask mandates in place at the moment. And I believe - so those - those mandates would be affect - affecting all the parishes in Eau Claire county. Which also to the - to the parish I attended is a part of the diocese of Lacrosse, and so the Bishop of the diocese of Lacrosse will issue a letter to all the parishes in that diocese. And, you know, they're will be like - like - at the beginning it was like, "here are the standards of what we should be doing as a parish to combat Covid." And they look slightly different for each parish because it's like you know every parish different space, obviously, but, you know, there was some kind of overarching like guidelines from the Bishop for the diocese of Lacrosse which is part of Eau Claire county. But also other places. So there was kind of like some weird overlap with that, like the state mandates and also here's like some guidelines from the Bishop with that. And then also to it's like Eau Claire county versus like the entire state that's interesting too because it's - it's like there were some or even or even like when this capacity stuff too it's like or like individual businesses. This is kind of branching off with your question a little bit, but it's interesting to see like the state wide mandates come - come and then you have like businesses to say like no way we're not going to do that we're a private business, we can do what we want, or you have businesses that or or institutions like the

university that say you must wear a mask at all times on our property regardless if you're indoors or outdoors, which you know is not aligned with the mask or the mandate of the governor which said, you do not have to wear a mask outside etc, etc. So it's like there's all these like spheres of - I don't know, institution, business community, leadership all kind of like coming together in this weird way to like. So there's some like and there's not not ambiguity, but sort of like confusion as to what's the priority here? Like who are we listening to, versus what? I don't know, it was just - it's interesting to see both the union of those ideas but also some of them like clash with each other, a little bit. Yeah exactly.

### **SP 29:03**

You kind of touched on this, but if you could talk more about how just thoughts on the difference between local and federal leaders and how you think that's impacting your community?

### **SK**

Ah let's see um that's a good question, I mean. With the election of the Governor of Wisconsin Tony Evers I think there was a lot of hope that there would be more sort of mindfulness when going into the pandemic. When the pandemic came it's like everybody was sort of expecting what had happened - what happened with the mask mandate. I'd say the majority of those people would expect that, but then it was curious to see the, the Wisconsin Supreme Court strike down the repeat - or the continuation of the mask mandate for the state of Wisconsin.

Which I sort of expected that to happen. In a way, I would say, like in this town like you know, a small town like Fall Creek you know we have pretty good like-minded leadership here for the most part. I'm trying to think of a way to explain this. The - the community itself is so small it's it's hard to like think of any sort of like overall sentiment for the community because it's like - there's - I mean there's obviously going to be people who - who believe certain things and who don't believe certain things in terms of like what they should do as as an individual for the for Covid and like what the town should do. But it's like for a small town as small as Fall Creek and there's not much of a concern, I would say. Versus some somewhere like Eau Claire where there's a lot more people there there's a lot more disparity in terms of like you know economic you know, or like anything like that. And, just like different people who have different opinions on everything and people who just don't care. Like they just have no opinions at all. And also it's like a different age group as well it's like you have all the college students at Eau Claire which is like a pretty big number of people. So their, you know, their opinions are you know they matter and they they - they hold as much weight as the as a community member because in a way, the college students are invested, just as much as the community members are because they're partaking in a lot of the same things as the community members are. And also, you know, like people who live on campus you know they're living in all full time essentially. So it's sort of interesting to see the comparison between the community of Eau Claire and students. If there's any sort of difference at all, or if it's all pretty much a similar sentiment. I guess from what I've noticed that, you know Fall Creek is - being a small town, it's predominantly more you know

conservative leaning I would say for sure. Eau Claire as a city, especially, I would say is more liberal leaning in a way. And there are individuals in both communities who are sort of against the grain, I would say. Which is interesting to see. It's like, I don't know it's just - it's just curious. I'm just curious to see how that plays out I guess. In terms of Covid across like cities and counties and stuff.

**SP 33:03**

And federally, what do you think about the last presidency, but also the current presidency, and how they've been dealing with Covid?

**SK**

I think the previous Presidency was dealing with it in a way that was somewhat necessary, I would say. I also feel like it was like - there was a transit transition period, obviously, to President Biden now, which sort of was obviously going to usher along some new like standards of how things operate. I mean that was a given with the President being elected.

But also, like, you know either you know you'd like to think that nobody really saw this coming in a way. So if you go back to like the start of Covid and it's like leading up to now, the guidelines that were set in place during the presidency of Donald Trump were, in some ways, a foundation to the guidelines we have now. Because if we had absolutely nothing that we would have to have just came up with a brand new things- strategies at the start of the Biden presidency. I mean they did change a lot like a lot of standards, from what I had heard. But at the same time it's like there was some transition period from one President to another it's, like obviously, there were major differences between their, you know, beliefs about Covid and their strategies.

