Interviewee: Anonymous

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Abstract/Summary: In this meeting the interviewees answer personal questions about how the pandemic has affected their lives, their habits, and the habits of their family and acquaintances. They also discuss the vaccine, their fears and lack of information about the vaccine, their consumption of information, their opinion about the state's response and actions to contain the pandemic. One of the interviewees gives an account of how he felt after the first dose of the vaccine. Both are originally from Mexico and work on a ranch with cows.

Speaker 0 00:00:01 Okay. We're recording. Hum. Is it okay if we record the interview?

Speaker 1 Yes.

Speaker 0 Okay. Yeah, uhm. Today is Wednesday, April 7, 2021. We're in the central time zone in the United States for Wisconsin, ahm. In the United States there are 30 million five hundred ninety thousand eight hundred thirty cases of Covid-19. And there are, ahm, five hundred fifty-four thousand 40 and 20 of Covid-19 deaths [in English] and in Wisconsin there are, what does it say?

Speaker 2 There are six hundred thirty-nine thousand five hundred fifty-three cases, and seven thousand three hundred forty-one dead.

Speaker 0 00:00:59 Yes. First we're going to start with some, with some background questions. First, when you first learned about Covid-19, what were your thoughts about it and how have your thoughts changed since then?

Speaker 1 00:01:23 When we heard about Covid-19, the first thing we thought of was death. That's the first thing you think of, there's nothing else. This evil virus that was, blah blah blah blah blah blah, and death. There was nothing else. Time goes by. Days go by, and you see how it spreads. You see people's reactions. How, how, how, how, how they get sick, what are their, their, their, what do you call it, their symptoms. And then, well, more than anything else, for a while you are, you are scared, like you become traumatized, right? Because you see so many things, that [clicks] But as the days went by, we had to understand that not everything is death, that there are also solutions, and there have also been cases of people recovering from the virus, right? Then time goes by, the fear vanishes and you become more confident and, you know, everything is a struggle, right? And everything, more than

anything else, everyone must do their part. You have to protect yourself, you have to take care of yourself, and you have to keep a considerable distance, no, no meetings, and no parties. And a lot of things, you know what I mean? [Clears throat] And then, people are always saying, it's not that the government, the government doesn't do anything. It's not the government's fault. It's your fault. You see, you should be responsible for your own, for your house, you are responsible. If you go out, you have to take care of your family, watch what you are going to do and watch where you are going to go. Do you understand? Sometimes I wonder if it is necessary to go to overcrowded stores when it is not necessary. Sometimes, only for a pair of pants, people go where there are a lot of other people, and they only want to buy a pair of pants. Are you starving? Don't you have anything at home and you need to go buy some food? Bursa so, is it the government's fault or is it your fault?

Speaker 0 Exactly.

Speaker 1 Or is it the doctors' fault? The doctors, what's their fault? The nurses, what's their fault? They don't have to be suffering, or carrying the burden of other people, of negative people, of foolish people, people who don't think about them. Because, if you reflect about yourself, you would take care of yourself, it's as easy as that.

Speaker 0 00:04:08 Mh [nods] And, what do you think?

Speaker 4 00:04:10 I don't think [laughs] What he says is true. Because sometimes people go out shopping and they don't have/need to do it. At least, if we go to the store, I leave my children at home and we go, we go to the store, there are countless families and children without masks. In other words, that's what they don't think about, and then they blame, as he says, the government, that the government is the responsible one, when in fact, they had nothing to do with it. [Background voices] [All nod] [All nod]

Speaker 1 Yes. No. What about the nurses? No, what we have, or what he has, some people say that the nurses don't take care of them, the nurses don't take care of them, the doctors don't pay attention to them. Hey, hey, hey, hey, the doctor didn't tell you to make noises or trouble about this issue.

Speaker 0 00:05:01 People need to listen.

Speaker 1 A nurse and a doctor always telling: Hey, mask up, wear your mask. Thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of times they repeat it. So who's the, who's the fool, the nurse or the doctor for telling you things? Or, are you the fool because you don't want to listen to them?

