

**Interviewees:** Emily Martinsen, Brian Dombrowski, Morgan Moe

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**Abstract:**

Emily Martinsen, Brian Dombrowski, and Morgan Moe are currently first-year students in the master's in public history program at the University of Eau Claire. Residents of the Chippewa Valley, the trio discuss their "COVID Lives" in a chronological fashion. Each student discusses where they were and what was happening when they first heard about COVID, and what life has been like since. The students discuss politics, things they miss, and life as a graduate student during a global pandemic.

**EM:** Oh, okay, so I think it's recording now

**MM:** Does it say it's recording on your guys' screen?

**EM:** yes, it does.

**MM:** Okay

**EM:** So, I think we are good to go. All right, so the date is November 11, 2020. And the time is now 5:41pm. And this starts our public history oral history project. In Eau Claire currently, there are 5280 cases in Eau Claire County, I mean, and there are 37 deaths. So, to start this interview, my name is Emily Martinsen. Whoever wants to go next.

**MM:** I'm Morgan Moe.

**BD:** And I'm Brian Dombrowski.

**EM:** All right, cool. So, we are all graduate students in intro to public history this semester. And we thought we would all sort of sit down and interview each other. And pretty much just have a conversation about what we think about COVID. And the impact it's had on us. And those we know, and just our general thoughts. So, let's get started. Yay. All right. So, we can probably start with some background questions. I know on there, it says, do you mind sharing demographic information for the study? So, if you guys want to do that, we can. Um, or if you guys want to answer different questions, we can do that as well. But I thought that might be a good starting point. So, would either of you like to go or I can go.

**MM:** I can go.

**EM:** Okay.

**MM:** All right. So, it says here. Oh, my gosh, what is wrong with my? Oh, it's half on the screen What is happening. I just want to move it over. Okay. So, race, ethnicity, age and gender. So, I am white, Caucasian Don't know my ethnicity. It's a mix of all kinds of things. I'm 24. And I identify as a female.

**EM:** Awesome, Brian, would you like to go?

**BD:** Sure. I am also a white Caucasian. I am a whole lot of polish. And I'm 31 years old and I identify as a male.

**EM:** Okay. Um, so my race, my race is white, Caucasian. ethnicity, like you Morgan is a whole mix of stuff. But I am primarily German. I am that 22. So, I feel like a baby in comparison to the both of you. And I identify as female. So. All right. Now, are there any questions in particular that you guys want to start with in the background questions?

**MM:** Well, I think one thing we could probably start with like, right, uh, like, kind of go chronologically, so like, what did you guys all think of in January, when we were just starting to get the news of COVID coming? Like, I know, for me, personally, I was kind of like, Ah, don't ever come here. It'll be gone before it even reaches here. That was kind of my attitude towards it. So, I'm just kind of curious what you guys all kind of thought about it.

**EM:** Yeah, I mean, I was pretty much the same way too. I just remember hearing, you know, like, there was this virus in China, and it could potentially be very deadly. You know, they're setting up these field hospitals. And, you know, again, like you, I thought, oh, we're okay. Like, you know, we'll be fine. Nothing bad is gonna happen. And then I remember specifically, so I was still in my undergrad my last year. And it was actually on my birthday, my 22nd birthday, where the whole school announced we all had to go home. Mm hmm. And so, I went to UW Whitewater, and I remember I was sitting sitting in my International Studies class, and we all got the email that's like spring break would be starting early because of the Coronavirus. And I thought, Okay, this is like something out of like an apocalyptic movie. Like, I don't really know what's happening, but I was also like, Oh, my gosh, it's my birthday. I'm, you know, I had planned, you know, to get together with all of my friends and my family. And I was kind of selfish at the time, because I was like, Well, I don't know if I can do that now. But, you know, putting it into perspective, it's like, you know, that's, that should have been the least of my worries. You know, just with everything going on. That's what I first thought about it. So now, what do you guys think? What did you think?

**BD:** Yeah, I was kind of in the same boat as you guys were, you know, it was started out in China. And I know a lot of things have started in China.... Think, okay, maybe this could be a thing. But then again, I'm surely healthier. Like, I never had a flu shot in my life and I never get the flu or anything like that. So, to me, I just didn't think of it as a real big problem. For me at least it's kind of a selfish thing to think. But I really wasn't too worried about it.

**EM:** I think we almost think that the United States is invincible in a way because we think oh, you know, that's in a different country. That doesn't concern us. Like that's never been in our lifetime. So why should we have to worry about that?

**MM:** Well, and I remember thinking to I was like, Well, of course, it's happening so bad there. Because everything is so congested, like everyone takes public transportation or everyone's walking, you're like, it's like a country is so small compared to the US like, we're a big country with a bunch of bigger states, like you go to Europe, and you drive 25 minutes, and you're in another country. So, I was like, of course, it's so bad over there. Because there's already in such close quarters that it's almost impossible to avoid everybody.

**EM:** Yeah, I never thought of it like that, too. But I mean, that makes sense.

**MM:** Yeah. I don't know if that's stupid. But I was like, kinda dumb in that sense, I guess.

**EM:** I guess, you know, what are we supposed to think? You know, when a pandemic hits? I think it's natural to kind of have like, all of these thoughts circulating in your head, you know, and, again, you know, nobody really knew what was happening. So, you almost like you speculate on all of these different things and these different reasons. So, I just, I still can't believe that it's around.

**MM:** Oh, I know

**EM:** And that we're living through history.

**MM:** I remember in March; I was very much like when the safer at home order was first put in place. I was like, Oh, this will be over by summer. Like, it'll be fine. Because I was moving from, I lived in Green Bay at the time. And I was moving from there to here. And I was like, oh my god, safer at home, like, how is that going to affect my move? Like, what is that going to do for me?

And it just kept getting worse and worse and worse, even though everyone was staying home. And as my moving day got closer, my mom texted me. She's like, hey, like, your grandma's really sick of sitting at home. She wants to come help. And I was like, at that point in Green Bay, like everything was the numbers were getting really bad. And I was like, are you sure she wants to come? Because I don't think that's a good idea. So, I called my grandma, and I was like, Are you sure? Like, are you sure you want to come? And she was like, Morgan, I just need to get out of the house. And I was like, Okay, I'll let you do it. So, the way we handled it was my mom and I went out and did all got food, got all the stuff that we would need. And my grandma just stayed at my apartment. She never left. Like, I didn't want anything to happen to her. Because at that point, it was like, really bad. I mean, it's probably way worse now. But that point, that was the worst that I thought it was going to get.

**EM:** That's crazy. That's crazy. Like I remember, I think when it hit me where I thought, oh my gosh, like this is really, really bad. I remember going into pick and save and that's, are they're pick and saves around here. Do you guys know what that is? Okay, I don't know. I always forget how like far up north I am in comparison to where I come from. Um, so I'm from Waterford,

Wisconsin, which is about like, 30 minutes south of Milwaukee. And I remember my mom and I went to pick and save. And there were like a handful of people wearing masks, and everyone looked kind of panicked. And you know, there were like maybe the same amount of people not, you know, I'm just kind of like, Oh, this is you know, just another day at the grocery store. And then seeing like the toilet paper aisle

**MM:** Oh my god, that was insane.

**EM:** It was and seeing like all the cleaning products gone. I was like, What the heck, I was like, this is actually this is actually happening. And I remember reading books in middle school about the end of the world. And I'm like, wow, this is a little too all familiar right now. And I just remember leaving the store and getting in the car with my mom. And I said to my mom, I was like I felt like I was holding my breath in there because I was scared. You know, when I just didn't know if like, it was around yet and at that time COVID hadn't really hit my town. Like, as far as I know. And I think it was just the overall like panic people had I think that was bigger than anything at that time. So

**MM:** Yeah, for sure.

**BD:** Yeah, no for me like right before the see the speed of mid-March, like just before the actual stay at home order had happened at work, it was like, all of the the managers, the big managers from corporate are coming down calling us and be like, you have to sanitize everything every 10 minutes and all that kind of thing, because my job consisted of having to talk to people all day long, and all these different people. And it's like, you can't touch them that they're touching yet you know, clean, your hands have to wash your hands every half an hour. And this is before like the the mask mandate. So, I kind of felt the same thing. I guess I didn't want to talk to people at that point. Because it's like, this thing is so airborne that as somebody even like breathes the wrong way, you're gonna get it and it's gonna be this deadly thing. And it was more or less a scare where they they know; I think they they hyped it up way too much. And it just caused a mess, like, you know, pandemonium across town. But yeah, but they really made it sound like it really was gonna be the end of the world. Like, we have no idea what's going to happen and that kind of thing. And so yeah, I mean, it was it was definitely it. It was scary at that. But at the same time, it was this, like, Is it really this bad? Like? I don't know.