But I think there was a lot of similar sentiments there, whether people like to admit it or not. Just because it's like - it wasn't so - such as - it wasn't such a stark contrast, where it was like we did nothing and then all of a sudden, oh my gosh, we're doing everything under the Biden presidency. I think, in both cases, they would - I mean there's always like more to be done per se. I think the priorities are maybe different between the two. And like who's to say like what one would have done in the other person's shoes? Because we can't really like go back and say like "Oh, if this guy were President, he would have done this," or you know "Vice President, back then, he would have done this" or "If trump for President now he would have done this." Or what have you so it's like it's a lot of just like you know guessing as to like "Oh, you know that's - he - you know" That doesn't pay to guess about that stuff. It's like - If there's any sort of like semblance of unity at all and, like the transition between the president's in terms of like mandates for Covid, like, then, you know we were bound to be where we are now probably. I'm like who's - who knows what's going to happen in the next couple months or a year, or whatever.

**SP 36:17**

Sorry to interrupt, do you have general thoughts about what you want the government to do in the future?

**SK**

Oh boy that's a broad question um i'm assuming we're talking about the federal government?

**SP**

Yeah

**SK**

In terms of Covid or just in general?

**SP**

In terms of Covid.

**SK**

That's a tough question. I wish that so - I mean, realistically, the Federal Government cannot determine what is - or what should be set or done individually for each State. Because that's like up to the Governor of the State obviously, and there are statewide mandates for that reason. I just feel in general that the Federal government is being more reactive rather than proactive in terms of Covid, just in a very vague statement - generalized statement there. It seems to me like there's not like - I don't know it just personally it just feels like there's no forward movement in this - in what's happening right now, or what's being done. I mean, obviously I can't speak for every person or like I - I've only seen - like I've been to other states in the time of Covid, you know briefly.

And it's just - it's curious to see what they're doing versus what we're doing as a state to like either combat Covid, or you know progressive nation or do whatever you know it's like I've you know you hear on the news. It's like, some states have completely gotten an excuse to be - gotten rid of their lockdown mandates and masked mandates and everything, like Texas, for example. And they have a much lower rate of Covid cases at this moment. And it's like you know that's not necessarily a correlation thing, maybe, but at the same time it's like we're - we're doing what we can now. But I'm wondering, in the future, like what's going to happen in the next six months? Or like, is there going to be a continuation of these practices? Are these practices, after Covid is done or like - or will it ever be done? Like those are the questions I'm sort of wondering about. That you know, maybe I'm not knowledgeable enough to answer those questions, obviously. But I would say overall it's just there seems to be a lot of.

Like I don't know how to say this without sounding bad, but Covid is, of course it's an issue. And it's a big issue. It's something we haven't faced since. I don't know probably like, The Spanish flu in the 1900s I don't know so. I don't know if it's - if it's fair to compare it to that at all. You know, but it's like, you know, this is sort of a definitely a thing we weren't prepared for

as a nation, I would say, you know, in a lot of ways, but at the same time, I think there's a lot of people who are sort of at the beck and call. That, like they're waiting on bated breath for the government to say "Okay, you can do this now," or like "it's safe to do this." Which is if they're - if that's what makes them comfortable then that's you know that's their prerogative, but at the same time there's a lot of media hype. And like people being - There just people are scared like rightly so in a lot of cases, because you know Covid has claimed a lot of lives. Of course, and that's a scary thing for a lot of people. And it's left a lot of people, you know, without jobs and things like that.

I was affected actually when my - I lost my job when Covid started, thankfully I've regained that job now but I - I just - from what from what i've heard from people it's like some people that i've interacted with it's - they just have no hope for the future at all. It's like this just this doom and gloom. And you know, maybe that's a result of what they've experienced because of Covid and that's, you know, unfortunate. And I don't, you know, claim to think that they're - or - or i'm not saying their experiences are invalid, or you know their -their - what they've experienced or lost is invalid. And I know I've - I've lost my, you know, I lost my job, the beginning of Covid and we have some family members who were affected by Covid and things like that. No deaths thankfully, but I just it's - it pains me to hear people say you know it's never going to be the same.

You know, "the world's going to be this terrible place like." You know and it's like the world, you know just in general, like, I hear people say that and they just have a pessimistic attitude about the whole thing and I don't - I don't want to say it's going to be - it's not going to be better than it was before it's not gonna be perfect, obviously. It's not going to be normal, or whatever you know I keep saying the 'new normal' or whatever. And it's like, I think, trying - trying to normalize what's going on right now is tough and it's sort of a - it's sort of a reach that I don't think is necessary, just because it's not normal, first of all. Secondly, it seems to me like if we just normalize what's going on right now we're going to have a much harder time getting back to any semblance of where we were before, because people are going to - With the - with the attitudes, they have now or like the dependencies they have now, that's not going to last forever. You know it's like - if people have this doom and gloom attitude now, and then in like six months things start to look up it's like you know, like, are they going to change their mind? Is it going to be like, are they still going to be pessimistic?