Speaker 0 and 2 Mhh, yes. [Affirmation]

Speaker 1 I know that after they did wrong they want to cover their tracks. And, that is not right. Do you know what I mean? That is not okay. [background voices]

Speaker 2 00:05:45 Okay. [Paper sound] With, what, ahm. Okay [paper sound] and, what problems have concerned you the most during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Speaker 1 00:05:55 I, thank God, I didn't lose my job. I, I am currently working, right? And, I've been worried about, well, it is my children's education.

Speaker 0 and 2 Mhhh [affirmation].

Speaker 1 My children's school. Why? Because, a thousand times I honestly tell them, a thousand times, they should go to school instead of being at home, because studying at home is not the same as studying at school. [Background voices] A thousand times I tell them, a hundred times, a thousand times I tell them it is better to go to school. Why? Because there they feel, they de-stress from being at home. They de-stress, no? My, my, my, my children learn new ideas when they go to school, they say: 'I saw my friends, and we play, and we talk.' That is better than being in front of a screen all day. We're talking about that, that's what we're talking about, they should be at home only the 30% of the day, and that's it. Students take advantage when they are at school taking classes.

Speaker 0 00:07:01 The quality of the education is not...

Speaker 4 00:07:06 They, themselves say that at home, that on the computer is not the same thing.

Speaker 1 00:07:13 And if, and if, and if I, you won't let me lie, during the pandemic, how many kids, and I'm sure about this, how many kids are overweight? Why? They didn't have physical activity, they didn't move at all. They were at the computer and their mom would bring them a juice, she would bring them a muffin, she would bring them, I don't know, and they would go downstairs for a snack. I bet that is the way it is. I have, I have children.

Speaker 2 Yeah, you're right.

¹ The literal translation would be: "having drowned the child, they cover the well." Spanish/Mexican proverb. The meaning could be better understood as it was translated. Another option is to use the expression: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," used to say that it is better and easier to stop a problem, illness, etc., from happening than to stop or correct it after it has started. *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," accessed July 20, 2021, https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/

Speaker 4 00:07:41 We have kids.

Speaker 1 00:07:44 And that, and that, and that's the problem. Well, for me. Well, that's the problem that the pandemic has caused me. Why? Because, my children are not studying as they used to do before the pandemic. They are not 100% committed. No. About the economy, let me tell you, it did not affect me because, thank God, I have a job. We are working, but many families in other places, cities, you can tell me, I live in the city and I have seen how people are doing. I work on a ranch. But it is the changes in school and education that have affected my children, very much.

Speaker 0 00:08:22 Ahm, so, now we're going to talk a little bit about your employment. And, the question is: What concerns do you have about the effects of the coronavirus in terms of your employment, your family's economic situation, community or even more generally?

Speaker 1 00:08:46 Look, if, if I told you that on the ranch where I work, there was, because there is no coronavirus, how many of us would be quarantined? The work we do is with animals.

Speaker 0 Yes.

Speaker 1 The cows need to be milked three times a day [background voices] If they put us in quarantine, no more or five elements or five people, how many, how many are going to keep on working? If they isolate two or five people, they quarantine the whole ranch. Economically we all lose, I lose, my friends lose, my bosses lose and, if we are not careful this will go bankrupt. Do you know how much milk each cow produces? In each ranch, Do you know how much, how many, how many pounds of milk are produced?

Speaker 0 and 2 I don't know. A lot of milk? [Laughs]

Speaker 1 We're, we're making ninety thousand pounds a day.

Speaker 0 Oh, yeah.

Speaker 1 Now, imagine that we are not working for fourteen days, the cows die.

Speaker 0 00:10:16 Yeah. No, you can't stop the...

Speaker 1 00:10:17 We can't do that.

Speaker 0 It's hard work.

Speaker 1 So, now there is a vaccine. And, I repeat, again. Thanks, thank God, the ranches didn't stop and they're not going to stop, hopefully.

Speaker 2 They can't stop.

Speaker 1 Because this is essential ... Do you understand? So, yes, There are concerns. It is like everything. So, I mean, let's think about it, we are talking about thousands, thousands of dollars. If I don't work, and my wife doesn't work. Can you imagine how much money we are losing? We are losing [puff] how are we supposed to eat? We receive help. The church helps us and they can give us food. Maybe, but for how long? [Background voices]

Speaker 4 00:11:11 We had to go and pick up the meals, because, well, maybe they couldn't bring them, because they also have other responsibilities.