**MM:** I know exactly how you feel about working with people. Because at that time, I was a teller at a bank. So, I was dealing with the money, I was talking to people, and I think it was March were like, right when the safer at home order was put in place where we shut down our lobby and just did drive up only. And of course, that was a whole different story. Our customers did not appreciate that. But it was just insane. Because like before that like people would come and they'd like cough all over their hands and then hand you your money. And I'm just like, I don't want to touch it. Don't want to. But like we ended up like taking pens away from customers because we're like, we don't want you touching them all. So, we had to like physically hand them a pen. And then we had like a box for dirty pens and then a box for clean pens. So, one of us had to go through and sanitize all the pens. It was a whole thing.

**EM:** A process

**MM:** I was so happy where it was just drive up only because I was like, I don't want people talking to me. I don't want people coughing on me.

**EM:** Go ahead.

**BD:** You couldn't walk anywhere without even clearing your throat. So, somebody's looking at your funny leg. Yeah, got it. It was just like, clear my throat. I get I have really bad allergies. So, it's like I had a stuffy nose. And he said, and people were really looking at me as especially if I sneeze or something like that. And they're like, acted as if I was like Frankenstein walking around is just like it was really alienating. It really wasn't a really good feeling. No, kind of like everybody was judging each other. Everybody's on edge. And it's not a good time.

**EM:** I feel like it's even still like that now to maybe not at the same level as it was at first but just it's just such a weird environment to be in right now. And I just, you know, you go out in public, and I think everyone's just kind of crabby and still kind of scared. And it's just, it's just strange. And as somebody who likes being around people, it's a weird thing to see just this change in dynamic in society. And um, you know, living four hours away from, you know, the people I love in my family. It's like, I hardly have human interaction. Yeah. And that's hard. So, you know, I live by myself and an apartment in Eau Claire, but I'm just grateful, you know, for technology, I guess. And then aspect of you know, FaceTime and Snapchat and texting so you do what you can. So, are you guys like comfortable with going out and seeing people or are you how are you guys with that?

**MM:** Well right now. So, a couple weeks ago, my grandma got diagnosed with stage two lung cancer. So now I'm even more cautious about who I'm around what I do anytime I go over to see her and masked up I stay farther away from her even though we're in a house but it's something so before then I was very like before that I was kind of like oh where my mask, whatever. But I'm more, like all I do really is the only people I see as I go to work. And because work is so shut down. I work at Wisconsin credit union in the mortgage department. So, I just sit in my cubicle all day. Most people are working from home. So, I don't really get a lot of interaction throughout the day unless that pass someone in the hallway, which doesn't happen very often. And then I come home to my cat because I live by myself. And then on the weekends, I go home to my family. And I know they're taking the same precaution. So, I feel comfortable. But when I was living in Green Bay, my work there, the bank that I worked at, they put out like a whole, you can't travel outside the county, back in March when I worked there, so there was a good three months that I wasn't able to come home. So, I get what you're saying Emily where t's hard, though, and it was even harder because I bought my house, and it was unfinished. So, I was like, so excited to like, come home and help out with the renovations. And I didn't, I didn't get to come and help out with any of that. So, it was my mom and my dad that did all the work for me. So, there's a lot of stuff going on.

**MM:** Mm hmm. What about you, Brian?

**DB:** I'm fairly comfortable going out. I know when I go out, like I kind of do my bit where I wear the mask and I you know, keep social distance and I sanitize every single chance that I get.

And I feel like that that's all I really need to do is I'm not like getting in people's faces or if I'm sick or if I feel sick. I don't go out purposefully. But like I said earlier, like I really don't I've always been rather healthy. So, I really don't feel like it's gonna affect me, but I know it will, and also come back to bite me but but yeah. As long as I'm courteous to others, I think that that's all that matters is if you're just kind of keeping in mind everybody else around you. So, if it's a little bit of a, you know, an elderly person that might be more susceptible, someone that maybe I know, I'll walk around, and I won't go near him or anything like that. But other than that, it's like I don't like to go out just for fun or anything like that as deftly for my essential needs. Like I have time to go out anyway. But But yeah, I mean, yeah, so I'm definitely fairly comfortable. I think it's kind of way everybody has nowadays it's like, I think they just kind of have that they're just tired of it. So, it's like, I'm just gonna do it. I'm do if I catch it, I catch it. Whatever. Because everybody at some point is gonna get it. You know, it's just a matter of when metals get it over with type of deal.

**MM:** Yeah.

**BD:** I don't know.

**EM:** yeah, sometimes I even wonder too, if I was ever asymptomatic and had it.

**MM:** I know, I have that feeling too

**EM:** you know, just that covid anxiety is very strange. And as somebody who has anxiety, it's, I've, there have been so many times where I'll be like nervous about something, you know, one of the side effects of anxiety. And Morgan, I know, we've talked about this is you know, you can have like chest pains or you know, like, Oh, right, and I'm like, oh my gosh, am I having anxiety issues? Or do I have COVID?

**MM:** Yeah

**EM:** the story of my life right now. So, it's just, it's like, not a constant worry, I think but it's always in the back of my head, like, oh, if I, um, you know, go out to the store, you know, and come back. I was like, what if I have What if I caught it? It's, it's very weird, but I'm trying not to let it stop me from doing things. And like, I'm like you, Brian, like, I'm not going out to, you know, bars all the time.

**MM:** Going out looking for it

**EM:** Right, you know, I'm just like, Okay, well, I'm still gonna live, but I'm still gonna be mindful about it, too. You know, I'm still gonna wear a mask. I'm still gonna use hand sanitizer, and, you know, be mindful. And I think that's a big thing, too, is just being courteous of others. So, you know, why wouldn't you wear a mask, you know, if you're just being mindful of other people around you, because again, you may not know that you have it and you give it to somebody.

And that's, that's a big thing.

**MM:** For me the mask thing, though, I'm getting so desensitized to it to the point where like, I'm watching a TV show or a movie and I'm just like, I'm like, uncomfortable that they're not wearing masks. I don't know if that's how you guys are but I'm just like, like, I watched a movie, and she was sitting in like a law classroom. And I was like, they're very close to each other. They should be masking up. I don't have anything. And then I have to think about I'm like, Oh, yeah, it's not real, like in this moment in time. Like, it's a movie like, it was just very, like, Can I take a step back from my own reality and be like, Oh, right.

**EM:** Yeah, no, I've been feeling like that too. And especially with watching TV, or I've even seen it on billboards. Because I've been traveling like back and forth from home into here. And I'll see, you know, it's two things I'll you know, I'll see, you know, shows or billboards with people without masks and unlike the same with you, Morgan where I'm like, wait, I was like that's kind of weird to see, like, that's not normal and then you know, I see these, you know, billboards or commercials with people wearing masks and I'm like, Okay, this is this is where we're at right now and this is our reality and I almost think too, you know, if and when there's a vaccine and if and when people you know, are recovering, you know, if we're going to go back to what we thought was normal, or if like, the mask thing is gonna continue.