Or like the people are depending on stimulus checks to you know - for things and things like that. But also the stimulus - the stimulus like bills and the money is also going to a lot of other things as well. Which is like not even related to stimulus money for people, it's completely related but that's not the point but um. There are people who are receiving the stimulus checks, who are, you know -they don't necessarily need it. It's like they're not in dire need and there's no like there's no disparity between the people who need it and don't need it per se. And that's not really like the problem, but if we have people who are using like depending on that as a crutch, it's like what, when that's gone - Is that going to set them up for financial instability in the future? Is that kind of like what you know - what is that going to actually be a benefit for them, you

know. I don't know honestly but. I think that the normalization of what's happening now is kind of a concerning thing. I feel like there's a sort of complacency happening, a little bit. Because it's been, what? A year over a year? - That this has been going on now, and people are sort of getting used to the mandates and getting used to interacting with people over Zoom and getting used to all these you know social distance rules. And that's great because it makes it easier for everybody else in businesses and schools and what have you. But also it's like the experiences that people have. Based on all this time it's going to - it's going to change the future completely. Because, like you have students who are either going into high school going into college. Or you know young young kids who are just starting school that are dealing with all these things. And it's completely changing the way they're experiencing their first time, you know, in school, in high school and college, whatever.

You know there's people who are missing out on opportunities that are not happening now, because of restrictions. I mean, you know, but it's like those things, some of those things just can't be - straight up, it can't be helped at all. Just because of the situation of, like, world relations, and you know everything like that, but it's - there's other other parts of it that I think could be, I don't know. I'm - I'm not saying we should do something to change this, all of a sudden now because we're still experiencing Covid, but at the same time it's like, what are we going to do after? Like are we are we just going to like - There has to be some exit strategy that's proactive not reactive. That's happening after Covid and it has to be seamlessly integrated between the time where it's like down trending, down trending, down trending, down trending across the world - into like "okay here's some semblance of what we had before Covid happened. It's going to be hard to recuperate from that I'm sure, but I just feel like we're just being really reactive to it, right now, which I don't think is a good strategy.

**SP 46:12.**

Yea, so you want a more positive outlook for what's going to happen, both socially and also economically?

**SK**

Yeah economically, socially. Not just within the United States either. I'm looking at the work, because I think I think that's part of the problem. It's like people get so stuck in the sort of position that they're in currently. Or, like the city, they live in, or the town they live in, or the school they go to or the job they have, or what have you. And it's like for me, as somebody who's from a small town, I could simply you know shut my ears and eyes to the rest of the world and I'd be perfectly fine doing that and I wouldn't have to worry about, you know, xyz.

But I don't want to do that because I'd rather be informed and I'd rather know what's going on outside of my little town. And knowing the stuff that's happening in the world doesn't make me feel like "oh no the world's going to end" or "oh no nothing's going to be the same" or "oh no, you know what happens if X happens." To me, as a young person who is, you know, exiting college in a short time, there's still this opportunity for me to, you know, go out and do whatever

it is I want to do in the world without having to think my life is going to be terrible. Or like, “this is going to affect my life in a negative way.” Which it may, but at the same time it's like a realistic possibility that might happen. If I can prepare myself for a realistic possibility of: A: “it's going to go bad” or A: “it's going to go good,” objectively good or bad like really generalized terms of good or bad. Then you know I should be you know at least mentally and emotionally accepting of those things because, like I've talked to people just - just in like in my community and at school, and you know there were like, “well how can you, you know, stay - you're doing good” or like things like that. It's like, well I've noticed through Covid it's - like it'll make you or break you in a way.