Speaker 1 00:11:17 So. I'm an employee, you know what I mean? Maybe if I were the ranch's owner, well, maybe I wouldn't care. I could stay, ah, I could quarantine for a month or two months. I wouldn't care. I depend on my employers and they depend on me, as well.

Speaker 1 So, if I don't work for a month, if I don't show up. What are the employers going to do? They're going to hire somebody else. And, I would lose my job. And then who's losing? Them or me? I'm losing more, because they can replace me. But how can I find another job? That's the concern. That's what is most stifling for all ranchers; those are the most stifling things. [Breathing] Losing jobs, losing employees, and losing the community more than anything else, do you understand what I mean? So, nobody wants to lose. Nobody wants to lose.

Speaker 2 00:12:21 It's very difficult because there's a lot of people that don't know about the concerns, ahm, and the difficult things, ahm, in rural areas, like in the ranches and in the small communities in Wisconsin. Ahm. And that is the reason why we're doing this project. Ahm, for... [Background voices].

Speaker 1 00:12:43 Look. I'm going to tell you something; I'm going to tell you one thing. I'm going to tell you, honestly, that here the only people that come to check on us, are you and the nurses. Are you nurses or are you not nurses?

Speaker 0 and 2 No, no, no, no.

Speaker 1 Well. Well, you and the nurses, you're the only ones who visit the ranches, nobody else. Because if they send, for example, they send county officers, or they send nurses from the county...Let them say, look. They have not come. No. A year after the pandemic, do you know who is more scared? They are more scared than all of us. Yes, because they are afraid of getting infected, but they are not afraid to go shopping. They are afraid of visiting the ranches to see how the personnel are doing and they are afraid to come here, but not to go shopping. So, that is the first thing that is wrong, it is incorrect, because they take care of themselves in one way, but they do not take care of themselves in another way. There isn't, there

isn't. [Background voices] That is not okay. They want to shut down a ranch but they don't want to shut down a bar.

Speaker 0 and 2 Mhhh [They nod].

Speaker 1 Do you know what I mean?

Speaker 4 I agree

Speaker 1 They want to close some grocery stores. But they don't want to shut down a golf course, right? So we're in that sort of situation.

Speaker 0 00:13:55 There are a lot of contradictions.

Speaker 0 00:14:56 Well, I have a question, ahm, very similar to what we're to what we've been talking about. Has the coronavirus outbreak affected the way you stay in touch and communicate with friends and family? [Background voices]

Speaker 1 00:15:15 Yes, that's what the Covid brought, distancing, because I used to live, I used to visit my if, for example I would go to Minneapolis to visit my family, they're our friends and now I don't, I haven't seen them for a year. I used to attend a church; they closed the church, why? Why? Well look, I'm telling you about this church.

Speaker 2 00:15:38 Yes.

Speaker 1 00:15:40 And I haven't gone there for a year.

Speaker 0 00:15:42 Oh. A year?

Speaker 1 00:15:43 In a year, because the church is closed. I mean, it did affect the communication between friends; we cannot be closer and hug or kiss as we used to do in the past, nothing like that, anymore.

Speaker 0 Does your church offer virtual services?

Speaker 1 00:16:07 [breathes] My church does, yes, yes, at this moment yes, and in fact right now they are the ones that are feeding the population, they are the ones in charge. Yes, they distribute meals on Mondays and Saturdays. We serve, we still serve because sometimes we go to serve. But just as we used to go every eight, every two, let's say Monday or let's say Saturday and Sunday again, not anymore, not anymore.... [Background voices] It is, what is happening is that there is distancing, there is distancing. Well, you are not going to let me lie because I believe that even you put some kind of distance. Because you heard that such and such, a little group of people comes out with positive results and so-and-so, so-and-so. There were people in quarantine.