**MM:** Yeah. Sorry, Brian.

**BD:** What I want to know is, you know, they make like a new thing they have to wash your hands like when was that not the norm? I thought...

**MM:** At work every bathroom near has like the instructions on how to properly wash your hands. And I'm just like, we were taught this in kindergarten.

**BD:** So, I thought that already was a thing. Apparently not. But

**MM:** wash your hands and sing Happy Birthday twice or whatever and go about your day.

**EM:** You would think it would be simple, but again, yeah, really, not everyone does it. I remember. Like, this doesn't happen to me often. But it's happened before where I'll be, you know, in the bathroom, washing my hands, because that's what you do as a person. You know, there'll be a girl or some, you know, somebody's just coming out of the stall and just walks out. I'm like, why would you not wash your hands? But that's a whole other discussion for a different time.

**MM:** Oh, yeah, back to the whole madk thing. Like I'm a big Dancing with the Stars fan. It's been my show for a while now. And this season, they have like no live audience. And it's sad that I'm like, so used to it now where the other day I saw a video just like popped up on my YouTube or whatever. And I watched it. I was like, That's weird. They have people in the audience. What a life

**EM:** honestly, or you know, just seeing, you know, sporting events like my boyfriend. He's a huge hockey fan. And he you know, watches the game, you know, watches the game and watches matches and things like that, when they were on a lot and just seeing just the players and

you know, on the stands, like covered up, it's very odd. And I just almost wonder what it's like, for the players to I'd like for the dance contestants, because it's I feel like a big part of being on a team and playing like in those sporting events is like getting an energy from your fans. I mean, so I just I almost wonder how that goes for them if that impacts, you know, how they feel about it and how they play the game. I don't know so I get what you mean how it's weird to see.

**BD:** Yeah, it really does impact you as a player and I played hockey for about 20 years and especially at the semi pro level you have a lot of fans in the stand and a lot of times if there's nobody really there there's not really that much like cheering going on there's no energy and you don't really feel like playing as much so it's like the the crowd not being there. Like I feel like it was almost like this like an unfair decision like a disadvantage for the players.

**MM:** Oh yeah, for sure.

**BD:** They really didn't get the play to their full potential you know and so when the crowds behind in the crowds cheering like that, they really do give you a lot more you know, energy and a lot more willing to play. It's almost like

**MM:** pumps up your adrenaline

**BD:** Yeah, so like when they finished when they finish the of the season. I have a distant cousin who plays for the Dallas Stars. And he was basically saying as it's like, well, it's just like, they tell us to come back to work basically. And as a finish on our job is basically what it was is no fans no really nobody to play for so for just the association just to get my paycheck it just didn't feel like it didn't feel like

**MM:** But there the cheering track that they play speaker.

**BD:** Yeah. What's what's like the because I watched a lot of the MLB and they did just play like crowd noise on top of it.

**Mm:** Yeah.

**BD:** I know.

**EM:** I like how they put in I think this is just for the MLB and correct me if I'm wrong. They have like the pictures of people that they put in the stands and I think you could you know submit your photo and you could see yourself on like this like board. I feel like there's that too but I'm not too sure also sorry

**MM:** I'm pretty sure one of them did, like just fill their whole arena with pictures of dogs. And I thought headline about because I listened to um, I'm a big fan of Rob Lowe and he has a podcast out. And he had someone he was like interviewing someone. I can't remember who he was, but he was like pissed because the other guy got a better seat than him and the cardboard cutout. He was like, I paid money for this how can you get the better seat. I wanted that seat it was so funny. He was like, I have no control over it.



**EM:** right.

**MM:** I just thought it was so funny. And I was like, well, the reality.

**EM:** Yeah, you know, but that makes me think too. It's almost like making like light or not making light of a situation like we're taking this really like crazy situation that we're all in. And I think we're just we're making light of it in any way that we can. So, like, with the sporting games, just you know, joking about like, Oh, you got a better seat than me or, you know, putting pictures of dogs all around an arena. So of course, it was a good smile and pictures of dogs.

**MM:** Oh, yeah.

**EM:** Impossible. Unless you hate dogs, which is like no people. So anyway. Oh, but yeah.

**MM:** I would really love to know how it's impacting like high school sports. Like if it's the same thing.

**EM:** Probably.

**MM:** Because I think my cousin, he plays for Glenwood City High School. And I think it's just parents that are allowed. In the city.

**EM:** At least the parents are allowed.

**MM:** Oh, yeah, I know, huh.

And I know at one of my friend's weddings this summer, so in my high school, I was in field show marching band. And every year like you have a competition, and you prepare the show, and you put it on, and you compete between other bands around the state. And so of course, this year, that was totally taken off the table. But I saw my old band director at one of my friend's weddings. And I kind of asked him, I was like, hey, like, what are you guys doing this season for the kids? Because like, you can't go off and do all the shows that we used to do. You can't go to state because that draws too many people. Like, what what are you guys doing? And he was like, well, essentially, we're still doing something. But he was like, it was like halfway through the summer. And he was like, we just now got the band all together in one big group for the first time. Otherwise, they were doing like smaller sections at a time. And I was like, Are you crazy? Like, that's insane. And then he said, we're still doing a show. And we're gonna do a show for the parents. So, we're still working on something, but it's not like, as big as it would be if it were a regular season. And I was like, such a bummer for them.

**EM:** It's just not the same.

**MM:** I know. Yeah.

**EM:** Like, in May, I believe, you know, I was supposed to have a graduation ceremony that

**MM:** did ever get one.

**EM:** Nope.

**MM:** Not even like a virtual thing.

**EM:** They're planning a virtual one for December. But I'm like, okay, that's, that's nice. You know, it's better than nothing. But again, it's just it's not the same. You know, like, of course, I got my diploma, you know, I got all my graduation stuff. Because I had paid for it. I'm like, okay, you know, I got,

**MM:** A cap and gown that you just, like, paid for, but never wore

**EM:** I took pictures in it, you know, just kind of like, Oh, you know, if I actually did have a ceremony, so I have these and like, I had a very small gathering with my family. And I was like, okay, and I'll still take pictures, you know, I'll act like, you know, I'm having a ceremony or something like that, not to the extent of somebody handing me, you know, a fake diploma. But, you know, I was like, you know, I've earned these things. I know, it's kind of silly, in, you know, in kind of the grand scheme, but I'm like, Okay, well, I studied abroad. So, I got one of the, you know, study abroad stat sashes that you can wear around your robe. I was like, okay, that's cool. You know, maybe I can do something with it, and like, display it. So, I made a shadowbox of everything that I got. So, I was like, okay, that's, you know, it's better than nothing. But it's just, you know, you can try to plan all of these things that used to happen. And of course, it's not going to be the same. You know, it's just like with the marching band competition, like, at least it's something but it's not. It's just, it's different. And it's just, it's strange. But what I tell myself, I'm like, Okay, well, you know, I don't have this in person ceremony for my undergrad. And I said, you know, but the hope is, for when we all graduate with a master's degree is, I will celebrate both degrees at the same time. Oh, yeah.

**MM:** Some of my friends that graduated from UW Green Bay, where I went to school in May, they ended up doing like a drive thru ceremony. So, they sectioned off different areas for the campus like alphabetically and you could drive through in your car, everyone in the car had to wear their masks, but you could go up and get your diploma. Go back in your car and just continue through the procession or whatever. So, I thought that was like an interesting idea of how they did things like granted, it's not the same, but like, you still at least get that recognition for all at you worked for and whatever.

**EM:** creativity,

**MM:** yeah, for sure. Class sizes are not small by any means.

**EM:** I get that you can, you know, you can section it off maybe by like your separate college, like College of Letters and Sciences. But even still, I mean, you have so many different programs within those colleges. And then even with like, the history department at whitewater, like continues to grow, which is awesome. But you know, that's just not ideal for now, for having, you know, any sort of in person ceremony. So, it is what it is,

**MM:** I guess, figured it out, like three times to like this department, or this college and all the different programs and it go at this time.