It's like this - it's a trial for everybody, like I don't know one person that hasn't been affected by it in some way, even if it's like a remotely. But it's like for some people, it was like they were at a point where it was like do or die for them and Covid just broke them. It's like whether that's economically or just socially or like some relationship wise, like in their family or whatever, it's like - it's like that was the last straw for them. And they just completely were like, you know they - they were having a terrible time um you know and there's people that died because of Covid. And their families are now left with you know. That family member who's gone or whatever and it's like that's a reality that's a - that's a thing that happens. And it's in people who cannot accept those things are not going to be able to move forward in their lives at all very well. And it's not to say it's their fault, because of course Covid is a terrible thing. It's like you can't expect these things. But you can prepare for the worst case scenario, and then go from there, because if you can mentally prepare and emotionally prepare for those things. At least set yourself up to do something at all. Then you're going to be way better off than somebody who's like “well nothing's going to be the same, and i'm just going to know I won't be able to have a child, won't be able to do anything” and then it's like with that attitude, yeah, you're right you're not gonna be able to do anything. It seems kind of uh - what's the word I'm looking for - over simplifying the whole thing to just say “Oh, you have to have a good attitude,” but really - And that's like such a cliché cliché thing to say, but like. Really, like i've talked to other people who are like you know this this amidst all the chaos of the world, for some reason those people were like, “you know i'm doing much better than I ever was before, it's like Covid tested me in ways that I didn't think it was going to and i'm better, as a result.” And people have, you know, said to me that I'm - for some reason I'm more aware of things I never was where we were before. I took my life for granted, before and it's like now I'm seeing it with completely different light. You know I've talked to people who have said that and I've talked to people who have said the opposite. So it's kind of interesting to see how like Covid is affecting people emotionally and mentally and - and sort of like their view of the future. It's like, is it going to be good bad whatever, it's like nobody really knows.

### **SP 51:02**

Do you think the media has a large role in how people's attitudes are shaped?

**SK**

I think yes, I mean just generally, yes. not just related to Covid, but media consumption in the United States has changed from like, just traditional media vehicles and watching TV, to constant burn - like constant feedback from anywhere on - You go on a computer you get ads. You go on your phone or social media, it's like there's all these different avenues for information and news and worldwide events that are happening. It's unprecedented in terms of technologically speaking, the amount of information we have at our command. And that we can find through like news and media and things like that, but it's just mind boggling the amount of misinformation that comes about when people do not know everything that they're reading, or they do not understand what people are telling them, or they do not take the time to actually sit down and look at information. Not just for like one thing, but to actually make knowledgeable connections between one event and another event in like the current sphere of the world. Or, like any history or anything like that.

It's like we have all these opportunities to look up absolutely anything and do our own like research per se. And this is like a like a beating a dead horse here, because people talk about this, all the time, but it's like people saying do the research, etc, etc that's - it doesn't - it doesn't ever end there, it's never - it's like we are more than happy to just be complacent with consuming the news from whatever source we get it from and just taking it at face value. And thinking that that's enough for us to be informed about the state of the world.

And normally in a perfect world, it would be that way where we could understand and consume the news and be informed in a variety of ways and on a variety of topics. (Coughs) Excuse me but it's simply not the case anymore. Because you have news outlets that are, you know, very much biased - if not at the very least, like, leaning in some political fashion. Which, you know, in some ways, has always existed. But every single news piece seems like it's always politically charged, and that is maybe not inescapable. Or sorry, maybe not - it's - it is in some ways inescapable, in today's world. And it seems to be at the forefront of everybody's mind, it seems to be the forefront of every conversation and every interaction etc. And it's like that's just how it is now for whatever reason. But it's - it's like it's it, you know, it doesn't always have to be that way. It especially doesn't have to be that way when we're talking about things like, I don't know, just world events that are just completely so far and away from anything politically related to just the United States.

It's like there are countries that exist outside of the United States. There are people that exist outside of the United States, who have no idea what's actually going on here at all. We're so stuck in our own little things in the - in like the world and the community it's like - to see the world and there are like - I don't know it's hard to explain.

I think it's like the media is playing a big role in our lives as sort of this influencer, you know,. I'm not saying the media's like brainwashing people. But in a way it's like people turn on the TV, they consume the news, they turn - they watch the news, you know, they either - and then they make their decisions based upon what other people tell them to do. Which is ,you know, that's - that's how it works. But at the same time, it's like people need to make decisions based



upon the judgments they make from consuming the news. Not because someone told them to do xyz or whatever. Not to say that they're wrong or not to say that they're, like, completely off the mark. Or not to say that they're not truthful or whatever, because you know that still exists, obviously it's not this- It would be unfair of me to say that "all the media news - medias not true and everything's a lie and everything's a conspiracy," followed by that's not that's not what i'm saying.

But it's - I just have so many friends and family members who are just so caught up in what is going on in the United States. And you know that's great to know. But at the same time it's like they're just - they're putting themselves into a panic about things. And it's not just Covid, it's like everything else. It's just - and I can you know, like visibly tell they're just they're upset about it and, like, you know, sure that's, you know, rightly so in a lot of ways. Because if people are passionate about something, then of course they're going to be upset about an issue that they care about. But it's like they're - they don't know what to do with themselves. They're just - they're -they're stuck in this frame of mind like, "oh no, oh no" like "they told us this and now I can't do anything about it." They're like - they have no control over their own emotion or actions based upon what they've heard from somebody else and it's not just the news media either. It's other people telling them this stuff.