Speaker 4 00:17:03 Because that's what happened to our children, right? Because they were together with a child that came out positive, you have to quarantine. Then the youngest one, the 15 year-old kid went through the same. They had to stay at home because this one was with a child who also tested positive. And if he has the symptoms you have to be cautious. But, thank God they didn't have any symptoms. Yes, they were sent to quarantine. [Background laughter]

Speaker 1 So, yeah, yeah it affects everything, economics, camaraderie, the family.

Speaker 0 00:17:54 Nobody, nobody knew the huge effect, ahm, last year in March 2020, you know. [Nervous laughter] Nobody knew.

Speaker 1 00:18:09 It's just, well, it's, we're still talking about the United States. Everything is controlled here, it's under control.

Speaker 0 Of course

Speaker 1 And because, thank God, we even online can buy food or stuff. You place the order, they drop it off, and that's it. You can do everything online. You know what I mean? You can get what you need. But I am going to tell you about my country. Where people live by the day. Where they earn per day. Where they have to consume the daily.

Speaker 2 00:18:41 Mhhh [affirmation] And with the Covid-19 also, ahm, marginalized populations are more...

Speaker 1 00:18:47 Vulnerable.

Speaker 2 Yes, correct.

Speaker 1 I mean, what I am saying is that I am talking about Mexico, about the real Mexico, about my homeland, the way things are handled there. Here you can quarantine, I can stay in my house for fifteen days if I can buy food because they

bring it to me here, but not in Mexico, it's sad and it's sad because we have family in Mexico. In Mexico that option doesn't exist, it is sad and it is sad because we have family in Mexico, it is sad because we have siblings, we have parents, and our family is there. And they ask my how I'm doing and I ask them. And, well, I say that we are fine. [Background voices] Hey. There in Mexico it is not only the government, or the government's supporters. Those who follow the government, those from below are the ones who kill those from below, not the government; do you know what I mean? So, there are not so many of us, many countries are not doing things in the same way that we are doing here, do you understand? And this world power, the United States, sometimes, some things happen because we don't prevent them. I tell you, closing a church and opening a bar is not possible. It is not possible. Do you understand? People have to eat.

Speaker 2 Yes, of course.

Speaker 1 Do you understand? People also have to, for example, there are people that, for example, have essential jobs, for example, the ones that involve livestock, or croops, or harvesting, those are necessary tasks. You cannot stop it, even if there are many. In fact no, look at that. Okay. Yes. If you remember what happened in April, a year ago, precisely this month, how many millions of dollars were lost in the fields in California or in Florida. How many? How many pounds of fruit were lost? How many pounds of vegetables were lost? Tons. [Murmurs]

Speaker 0 00:20:43 [interviewers speak to each other in English] Okay. Ah. Let's talk a little bit about health. So have you or anyone you know gotten sick during the pandemic? And what's been your experience with the virus? [Background voices]

Speaker 1 00:20:59 Look, we know one person that didn't believe about the veracity of the pandemic and we got tired of warning him. Look, he told me "I didn't believe this Covid thing, I didn't believe it.". And we kept on repeating that it is a disease that is not recommended to catch, because sometimes it's not easy to recover. With this virus you shouldn't put your hands down you shouldn't stop fighting it. This is not a game. It's not gambling.

Speaker 0 Mhhh

Speaker 1 00:21:33 And this, this and this virus kills you in the worst way imagined. You know what I mean? So you're drowning little by little by little, little by little, it's drowning you and, just because of what, because you were not careful. [Background conversation] we have had contact, if we have seen, if we have talked to people who have brought you, if we have had contact with them and they have talked to us and always, they always tell us, you know what? Take care and protect yourselves. Don't go out if you don't have to go out, stay at home, as you say, uh, people don't, no, no, we don't understand, we understand. Me. I wished a thousand times that my children would go to school. Now, thank God, they go to school now, but before, believe me, I was afraid of sending my kids to school, but then I realized that they

were not learning at home. And it's like this: should they go or shouldn't they go or shouldn't they go? Should they go or shouldn't they go? And what should we do?