**EM:** Mm hmm.

**MM:** I don't know how they did it. But from what I gathered from, like, alumni emails and stuff, that's so still better than nothing.

**EM:** Yeah, that's true. Yeah.

**MM:** Yeah.

**EM:** What do you all think about just in general, and y'all can take this in any sort of direction? Because this is a very broad question. So, we're all going to grad school during a pandemic?

**MM:** Oh, God. I have no idea what I'm doing.

**EM:** That's okay.

**BD:** I think with our degree, it's not so bad. Because a lot of it is just more or less, we can do a lot of the work on our own. We just kind of get together for discussion kind of thing. Yeah. So, like with our other class, he basically we read a book, we get together one once a week, and we talk about it and we write a paper on it. And then, like for this class, like, Yeah, we do readings and things like that we do weekly discussions, but it's not like, it's so hands on, especially like, well, this is hands on, technically, but but think about cuz I have other coworkers that are going to school for medical things, oh, a lot of their stuff that has to be like for the clinicals a lot of is supposed to be hands on. And they're supposed to learn hands on all that kind of stuff. But yet, but now they're saying, base have to teach yourself. And you have to take exams are just as much work to do but you have to learn it yourself, because you really can't do hands on. And he's just like, Well, I better be getting a refund for half of my money because I'm paying all this money for this all his hands-on instruction. I'm not getting it. And anytime somebody does it COVID because she's had a couple people in her class have gotten COVID or, or they've been in a building with COVID. So, they actually have to shut off like two weeks, and they can't go in and all that kind of thing. And she's just like, it's just so overwhelming for her that she's like, I have no idea even if I graduate and I get out of this if I'm even know what I'm doing. Because I didn't get that whole hands-on experience. Yeah. So, I don't know how those people are going to be do it.

**MM:** But yeah, I can't even imagine I know my sister. She is doing clinical psychology in her undergrad. And she's having such a hard time because like, even though it's psychology, like you still have labs that you do, you still have all this other stuff. And she's just like, we're all online now. And I don't know what I'm doing for half my classes. And I was like, they want to get that figured out. Like, I do feel like at least this semester, I'm sure a lot more people will have closer relations with their professors, because I'm sure professors are just getting bombarded with questions and like, what do I do? What can I do? Like, it's crazy.

**EM:** It is crazy. No to going off the whole sibling thing. My brother goes to Stevens Point. I think he's a junior now. And he's going for biology and like field ecology. That's a lot of labs to you know, so how, how can you learn effectively with stuff like that? And I just, I can't even imagine like, you know, going to school to be a nurse or just pre-med like you were saying, Brian, it's just a lot of that they, but you have to practice and at that point, it's just like you're playing a game of operation. You know,

**MM:** find what is it the funny bone?

**EM:** Right, right, exactly.

**MM:** And don't hit the knee. Where's the water on?

**BD:** Oh, man, I forgot I never could never get the butterflies.

**EM:** Oh, no.

**MM:** Oh, no. he froze

**BD:** on his stomach. There's too many cores.

**MM:** Oh, yeah. I remember it was it the Charlie horse is always the hardest for me because it just the way it was shaped in the hole is so small.

**EM:** Oh man.

**MM:** I will say one thing that I've learned during COVID When the safer at home order first took into place, I can watch 12 movies in one day. That's all I did on my weekends when it first started, I just sat at home in my apartment in Green Bay, and I just watched movies all day.

**EM:** That's impressive.

**MM:** Well, because before COVID started, I was just bored out of my mind, which is half the reason why I came back to school. Like, I just come home from work, and I just sit there and watch TV. And I was like, you know what, I'm going to do something. So, I made a list of all the movies that I wanted to see before I died. When the pandemic started, I was like, you know what? This is the time to start that.

**EM:** And you did,

**MM:** I did?

**EM:** Wow

**MM:** I didn't get to all of them cuz life got in the way eventually. So, I only got 12 of them off my list. But that's very proud of myself.

**EM:** Yeah, I know. I like hearing stories about the things that people are doing to keep themselves busy during quarantine. And COVID. Like Brian until they point you out. But do you paint I can tell from the stuff in the background.

**BD:** Oh Yeah

**MM:** So, like, if you painted that?

**BD:** yeah, that's I painted all those.

**MM:** Oh, my God, that's awesome.

**EM:** It's really cool. So, like, I'm guessing, you know, even just when you're bored, or even before that was a hobby of yours, but I'm sure you know, with covid and quarantine, like, Did you like paint more? Or just have more time to do stuff like that. But I know, as adults that we are sometimes again, like Morgan said, life gets in the way.

**BD:** Yeah, even I taught my girlfriend out of paint. Because we were at the time when the whole legs, stay at home order type thing. Her she was living with her sister at the time. So, then she her sister has kids and all that kind of things that at that time, she's like, well, I really don't feel comfortable. Like I don't want to bring it home to the kids and that kind of thing. So, we're technically quarantined together. And she's just like, I there's nothing to do so of course, and we watch a lot of movies play a lot of good boardgames, but then we're sitting when they feel like once you teach them how to paint, I was like, Fine, whatever. So that that this one right in the middle here. That's their first one that she painted that taught her to do.

**MM:** Oh, wow,

**BD:** that's hers. But other than that, yeah, that I did a lot a lot of pain in five star when we do with them, but

**MM:** **I have a question for you.**

**BD:** Yeah.

**MM:** Did you learn from Bob Ross?

**BD:** Yes, that was my inspiration.is more or less I was sitting home one day, and I was watching him like, you know what, I could do that. And I just decided to try it. So, there's

**MM:** happy little trees with all their friends.

**BD:** It really it really is like the I think the the concept of is easy, but the hardest part of it is learning how to like to put the right amount of paint on it.

**MM:** Oh, that was my I did one of those like drink wine and paint kind of things. You know those places? I kinda, yeah, I did that for my 23rd birthday. And it was I thought it was gonna be so easy. I was like, I'm gonna be so good at this. Yeah, no, all we did was paint birch trees and like a moon and then we had to blend the sky to make it look like nighttime and the moon was shining. It was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. mixed with alcohol. It did not go over. Well.

**EM:** Not a good combination.

**MM:** Not a good combination

**EM:** That's funny.

**MM:** Yeah, it was crazy Lot of fun, though. I would definitely do it again.

**EM:** Yeah, like, seriously? art? Yes, exactly. Oh, man. It's wild.

**MM:** What did you learn during quarantine? Emily?

**EM:** Oh, see, I'm trying to like think back. Well, I know, for the majority of like, when the safer at home order, like was put in place, I still had to do classes and everything. So, it was really learning. You know, how, you know the format was gonna work and you know, how my professors were responding to it. So, it was just, you know, it was kind of like how it what, how it is now with you know, we meet on zoom. And, you know, a lot of what we do is self-taught now, because we're not in person. But I know. I read a lot. And I think I spent a lot of time time outside. So, I don't think I necessarily learned anything. I think I just had more of a chance to do stuff that I wouldn't if I was still up at school, you know, because it's, I feel like to now that everything is online. And I don't know about you guys, I feel like I have a lot more like flexibility in my schedule, because I'm not, you know, I'm not running back and forth from campus and great I live close in like, Morgan, I know you live in an Menomonie. So that's, you know, that's probably really nice.

**MM:** I'm loving the online because right now if my classes like, I need to be able to still work 40 hours, otherwise, I'm not gonna be able to pay my bills, like at all. So, I do like try to get 10 hours on Monday. And then I work from like seven to noon. And because it's online, I can just stay working up until almost class starts because I don't live far away. So, I can just drive on over and I can log in from my kitchen. And I love it.