And it's like in some ways it's like an echo chamber; it just reinforces everything they've known and learned from a certain perspective. Coming from a small town, I know how important it is to be informed about everything else outside of that because it's like if I grew up and didn't look into any sort of world events or read about stuff that happens, or listen to the radio or anything like that, then I would just be in a small town listening to the same people talk about the same things. Which ,you know, isn't inherently bad per se but it's like I don't want to put myself in a situation where I'm just stagnant and not hearing. It's like people should be open to hearing these - these- hearing every - every option across the spectrum politically and societally. In the world - in a world view it's like people should have that worldview that's based upon absolutely every option and absolutely every case scenario. Because it's like that's a possibility that, like there are events that could unfold that are a result of things that they didn't even think about at all. It's like, are you prepared to accept that? If they're not they're just gonna - they're - they're - they're going to lose their - they're going to lose it.

I don't know how to explain it other than that it's like people- people consume the media, consume information at face value. And then they give it no second thoughts. They're like, "Okay, this means this, this is a statistic about this" ' it's like okay great. Why is that a statistic? Why is that related to that? Why is that a statistic about this, what does that mean about the rest of the - what does that mean about my community? What does that mean about this, that and the other thing. And I'm not giving specific examples. But it's like there's no correlation between anything anymore. It's just - It just seems that way to me at least. It's - it's mind boggling to me because we have all this information. We have the ability to easily connect these things. The other sources of information and media and via our own like judgments and morals and stuff like that. We have the ability to do all these things but we're just not always - like people are more

than happy with just, you know, doing what they're told. Or - or - or - or not doing anything at all, or you know some - some people also are like it's the opposite. They just believe, like, "Oh, if I just go against what everything we're - if I go against everything that everybody says, then I'm doing something. It's like, but what are you doing exactly? Why are you doing it? What's motivating - is it just because somebody's not doing it? Is your motivation - that doesn't seem like good motivation to me at all. Which is way - that's way off the tangent of what we're doing. But it's just - it's like I don't know. In short, people need to think for themselves.

### **SP 01:00:18**

Are there any like important issues that you think the media is misconstruing or maybe not telling the public?

### **SK**

Let's see. I don't know about not telling the public per se. Because here's what I think: I think that's not like the media or - or it's like the media or like the Presidency or the government or it's like, you know, they're not hiding stuff from people I don't think. I think it's just the fact that - There's like the - the public populace is oblivious to any sort of idea or opinion or - or - or fact or anything that's not aligned with what they have heard. Or what they have made, as their own idea, based on what they have heard. People are stuck in opposing camps for the most part. And you have you know, a group of like people who are sort of in the limbo, moderate whatever stage of whatever they're in. And it's like it's almost impossible, I think, to not make almost everything that the media reports on political. It's just - Somebody some-. There's always, like, there's a saying, like everybody said there's always going to be a naysayer. There's always gonna be somebody who's like, no matter what is reported, no matter what's said somebody's just always going to be like a naysayer. There's always gonna be somebody who says X there's always gonna be somebody who says Y. That's just human nature, I feel like at its core. But at the same time, I feel like the media is kind of fueling that fire, but also they're - they're humans too. They're stuck in this opposing thing as well. And it's not like they're some non biased entity, because that's not realistic at all, you know.

That'd be hopeful that they would have some you know little - little to no bias at all, not just politically, but just in any sort of like agenda or whatever. And there are, you know, there are media outlets that exist that are just, you know, they report the news and that's all they do for you. They don't tell you to - they don't recommend anything, they don't tell you anything, etc, etc. But again it's like predominantly in the forefront of everybody's minds and on their phones. It's like you have all these different opinions based upon whatever values, etc. It just seems to me that in terms of Covid and the media I think what is not helping is when people consume the media and the news and then, like I said, like they don't go any further than that. Because what the media, the media is reporting no evidence about Covid or evidence about what have you. Or like stories about what you know, whatever; doesn't even have to be Covid related.

But so much of it is just politically charged in a way that does it like it's not necessary. So instead of reading a statistic on like the CDC website you're getting a reporter, who says, you know, "this is like the statistic of Covid deaths in this county." "Oh, and also this county happens to be more liberal or more conservative," you know? It's like this other added stuff and it's like oh my gosh. And then people think "Oh, just because, like *that* it's *this* - all of a sudden and it's like - it's - it's it's more so - it's like people. It's - it's the - it's not so much the fault of the media, or the people or one individual group or one whatever. It's just like nature at its finest. Because people are - who would rather be complacent to you know, rules and order are following what they are told by the media. Which isn't a bad thing inherently, again, but there's a lot of people who are emotionally distraught because of what they're hearing in the media. And it's affecting the rest of their decisions in predominantly negative ways.