Speaker 4 00:22:36 That's what we were discussing about, whether they should go or not to school. In the 8 o'clock class, they didn't attend, because they were sleeping, and the teachers would ask why they didn't go to class. So, I told my kids that they needed to go to class. They have to get up at 6, 20, 6:30 AM. "Oh, it's cold." They complain. But they were at home so they should be on time for their lessons. And I tell them, I told them that they are going to school because if not they don't learn. And I told them to keep social distance and we made up our minds and it is better now. Whatever God wants is okay. He is the one who sets things, if it's their turn there is no other option, but thank God, so far He has kept them safe.

Speaker 1 00:23:33 Yes, yes, maybe we are talking a little bit about religion, but that's what we believe, we believe in God. That's what I can tell you about Covid. And this, it's all about Covid. It's bad. But I think that Covid is like, as you said, like influenza disease. It came to stay, it's not going to go away, now we must take care of ourselves.

Speaker 0 Mhhh, yeah.

Speaker 1 Take care of yourself. That's what you should do.

Speaker 2 00:24:11 Ahm. We have some questions about the vaccine. Ahm. Why did you decide, did you decide to get vaccinated?

Speaker 3 00:24:23 To start with, well, look at the vaccine thing. There are a lot of things that have been said about it, a lot of things that are the things that I've told you before, and sometimes, you know what I mean? Now I'm going to explain why it is the way it is. It is fear, it is fear, but you also say, I have to get it because I have my children, I have my wife.

Speaker 0 Mhhh [Affirmation].

Speaker 1 Everybody has been vaccinated with other vaccines, since you were a child you have been vaccinated, since you were a child you have been vaccinated and you know how it is and the people around you also know. The ones that have the knowledge about the vaccine are doctors and scientists. Okay. They have been vaccinated. We are already vaccinated. And I think that now with the Covid-19 vaccine it is up to each person to decide. I don't say that I am forcing people to get vaccinated because I have my children, I have my wife, and what if something bad happens? Let me tell you, I'm a religious person, I only have one father who is up there and he is going to tell me when is my time to go. Nobody else. [They murmur] [The couple talks to each other in a very low voice].

Speaker 0 00:25:50 Ahm Do you want to, ahm, to continue?

Speaker 1 00:25:54 Yes. I'll continue.

Speaker 4 It's just that they're going to vaccinate him.

Speaker 0 and 2 Okay.

Speaker 0 00:25:57 Okay. Thank you.

Speaker 1 00:26:00 That's what I'm saying. That's what the vaccine thing is. I mean, I know nobody, nobody can force you, right? But whoever wants to get vaccinated should get vaccinated and whoever doesn't want to get vaccinated, well, it's their decision, right? Then they will complain. They will say: "there wasn't, there was no vaccine." And there are vaccines but you didn't want one. [Background voices]

Speaker 2 00:26:27 Ahm. And how has your experience been with the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine?

Speaker 1 00:26:34 Normal, like any other vaccine, like everybody else. Yeah, well, but it wasn't, it didn't affect me at all.

Speaker 0 00:26:43 That's good.

Speaker 2 You had no pain?

Speaker 1 00:26:46 No.

Speaker 2 00:26:48 Good. Because I was in pain for like four days.

Speaker 1 00:26:51 Well, yeah, normal. I think it's a bug bite.

Speaker 0 But it's normal with any vaccine,

Speaker 1 Well yeah, but it's new. I mean, like I was saying earlier, it's a vaccine.

Speaker 0 Yeah. Mhhh.

Speaker 2 00:27:00 Ahm, how has daily life changed after receiving the vaccine?

Speaker 0 00:27:08 Has it changed at all?

Speaker 1 00:27:10 Not at all. I feel the same; I still go to work as usual [laughs].

Speaker 0 00:27:14 Yes, we all have to work.

Speaker 1 00:27:15 But if you want to know if the vaccine made me feel more sleepy or if I don't want to get up, the answer is no, nothing's happened to me.

Speaker 2 00:27:26 So do you feel more confidence now?

Speaker 0 00:27:29 Now I feel more, I don't know, more free.

Speaker 1 00:27:35 More protected, more protected. If I feel more protected, believe me honestly I haven't put my mind to it. I'm going to do it, but now, I'm going back to ... Let me tell you that when it's your time, it's your time, it happens. [Background voices].