**EM:** convenient.

**MM:** I'm kind of hoping the pandemic lasts as long as I'm in school, because I do not want to go to school in person. Not that it doesn't say it would be great. I'm saving so much money on gas.

**EM:** That make sense. Oh my gosh, I don't know, I want I like I get what you mean to like with the convenience factor and like saving money and stuff. It's just It's so weird. Not being in class and like with people like I wish, you know, I wish we were all like in class in person together, you know, especially after our Wednesday class, like, you know, I always thought to myself, I was like, you know, for how stressful that class is, we probably all go out and get drinks after and just that's about it. Like, I wish we could do that. But of course, here we are. You know, and you know, and it being a smaller group, it would be even better so

**MM:** Exactly, go sit at a bar and eat peanuts and throw them on the floor and

**EM:** Oh, yeah, man.

**MM:** I know, for me too, especially like moving to a new city. Like granted, I'm closer to my family, which is nice. But I'm just like, I can't go out and like, explore Menomonie and partake in like the stuff that they have going on. So, because nothing's going on. So, I literally just go home and go to work. And every weekend I'm at my parents' house.

**BD:** I think that was the worst of it. Where there's literally nothing happening. Nothing open. nothing going on there like expecting, you know, things you can do to manage your boredom. Like I know I gained the COVID 20 pounds.

**MM:** Oh yeah, for sure.

**BD:** All I can really do is go to the grocery store, find snacks and go home and eat and just eat it.

**MM:** Binge eat I eat bags of chips in one day, because I'm just like, there's nothing else to do.

**BD:** It's like, because I even like I enjoy working out. And all that kind of thing is like there's only so many like things I could do at home. Or you just become bored of it. But it's like I enjoy going to the actual gym and didn't do my work there. But

**MM:** I bought a Beachbody on demand subscription. And I used it for a month. And it's like I need to get back into it. Because like I felt so good when I did it. But then I just like got into the slump. And I was just like, you know what, no.

**BD:** Yeah, I think it was like that, like, you have to beat that half like depression that you got from it. Yeah, like this just affect us wake up the next day, knowing that you just, there's nothing to do, you can't do anything.

**MM:** Exactly.

**BD:** And it's kind of got you down because he kind of like fight through that. Like just kind of try to occupy yourself with something, make something like productive out of it. I never felt like I want to be so productive in my entire life.

**MM:** I know

**BD:** Until that happened. It's like it. Almost put it into perspective. It's like, all this time I could have been you know, doing all of this. And I just haven't like I like I'm so sick of watching TV. I'm so sick of you know, playing video games, all that kind of stuff. I want to do something else.

**MM:** I know. I don't even have a video game console. And I'm just like, I'm sick of just watching Netflix and Hulu all the time. Like I want to play a video game and do something different

**EM:** Just need some variety.

**MM:** But that that Brian brought up a point that reminded me so it's like when the safer at home order was put in place and everyone like had nothing to do, they were all flocking to the state parks. And then the state parks were like no, like, you can't all be coming here at once. I'm just like, why are people just realizing that they can do this now?

**EM:** Mm hmm.

**MM:** And I'm guessing it's probably because they have more time for it. But I was just like,

**BD:** I know we did it. We went on to a couple of state parks as we're still sort of setting, we just wanted to go out and walk.

**EM:** Yeah. Something. Yeah.

**MM:** but it was funny after that first weekend. They were like, sorry, like, you can't all come at once. Yeah.

**EM:** Yeah. And I think too, I think another problem with it is that people were like trashing the parks that you are funny and I'm like, just be kind to nature. Just go out, take a hike, take a picture and just throw your trash away. It's not that hard.

**MM:** But I will say it was really cool to hear that like the planet was kind of healing too. Cruz like, Oh, yeah, like the rivers in Venice were like as clear as you could ever see them, they were full of fish that you would never see there. And like, the skies in China were all clear like they could see the sky for the first time and forever. So, I almost wish it lasted a little longer, because I was like, maybe we could like hold from warming off for a bit.

**BD:** Like, hey, look what happens when we don't do as much.

**MM:** Exactly.

**EM:** Right. It's like, maybe we don't want to go back to what our normal was.

**MM:** I know,



**EM:** maybe we you know, like you guys said, maybe we do learn from this that we need to take care of, you know, our surroundings a little bit better. Because, you know, you hear all these scientists like freaking out about climate change and how it's going to be bad. And you know, X amount of decades. I'm like, yay can't wait, so glad that the worlds on fire like,

**MM:** right,

**EM:** Yeah. Oh, my gosh. That's what I thought of a question too. So, Morgan, I remember you told me that you got your cat, like, during this whole thing, because of the Humane Society is needed people to well not needed people to adopt,

**MM:** They just had an influx of it.

**EM:** Yes. Yeah. Do you want to talk about Ronald?

**MM:** Oh, God, well, I always knew I was gonna, like, get a cat when I moved cuz I had a whole thing with a roommate, whatever. We were supposed to go to grad school together, she got a boyfriend, whatever. So, she was allergic to cats. So, after she left, I was like, you know what, I'm gonna get a cat. So, like, I had that in my mind before I even like, moved. And I was like, I knew I was going to but it kind of prompted me to get it sooner. Because I saw how all of these like humane societies and like rescues.

**EM:** Yeah

**MM:** rescue organizations were like running out of room because people couldn't afford to take care of their pets anymore because they were losing their jobs. But on the other hand, all these people had more time where they're like, hey, let's get a dog. But so, it kind of prompted me to get it sooner because I was like, you know what? Why not? So, I got my cat when I didn't have a job. I figured out that day that I was hired, but so I was able to pass the application process. Yeah.

**EM:** Ah, awesome.

**MM:** He was two months old. And now he runs my life.

**EM:** It's Ronald's house, and you're just living in it.

**MM:** pretty much it. Like, I've never been a cat person, like ever had a cat when I was little. And she was the devil. She was the worst thing ever. So, it kind of turned me off from cats. But I was like, you know what? I don't have the lifestyle for a dog right now. Cats are very independent. What are the chances that this cat is going to turn out like before? He's nothing like before, like he's fun and playful and keeps me up at night. But very cuddly and playful. So, I wouldn't trade them for the world.

**EM:** Oh, my God. Brian, do you have pets? Or do you want to get a pet?

**BD:** I don't. I'd like to get one. I grew up with animals. I love animals. But yeah, I just the place I'm living at now won't let me

**EM:** sad.

**MM:** Yeah. But I know them but not stop us because it's I'm basically renting for my girlfriend's grandpa. Oh, because yeah, he had a I needed to move I need to get out of the place where I was at, because my lease was up. I was involved the pay what they're gonna, like, upgrade my cost was. He's like, I have a place. You don't even have like a lease or anything like that. I just got to just pay me every month. I'm like, deal. I just took it. So, I moved there. And I asked him like, Well, can I have any pets and he was like not really because it's kind of a small place anyway, I kind of feel bad for the animal. But I feel like if I do get the move to a bigger place, I'm definitely going to get at least a dog or something. But I plan to have that companionship in my life. But don't judge don't judge, you know?

**MM:** Not at all

**EM:** Oh, man. Its already 6:31 do you guys want to keep going?

**MM:** If we can find more stuff to talk about, I'm game.

**EM:** What other questions do you guys have because I have a few like off the top of my head but I don't want to steal your thunder or anything like that.

**MM:** I'm just looking at her guide, because most of my questions we've kind of already touched on.

**BD:** Like, I want to know what your guys' thoughts on like how the media handled it. Like with radio and like the news and all that kind of stuff and like holiday, like how they handled the situation. Like Me personally, it's like, every single time I turn the radio on in my car or anything like that, it was like, you know, a breaking news update COVID-19 knows all those settings and what else is even happening in the world? It's like, it seems like this is the only thing that's happening. And I, you know, I almost had that thought to me, like, what are they hiding? Like, this is all they're going to talk about, like, what are they hiding from us that, you know, they're making this such a big deal. Now, it's almost like a conspiracy theories thing. But I felt like, you know, this, the only thing that they literally had to talk about, like, it just became overwhelming for me.