Like, for example, my grandparents, are you know very much I would say conservative leaning people. But because of the media, they consume it's contrary to everything they have, you know, been brought up as individuals. So it's making them emotionally - like they're - they're falling for the same emotional trap of like the - you know the sensational - sensationalization of this - these events. And it's like - it's just capturing them in a way that's just it rocks their world you know? And it's like you should, as an individual, be able to consume the news media without being emotionally, I guess, coerced in a way to to like, act or do something based upon that. And I guess that's - that's - that goes into, you know, how your emotions play into you, I don't know things, like that.

That's that's really complicated stuff I guess I, I know, like I don't have the knowledge or anything to talk about that at all, but it's like - it just feels like me like people are - are so willing and ready to accept what people tell them with no regard to any sort of other possibility. it's like - (noise interruption) Oh, my headphones just. came out.

So you know. Apples or red. Okay great, like that's that's a fact right? And if somebody came around and said apples are purple it's like well that's a possibility. Is that real? No, probably not, but maybe. It's like it, I don't know that's a stupid example. (Laughter) But it just - it just boggles my mind - it blows my mind. As somebody who comes from a tiny town, I have the easiest avenue of being complacent to absolutely everything I consume media wise. And you don't even have TV, for example, at our house.

**SP**

Really?

**SK 01:08:39**

Like we don't - we don't sit down and turn on the TV and watch the news like some people do. So we - I - we have it, the easiest in terms of I could just be obviously ignorantly blissful to everything that's going on right now. I could just completely ignore it, but I'm- rather instead choosing to go out and look at: "What does this person think about Covid? What does this person think about Covid? Why is this group or media, why is the - why do they think this about

Covid?” And I have my own judgements and opinions, based upon my ideals and I'm forming those opinions, based upon those ideals. And the information that I go out and actively look for instead of just having it, you know shown to me through whatever. And it's like I don't have Twitter, I don't have TV I don't have. You know, whatever I feel like those are big outlets for people to get their news and media, which is great like that's it that's - that's great for them, but I would much rather find those things out on my own. because i'm like it - motivates me. Because like when I'm sitting here thinking like, “Oh, I wonder what Minnesota is doing for their mandates” with, you know, I have family in Minnesota I wonder what's going on with them. Instead of just having it shown to me via the news. Or instead of looking up Minnesota mask mandates and the first result that comes up, I read and then I'm done. I want to ask people about what is it like living in Minnesota with the mask mandates, or like different websites or different stuff like that. I want to ask people who don't live in Minnesota what they think the restrictions are like in Minnesota so it almost motivates me more to do that. Because I don't have those opportunities, then less, because I feel like if I were to just sit and consume any media or you know and never leave my hometown and blah blah blah, I would just be ignorant. And you know they say ‘ignorance is bliss’ but really ignorance is just ignorance, In a way.

So, and you know you get a lot of people saying like oh you're from a small town that means you don't you don't you don't have any knowledge about the outside world, you know you're -. And it's like going to college - it's like “Oh, if you - if you don't believe the stuff they teach at college it's like you're not going to understand the rest of the world” and blah blah blah, and it's like well, no. Just because I don't agree with everything that I'm told at a certain - you know if there's a room full of like 10 people and they all say the same thing and there's one person that says something different, the person who's saying something different, probably is curious why everyone else is saying the same thing. And like, why does it matter? Why is it - why is my opinion different? And that's not that's like a really broad example and stuff like that. I'm not saying that i'm some maverick who like - no, I'm a unique person, and I think for myself. And I shouldn't have to say that, like, I don't want to say that because it sounds very vain. But - because I have plenty of friends who understand exactly what I'm talking about - they think exactly the same way, but I also have other friends who are just willing to be told what is what and stuff like that. And it's just - it kind of blows my mind, in a way. Because it's like they - they were like, “Oh I'm- I'm consuming the news and media and ideas that are progressive and that are happening now, and that are now and they're new” And they're like - yeah that's true but it's like -it's just the next thing. It's like the next trend or the next whatever. If tomorrow we woke up and 90s fashion was in trend and everybody loved it like would people will actually wear it? (laughter) Like I don't - I don't know. I sure wouldn't. I mean again, another stupid example but it's like how - how far people willing to really go to to to be to like to get information. If they're being influenced by all these outside factors, you know, it's like everybody's influenced by something. Like you're never going to be in a - in an informational vacuum. It's like you can't exist in that state as a human being. But it's like if you have a set of concrete ideals in your head

that are somewhat reasonable, you know, and if you base everything off of that, like consuming media, you know, interacting with other people, talking to other people. Then you should have logic and reason behind your opinions about things, rather than just like, “Oh, because this person said so.”