Speaker 0 Mhhh

Speaker 1 00:27:58 Don't worry, it's a prevention, more than anything [ps] it's prevention, because that's what's happening, it's not that you are not going to catch it. It's to prevent and to be prepared in the case that you get the virus, but that's as far as it goes.

Speaker 2 00:28:22 Ahm. Did you know that the state of Wisconsin has the fastest response to vaccine release?

Speaker 1 00:28:30 No.

Speaker 2 What do you think about that?

Speaker 1 Now, mmm... [Background voices].

Speaker 2 00:28:36 The state of Wisconsin, ahm, has the highest vaccination rate in the United States.

Speaker 0 00:28:46 Yeah, they are vaccinating people fast.

Speaker 1 00:28:51 Oh, it's the state that has vaccinated the most people so far. I didn't know that. I didn't know that. [Laughs]

Speaker 0 00:29:01 No, me neither, did that surprise you? Do you have an opinion?

Speaker 2 00:29:09 No?

Speaker 1 Well, I think they are doing a good job. [Background voices]

Speaker 0 It's good.

Speaker 1 It's a good job, yeah. [Complicit laughter] There's concern. Yeah yeah.

Speaker 0 Go Wisconsin! Yeah

Speaker 1 Let's say we're going, he earned a point for it [name of politician] He's been working to accomplish this. [Laughter]

Speaker 2 00:29:34 We have, ah, I think, two more questions. Ah, what do you think about student nurses administering the vaccine?

Speaker 1 00:29:43 Can I? [Complicit laughter] No, well, you are doing a great job.

Speaker 0 Good.

Speaker 1 That's. How, how do you, how do you say, , I think that, look, I have family, they are doctors in Mexico and a nurse, they have been working hard. My aunt, the doctor, has not complained at all. And so let's say, let's call them heroes, heroes without a cape. Because I don't understand why they don't, look, they live it every day, you know? Sometimes I think, look, that's why I don't understand people, look, they live it every day, they are working every day with these cases, with people who are almost more dead than alive. And they tell me, my aunt says, "no son," she says "look, when I enter the hospital I enter disinfected, do you understand? And during the day I have to change my clothes about five times and to leave I have to take a bath, I have to disinfect myself again with new, clean clothes to leave." And she knows that there are people who go to the street with the same clothes, who go out without changing or sanitizing themselves.

Speaker 2 Mhh, mhh.

Speaker 1 00:31:13 Do you understand me?

Speaker 2 00:31:15 Yes. Ahm. One more question. Ah. Do you have any recommendations for us to improve the clinic in the future?

Speaker 0 00:31:25 Improve the clinic?

Speaker 0 The experience, like, for example, the space.

Speaker 2 How would you say we can make it better?

Speaker 1 00:31:35 Just what I request is that you don't discriminate.

Speaker 0 Is everything perfect? [Nervous laughter]

Speaker 1 Everything is good. Not perfect. Everything is good, right? Of course, but it's just that the only thing I ask you is not to discriminate. Discrimination is not good.

Speaker 2 00:31:51 Of course, you are right.

Speaker 0 Do you have any further comments?

Speaker 1 00:31:56 Nothing else. Please continue as you are doing. [Background voices]

Speaker 2 Thank you for your time. Thank you.

Speaker 1 00:32:03 We need to try harder. It's not easy, but it's not easy for anyone.

Speaker 0 00:32:06 You're right, yes.

Speaker 1 00:32:08 It's not easy for anyone. We have to get through this and this is not going away. This is among us to stay. Some people say that they don't know what to do with their lives and they think the pandemic is over with the vaccine. Don't believe it, it won't go away. Influenza is gone? Influenza is gone? Where? The influenza virus is still alive. Yes, it is among us every year; the coronavirus is not going to go away. If you don't protect yourself, you will die. It's hard, but it's the truth, I don't know, the truth.

Speaker 2 Yeah, it's true.

Speaker 1 00:32:43 But as a Mexican saying goes "a word to the wise is sufficient" [complicit laughter]

Speaker 0 00:32:53 Thank you. Thank you very much. Have a nice day.

Speaker 2 00:32:56 I think that's...