**MM:** Yeah, I definitely did feel very overwhelmed. And I do feel like in the beginning, like, I feel like now it should be overhyped, because the numbers are getting so bad. And we're getting back to even worse than we were before. But I do kind of feel like in the beginning, it was kind of like, instant panic mode was instilled in people. And it was just insane. And I was like, you guys, like, it's just a cold, like, we'll be fine. Like, that was honestly my mindset until I realized, like how severe it actually was. But I think the media too, had like a big hand in politicizing it. Rather than making it a health crisis. Like, I feel like we would be so much better off if we didn't

put so much political emphasis on it. And it was just health crisis, like take care of yourself, take care of everyone else, be mindful of who you're with. And, like, I hate how it became such a political thing.

**EM:** Right, like when did caring about people and you know, others well-being, you know, when did that become such a bad thing?

**MM:** Like, even last night, I was listening to Governor Evers order about a new well. It's not an order, because the Supreme Court's just going to shoot it down. But the recommendation to stay at home and the comments on it, I was just reading it. And I started just getting so worked up over just reading people's comments and how much hate there is towards like, the person that's trying to take care of us. And it's just, it's crazy to me how people can be so awful to each other, just because how politicized it's gotten

**EM:** right? Like, you know, again, it's not a matter of, you know, what side you're on, it should just be okay. Don't you want to live in a healthy world? Don't you want our society to get better? It's just, it's bizarre to me. And I do think, too, that the media has, in a way and still instilled a sense of fear in all of us too, because like, you got, they just keep talking about it all the time. So, it's just, you know, it's always in our heads. And it's always just something that you think about too, and it's just I feel like it almost kind of dictates your every day. But you know, I kind of like what you said to Brian, like, what are they hiding? What? What, what are these secrets?

**BD:** they're doing something out there. I don't like I always kind of had this this saying and, you know, I don't have a place to say it, but I'll say it anyway. But my opinion is that, you know, in the world of information, we literally have the world's knowledge in the palm of our hands in our pockets every single day. stupidity vice.

**MM:** Oh, yeah. You know, I totally agree with that.

**BD:** You know, ignorance is something just means the lack of knowledge of something. And that's easy to fix. Look it up, look, find a reasonable source and look it up. You can knowledge yourself on it. But if you're going through every single day with that ability to learn about something and know about something, but yet you have this fog over your eyes and just want to believe what everybody tells you. That's your choice. You know what, I'm not gonna feel bad for you.

**MM:** Yeah, it's like my parents got into a little spat over the summer, when, I guess numbers were not okay. But they weren't great either. But my dad was like, Oh, well, I heard from this guy, that it's just it's all hoax like, nothing's happening. And my mom was just like, I talked to a public health official. And my dad's just like, like, I just don't understand why people can't just like do the research and like make themselves better rather than just passing around all these like misinformation and just like it's just crazy to me. Yeah, and word of mouth is becoming credible.

**EM:** Right, right.

**BD:** I had a coworker that was saying that, like, you know, he's getting really political and I don't like getting political at work. It's just like, I don't cause trouble. But he was saying this, like, you know, with with the whole, like Biden things like you just gonna do a thing but listen to the scientists and looked at him. I just had to say something just like, so you mean, he's gonna listen to people who live in truth? And if they don't know about something, they want to figure it out? And they're gonna test it over and over and over again and make sure it's so like, oh, you're not saying that this person is bad, because they want to listen to people who want to know what the what the actual answer is

**MM:** Exactly

**BD:** even if they're wrong, I was wrong.

**MM:** Yeah, no, but I had that same thing. Because like, everyone's like, Well, of course, our numbers are bad right now. Because it's flu season. It's cold season, and I have COVID on top of it. And I'm just like, you do realize that the things that you get tested for they can differentiate if you have cold? If you have the regular flu, or if you have COVID? Like, they can tell which one you have. It's not just like, oh, you're sick? Oh, it's COVID. Like, no, they have the science to figure out what's actually wrong with you.

**EM:** Right

**MM:** Sometimes I just I just shake my head and smile. I'm like, Uh, huh.

**EM:** Like, interesting

**MM:** Like, it just baffles me how much people like don't understand how the medical field works.

**EM:** just basic science that you're saying like a science is there? You know, science helps met, you know, people in the medical field, like, you know, we've there's a pandemics that have happened in the past before. And we've gotten past them, because what did we do everyone, we listened to people who know what they're doing.

**MM:** Exactly. I remember I was listening to a podcast. And this isn't really COVID related, but she was talking about like to vaccinate her kids or not to vaccinate her kids. And she had an anti vaxxer, who's like, in the political world, he's a Kennedy. And, um, he was like, doctors aren't taught science. And at that point, I just turned the podcast off. I was like, what are you trying to say right now?

**EM:** What are they taught?

**MM:** taught science? I'm like, they have to at least know basic chemistry and bodily functions. I was just like, I don't. I turned off the podcast right then and there. I was, like, I can't deal with this right now.

**EM:** Wow

**BD:** I'd rather put my faith in somebody that that strives in the unknown. Like, they look at the unknown. Like, I want to figure that out. And just like you, do you, I'm listening to you because well, this is somebody that well, this guy's business, I'm just gonna believe him.

**MM:** Especially I don't know if you guys remember this, but it was I think it was at least a month ago, when the CDC came out and said, like, and everyone was like, Oh, my God, the CDC lying to us. Not all those people died from COVID. Like, I don't know if you guys remember that. Um, but like, they just don't even know how a death certificate works. And like, I remember I was talking with my cousin and she was like, they're lying about the number is not that many people died of COVID. And I'm like, No, what they're saying is, yes, that many people died of COVID. But 200,000 other people have died from COVID related issues where if they didn't have COVID, they wouldn't have died kind of thing. It's like, I always tell them the analogy where it's like, say you have breast cancer, and you get into a car accident and die from the car accident. You didn't die from breast cancer, you died from the car accident, but you had breast cancer

**EM:** right?

**MM:** That's always the analogy that I tell them. But I had to ask one of my friends who was a human biology major, like she studies this stuff hardcore, even though she's graduated already. And I was like, can you explain this to me? And that's exactly how she explained it to me. And I was like, okay, so I was not wrong.

**EM:** Oh, man,

**MM:** like, it's just how people can just and then I had like other family members like sharing this and saying, how can they get away with this? I'm like, Yes, it means what you think it means. But it also doesn't mean what you think it means. Like, it was just a whole thing. And I had was trying so hard not to start family drama. It was very hard for me.

**EM:** That's a whole other thing, too.

**MM:** Yeah. It's just, again, the politicizing of it all. And even if there's a vaccine, like how many of the anti vaxxers aren't going to go out and get the vaccine, like, how is that going to help anybody either?

**EM:** It's not, no, it's not. We're just going to have that group of people that just keep thinking what they want to and hopefully they come around to it. But maybe there's something there that I just don't understand or don't know. But I, I would like to get vaccinated Once there, you know, once a cure or something out, I just Yeah,

**MM:** So, say a vaccination comes out in like a month, are you guys gonna be like first in line to go and get it?

**EM:** Go ahead.

**BD:** I wouldn't be the first because I think it's still kind of in the testing stage like there, it comes out and

**MM:** you grow a tail.

**BD:** Yeah, like they pay. They basically, you know, they're vaccinating you, they're basically giving you the disease, they're giving you the sickness and say, telling your body that the to deal with it. Like, I don't think it's going to be completely all everything's be all ironed out in the first round of it, like, yeah, they tested and all that kind of stuff. And they say it's really helping out. But what if there's an underlying

**MM:** work with different people of different backgrounds?

**BD:** Yeah. What if there's an underlying issue that I don't know about that I have, and I take that first round of vaccines, and all of a sudden, they didn't have that figured out? And it makes me even sicker.