Because you know, although somebody saying so isn't a bad thing, because it's like you have expert knowledge on a subject or there's - more so than just a regular person could - could come up with. It's not always the best - the best option, because that person - that expert is another human being. And they're bound to make errors and make, you know, not just errors, but they're going to have their own ideals that they base their expert opinion off of. Because, like, as much as we'd like to have experts be non biased about things in the world that we live in today, with everything politically charged in some ways and information being so readily available, it's like people can't help, but have some kind of bias, based upon whatever they're talking about. And it's permeating every space of society. Especially in the United States. And other places too, obviously. But yeah. So it's like nothing is object - like nothing is an - excuse me that's not what I meant to say. Nothing is just ever without bias in human communication in some ways. Unless it's like, one plus one equals two. And that's like that's, like, information like you know. But I don't know, it's just - it's interesting to me just to see the contrast there. I don't know, that's really long, yeah.

#### **SP 01:14:06**

Have you had to change your news sources, since then? Or what were your new sources at the beginning of the pandemic versus now?

#### **SK**

That's a good question. I used to - before the pandemic, long before the pandemic I used to listen to Wisconsin public radio quite a lot. And I remember a time where Wisconsin public radio was not so politically biased, they were, you know, if you can even say that I guess. And overtime I've noticed a shift in that. I've also - I've consumed news media from many different outlets based upon the availability of what is available basically. So it's like if I see a news report by Fox News, for example, like on the Internet because, like I said I don't have TV, I can read the post about whatever is being reported and then I can look up the same story by CNN or some other opposing news outlet, perhaps, to see if it's - what - what are the parallels between the two reporting stories. Obviously locally, you have like WQOW, which are more - those are those are new stations, but it's like weather channel's from for the most part. And they have like - I'm on Facebook, for example. It's like they share stories from other states, because they don't have all this stuff to populate their page with, because it's like not every single event in Eau Claire is newsworthy, to say the least. Because although Eau Claire is a larger city it's definitely not like Chicago, or New York, or Milwaukee or anything like that. And I'm getting news sources from, say, opposing media outlets. I hear things, like, people are like, “Oh, did you hear that this happened in this state?” i'm like “Oh really? That's interesting.” And then I'm like, “I'll look it up

later and see what I can find out about it.” Or you know political candidates will often comment on other - or make a statement about other political candidates, based upon, you know, some facts or something. And it's like okay, let's look that up let's make - let's check it out, etc, etc. You know? there's figures like - let's see - I don't know, I just a lot of like different sources. I can't think of like - I'm trying to think of - there's a couple of different, noteworthy people, like public figures that I follow I guess. What I'm trying to think of - I can only think of one person right now but i'm trying to think of more variety of some other people, so if I think of them, I'll mention them later.

### **SP 01:17:18**

Okay, so we're at 12:26 I think to wrap up, I want to touch back on - you talked really briefly about losing your job? Can you just tell me a little bit about what your job was and how it was impacted?

### **SK**

Yeah, so I worked at the public library in Fall Creek. It was a - I only had worked there a couple months prior to Covid getting serious, so it wasn't like I was losing a you know, a career let's say. But at the same time it's like a job I had just started in the fall of that time. It was, let's see, it would have been last year I think in the fall. Or something like that. And I just started, and it was a new job for me after not having a steady job for a period of time. And, you know, four months in or whatever, the library shut down because of Covid. And it hadn't opened back up until just recently. I - my life wasn't depending on this job, per se. You know I don't have to pay rent I don't have to do all this stuff. I own a used car etc. so it's like they're in -. But it was still like that's unfortunate. I no longer have a job, I no longer have a steady source of income. So it's, like, what am I going to do about that? Am I going to look for another job? Am I going to simply go to school? Am I - what am- you know what's- that that was sort of my thought process there. I had done some very temporary landscape type work for some people in my town a little bit and then, it's like when winter came it's - I was just focusing predominantly - in the time between then and now I've been focusing more on school than anything else. And I have done a little bit of like work here and there. Nothing like - not like a full time job or anything like that at all. And then, most recently, I had gotten that contracting job and now I'm back at the library starting this coming week actually on Friday. So it was - I was thinking I lost this job, and you know it obviously wasn't like a life ending thing for me, or like a world breaking thing for me, but it still was an unfortunate circumstance. Because I was just getting established there, I felt like I was starting to get the routine of things and then - now going back to this job I'm like - I'm going to have to like retrain into it and make sure I can you know, do the things I was still able to do at the time. But I think more so it'd be even more difficult for somebody who would either, like, had a job that they weren't, say, like a career - had a career job, or they were work they've been doing the same job for a number of years, and now they have to completely find a different avenue to work in, you know, or whatever. Or people who straight up just aren't they aren't able to get a