**MM:** Exactly.

**BD:** Or like my brother who has an automatic immune deficiency, and I take the vaccine and think everything's all, you know, hunky dory, and I go, and I talk to him with like that I normally give him something and he ends up getting really sick and possibly dying from it. No, like how, like, how am I? How do I how do I what I feel about that? Yeah, I'm thinking, why have the vaccine? So, I'm good.

**MM:** Yeah, exactly. That's how that's my exact feeling on it. And that's also kind of like what you said, like, I'm not well, I am kind of afraid of getting COVID? because like you said, it's like, what if I have an underlying issue that I don't know about? Right? Like, you just never know, what could happen?

**BD:** Yeah, it's not like the flu shot, where they pretty much have it down to an exact science, they figure out the strand every single year, and they Yeah, it changes every single year. And they figured out all the tiny genetic mutations that it has every single year. And they you know; they figure that out. Whereas COVID, yeah, we get a vaccine, it's probably going to, you know, mutate itself to live, it's, it's a bug, it's a thing as

**MM:** well, that and people are losing the antibody, people that have had it are losing antibodies for it. So, they're basically not immune to it anymore. Anyways.

**BD:** So, there'll be a second strand of it, and it's going to come back. Yeah, you know, so, in the long run, is it going to help you and maybe for a second or two, but you know, the, the offspring of whatever it is, it's gonna basically make itself better and defeated the scene, so it'll probably get worse. So, like,

**MM:** and it already has mutated so much, where there's this whole list of symptoms, like I could have a migraine and I could have covid, like,

**EM:** that's where I'm like, oh, chest pains, you know, again, is it anxiety is

**MM:** My fingertip hurts. Oh, no. Like, so many symptoms underneath it, where it's like, and like I said, like, people who have had it are losing the antibodies for it. So, they're not immune to it anymore. And it's like, are they going to have us take a vaccine, like every three months, and that's stupid, like you get a vaccine and you're supposed to last for like, five, seven years, and then you go on, you get a booster, like,

**BD:** I think it's more or less they have no idea like the long-term effects of it. So, I think I think once in the future, it's gonna be like kinda like a flu thing where they figured it out like, it does this and this and this. So, it might have to be like, every year thing, like people have to go and get like a COVID shot and a flu shot and all that kind of stuff.

**MM:** I will say I got my flu shot for the first time in like, seven years this year. I was like, if I can help, I'm helping.

**BD:** You know it. At the same time, it's like, this may be a really morbid thought. But it's like, it's life. things come along. And it's kind of the survival of the fittest. So, it's like, yeah, it's terrible. It's really, really bad if people are buying or dying from it. But in the same way, that's kind of nature's way of saying you're not strong enough to live on and pass on your genetics and all that kind of thing. And maybe it's some weird way of the earth saying, I've had enough of you need to pay off everything. You know, it's kind of one of those deals at all. It's terrible, because, you know, we live in a society but we're very, we're very, you know, social kind of thing. We mourn our death and all that kind of thing. And it is sad. Like I'm not saying it's a sad thing that people's family members are dying and things like that, but at the same time, kind of to think of it another way, it's like, I might get it and live from it, but my offspring's gonna give my offspring that that kind of mutation like they're going to be stronger. I think, at the same time, where we're sitting here and we're sanitizing every five minutes, all that kind of stuff. It's gonna make us weaker in the long run. It's gonna make her body's not people to fight it off. Right? You know, and is it more of a Think that Yeah, but at the same time, it's kind of reality kind of thing where, yeah, we got to, we got to live on knowing that that's how we're gonna make our species stronger is by no kind of weeding out the weak and letting the strong survive.

**MM:** Yeah.

**EM:** And again, like, you know, just looking at history because for historians, and that's what we do, you know, there have been diseases and you know, pandemics in the past and evidently, obviously we've, you know, adapted and learn to combat it, because, you know, there was the flu pandemic, and, like, around World War One, people were freaked out. And there's even evidence to have, you know, people having to wear masks, and you know, stay safe and stuff like that. And it's like, Okay, well, the way I see it, like, if this has happened before, and we've gotten to where we are now, and we're coming to it again, who's to say that we can move past this to? I mean, it might take us, right, like, it might take us X amount of years. If it does, it does, but you

know, if that just means us, you know, keeping on with what we're doing, then the does, so it's just, yeah, it's a weird time. You know,

**MM:** there's a very weird time.

**EM:** Mm hmm.

**BD:** Yeah, I just think people are just afraid that they have no idea what's going to happen in the future. And that's the that's the gist of it. Yeah,

**MM:** the thing that really baffles me too, is like the people that say that they want to get back to the way things were before. They're also the ones not taking the precaution necessary in order to help us get to the way we were before. Like, some people in my family, they're like, well, we got to live our lives. And I'm just like, Yeah, but the longer the more you do that, the longer you're pushing it back for everybody else to. So, it's like, again, it's like a whole debate, issue and

**EM:** right and just, you know, finding a balance, like yes, like, obviously, we all want to go and do things that we normally would do. And that's fine to an extent, you know, depending on what those things were. But you know, you still also have to consider what's happening in the world, you know, you just can't go and do things willy nilly, like you used to just have to be careful.

**BD:** You know, if I had a customer come into the store about three weeks ago, and he refused to wear a mask, and now our store policy is that we recommend it we certainly like we want you to, but we can't make you.

**MM:** Yeah.

**BD:** And he was going off, he was getting very political, but the whole deal was like look, and I kind of got tired of it. But after a while I was like, look like my whole thing. Like I'm a historian. You know, I'm doing this job here, until I can find something in my field. But it's like, wearing a mask also social distancing and things like that. It's kind of doing your bit being patriotic about it. You're looking for your fellow person. It's like back in world war two people who weren't fighting, they were both, you know, they rationed and everything, just so they could, you know, for the war effort. And they sacrifice themselves like, Look, I don't want to wear a mask. But here I am wearing a mask, because it's what I have to do for you know, for you have to do for me, I have to do for my friends and everything else. And he kind of looked at me as like, I never even thought about it that way. And I was like, Look, you don't have to like change your views completely by not wearing a mask, but at the same time, you're not wearing a mask. It's kind of being unpatriotic in a way. And I think I think that really kind of like he didn't buy anything when I think I ruin the sale for that.

**MM:** It all comes down to perspective, because like, my cousin has two little kids. One's five and one's three. And the five-year-old, he just started kindergarten and I was like, hey, Mac, like, how school like isn't it so much fun. And he was like, yeah, it's fun But I have to wear a mask. And just like the tone of it. Like that's how his parents talk. And so, I just started talking to him. And I was like, look like cuz, you know, everyone's talking about like, oh, the kids are missing



out on so much this year. And it's just like, just changed our perspective. You are talking to him? And I was like, Yeah, but isn't it so cool. You get to wear a mask with trucks and tractors. And it's so fun. And it's like a fashion statement. You can probably match it with your outfits if he was like, yeah, it is kind of fun. And it like totally flipped around. I'm sure the next day after his parents started talking to him about it. He was like, oh, whatever. That's all you have to do. I was like when everyone was throwing all this hoopla about not having the kids go trick or treating. It's like, stay at home, create a fun spooky dinner with your family and make it a special Halloween that they don't go trick or treating every other year. It's like do something fun and different to make them excited about it and want to do it teach them to be resilient and to overcome the tough times. And teach them what that's like.

**EM:** Mm hmm. Oh, you guys are very wise

**MM:** I got that all from a Facebook post. But it is it's all about perspective.

**EM:** Mm hmm. It is because I think if you're just gonna stay in this negative mindset, too,

**MM:** it's gonna eat you alive.

**EM:** It is it is. And I really like what you said to Brian about it, you know, kind of, because I feel like that guy was like super super patriotic like America. Whoo. So, I think bringing that in of like doing your part for the country. Like, I wonder if you did change his mind?