job, for whatever reason, right now. And interestingly enough it's like I did not receive any of the stimulus checks, like many of my friends did. Just because I was not only - was independent for like a long time, I just didn't - I was not proactive on that. I have - my memory and organization skills are pretty subpa. So I was like "I'll do it later" and I just never got around to it. And, and you know it's - I didn't feel like I needed it. I mean extra money is always nice but it's like I didn't feel like I needed it at the time. I was like, "there are probably other people out there who need it more than I do." But you know there I talked to a friend of mine who lives in Philadelphia, he was working full time at his job and he had his - his roommates were not working at all. And they were making more money than he was because of the stimulus checks. And it's like this kind of incredible and strange to think about in a way. So, it's like, I would have the fortunate ability to - If I received a stimulus checks, I would probably try to save a big chunk of it. But I could spend some of it on things that I probably would need to spend money on at all, you know.

So, having a job, or not having a job for that short amount of time was kind of like, "wow I should be looking for a job and stuff." It's not like I was living on the streets or anything. But it's like I still need to pay for things, like living my life and stuff and so it was - it was tough for a short amount of time. But I'm not, you know, not saying it was anything compared to lots of other things that people have experienced. But it was - it was uniquely challenging for my - for my situation, I suppose. And I'm thankful that I have that opportunity to get this job back, and I also have that other job now too. Which is great. And it's it's been - it was also a little tough balancing the new job with school. Because it's like, I'm devoting a lot of time at home to classes. And the classes that I - some of the classes I took, especially last semester, they were asynchronous. So I didn't have to physically show up or attend an online lecture at a certain time. So my schedule was all kind of derived from my own schedule at home. And time that I had to allocate for that. I'm pretty bad at allocating time for things - or significant or - or not enough time for certain things. So I tend to kind of back myself up into a - into a corner or double booked myself what comes to time. So trying to say, "Oh, I can work on this day, but then I have all this other homework on this time I got to find out time to do that." So it was like I was sort of scheduling my homework around my job, and my job or my homework and it was just really all up in the air. So that presented an interesting -or not interesting, but sort of annoying challenge. Which, thankfully, it hasn't been too much of an issue because school is sort of winding down a little bit. But also winding up because of finals but that's coming to an end, pretty soon here. So I'm hoping that, in the summer, it will be way more easy to just focus on. It's like school, then job in the summer and whatever else that comes in the summer. So yeah so that's - that's sort of what it's been like I guess, for the past three four months.

### **SP 01:24:18**

Are you expecting your library job to change a lot from what you remember? Do you think that they're going to have a lot of protocols?

**SK**

I, yeah, well actually I was talking to my boss recently and she was saying, “we’ll retrain you in on some of the stuff you already knew, just to like a refresh. But also there’s some new policies we have” - They have curbside pickup, which is a new thing. So I’m curious, like, I don’t know honestly. Because I’ve haven’t gone to the library in quite some time and plus they were closed. Are they going to - is there - are there going to be patrons allowed in the library? Because if there’s not then that’s sort of - it’s like - it’s like Uber Eats for a book, you know? (Laughter) It’s like your drop - it’s like, “oh here’s your here’s a copy of Great Expectations that you ordered!” Like two days to go - are we gonna like start delivering books? Or like what’s the protocol there? So I’m curious. That’ll change my job, a fair amount because previously when I worked there, I liked interacting with the customer - or the patrons at the library. Because it’s like a lot of them are people that I knew just because of, you know, being in a small town. It was nice to see them. But if that’s not the case anymore, I would be kind of sad just kind of sitting there at the desk and twiddling my thumbs until somebody wants to get a book and I have to run outside and give it to them. So, and also that presents a unique challenge with how - if somebody doesn’t come in, like do I scan their library card? Or like, how does that operate? So I’m just kind of curious like how that’s gonna work exactly. My thinking is that because of how small of a town we have, I think that there will be patrons allowed in the library, but I think it will just be limited. In terms of how many people can go into the library, I think the curbside pickup is more for, like, order a bunch of books at once, or have, like, interlibrary loans or what. I don’t know, I’m not really sure, but there definitely is going to be some changes for sure of how things operate. And I’ll be curious to see what they are.

**SP 01:26:24**

I think that is good, I think we’re at a good stopping point. Thank you for agreeing to do this for me, we talked a lot and we got a lot of good stuff so that’s really cool. I’m going to go ahead and stop recording.

**SK**

Alright.