**BD:** I don't know. Maybe if he comes back if he's wearing a mask I'll No, but.

**EM:** And he'll buy something from you then.

**BD:** Yeah, probably not. I think I angered him

**EM:** It scared him intimidated him with your knowledge.

**MM:** Yeah, it's probably his loss then

**BD:** It's like none of us wants to do the things that we have to be doing right now. But it's like, if we do it, and we do it correctly. It won't last as long hopefully. Yeah, maybe we can get back to some kind of normalcy, I guess, is what you know, it's never gonna be the same as it was, there's always gonna be some kind of change, you know, something might come out of it, where you might even learn more about sanitation and things like that. And, you know, it might work better in the long run, like, because I mean, look what happened back when, you know, before the Civil War, they figured out sanitation and washing your hands, like, cut down on diseases.

**MM:** Yeah.

**BD:** That there were people literally getting sicknesses like dysentery, things like that, really, all we have to do is wash our hands and clean the surfaces that we're eating, and all that kind of thing went away.

**MM:** and bathe frequently

**BD:** And so, who knows what might come out of it, I mean, in the long run might be better for us to be going through this.

**MM:** Mm hmm.

**BD:** That's, that's kind of my look on it. Like, there's got to be some kind of light at the end of the tunnel, where it's going to be better for our society.

**EM:** There has to be

**MM:** well, and it's like to it's like, I don't want to wear my seatbelt. But I do for my safety. It's like, I don't want to walk in a straight line to lunch in elementary school, but I do it because it's the rules. It's like,

**EM:** like, just do it.

**MM:** I know, it's the same exact concept. I don't want to stop at red lights, but I do for everyone else's safety. Like, that's exactly the same thing.

**EM:** It is. It is, you know, and I think it's where I think and I'm not saying this is for everybody, but I think you know, a lot of people don't like being told what to do. Unless it's, you know, kind of ingrained in what we do like what their traffic lights and washing our hands, you know, once something different is thrown into the mix are like what you can't tell me what to do, because that's an infringement on my rights.

**MM:** Well, that point almost makes me wonder what it was like when those laws were enacted. Like you have to start wearing your seatbelt? No, I've lasted this long without wearing my seatbelt. So have my kids I'm not wearing a seatbelt. So, it's I wonder if we could almost like we could go back and look at it through different things that enacted that today we find totally normal, but back then it was like, totally obsolete.

**BD:** I think it's gonna come down to kind of that lean, you know, lean faire attitude until somebody it's kind of until it happens to me kind of attitude. Like, I've never gotten it. But until it happens to me or get, or somebody really close to me gets it. It gets really bad. I might, you know, it's not going to get it by, you know, attitude about it. And it's like, why wouldn't she want to be proactive instead of reactive?

**MM:** Yeah. Well, that's kind of what I thought when our not to bring this up. But when our President got it, like, I thought it might have changed his perfect perspective. But then he comes out and says, No, you don't have to worry about it.

**BD:** like three days later, when everybody's supposed to be quarantined for you know, whole two weeks, three days later, I'm fine. I'm good, don't have any more. And it's like,

**MM:** he was like, don't be afraid of it. And I'm just like, first off, like, you're the president, obviously, you're gonna have every single measure taken that we probably would never get, like, he probably got the best medicines that no one ever gets the best kind of care that no one ever gets. Like, of course, you're gonna have a different outcome and a different experience.

**BD:** But I totally I totally thought he's gonna come out two days later, he said I took the hydroxychloroquine whatever it was but gonna cure

**MM:** I drank bleach!

**BD:** I totally thought he's gonna come up with something like that. And I was like, I'm waiting for it. And it never happened. I'm actually kind of disappointed that he didn't. But like there's a video of him like going into the White House. He like walked up to these on the front parts of it wherever. And then he took his mask off against like visibly the card and having a hard time breathing and all that kind.

**MM:** Yeah, no, it's fine. In order for him to have his picture taken signing, what was it an actual blank piece of paper, but it was supposed to be like a legal document, and he was risking that photographer and I'm just like, Are you serious right now? Or like all the Secret Service in the car with him? When he was going back to the White House? I was like, No, this isn't helping.

**EM:** Great. Okay. And this is kind of a loaded question. Or maybe it's not. So, if you guys don't want to answer because it's political, you don't have to. But do you think if we had different leadership at the time, things would be different with our current situation?

**MM:** I do think so.

**EM:** Okay.

**MM:** Think about it. I kind of see it this way. It's like it kind of kind of I'll give you the example of that happened in my mom's office. So, my mom is the office supervisor at a credit union. Hmm, even before the masked mandate in our company decided to like, have everyone in the office wear masks. My mom was having all of her staff wear masks. She was getting pushback from one of her employer, or one of her employees who like no, I'm not gonna wear a mask like no one else is in the other branches. Why do we? It wasn't until our CEO of our company came out and issued the mandate that he was like, Oh, yeah, that's probably a good idea. So, I definitely do kind of think that it leadership does affect it. I mean, not that my mom is like, like a dictator, leader, or whatever. But like, she didn't have that authority to say, hey, hmm, like you have to do this thing. Yeah, I kind of feel like if we did have a different type of leadership, that maybe actually believed in doctors and what health officials were saying, not to totally, like, hit the nail on the head there. But like, I do feel like we might have probably, we probably still would, it probably would still be around. But I feel like it wouldn't be as severe as it is today. And it wouldn't be as politicized as it is today.

**BD:** Yeah, I'll agree with that. I mean, I'm not sure which President it is, and don't take my words verbatim, because I don't have the proper research on this. But I think it was like in the early 2000s, or something like that was, I forgot which President it was, I think, put a taskforce in place just in case a pandemic,

**MM:** that that was George Bush.

**BD:** Okay. George Bush,

**MM:** and no one believed him

**BD:** And yeah, he put that he put that in place, like, you know, just think just for this kind of reason. And then I think Trump, like complete us to handle it and took it away. And a pandemic happened, and no, we don't have anything to take care of it normal. Just kind of send her throat you know, with her underwear hanging out, like, Yeah,

**MM:** no, I read that because I think he was like, on a flight or something. And he read a book about the 1918, Spanish flu and he was like, Oh, my God, like there's a pattern. This happens once every 100 years. Like, we should start preparing this and no one believed him, but he got something together anyways. And then I think Barack Obama said something in one of the speeches that like we had something in place or something like this, and he's probably using it as a paperweight or something like, he was like, we did have a policy, like, a plan in place for something like this. So, I don't know what happened to it. But I do remember reading something like that.

**EM:** That's frustrating.

**MM:** You didn't hear that?

**EM:** No! Wow, you know, George Bush is probably sitting in his ranch in Texas.

**BD:** Probably like I told them, I told them.

**EM:** I know.

**MM:** Emily, I feel like I don't know if you guys watch friends, but I feel like you're like Lisa Kudrow in friends where she's like, this is whole new information

**EM:** you know, that's funny. You say that because I have a group of friends where we like to figure out like what character we are from, like sitcoms.

**MM:** I'm a Phoebe for sure or Chandler

**EM:** I'm a Phoebe too

**MM:** I'm like a mix of the two

**EM:** A good combination was very sarcastic and funny, but then just I don't really know how to describe Phoebe. She's just her own person.

**MM:** not ashamed of yourself.

**EM:** Very true. Very true. Yeah. and just oh, no, no. Oh, man.

**BD:** Yeah, but but yeah, I kind of the same that the point of viewer I think like in our legislature and in our house and all that kind of stuff. I feel like we should have more people like professionals instead of just lawyers, like people sit in the law or kind of stuff. Because you know, your law schools kind of hate you kind of get that that stain of like, you learn basically how to lie and how to, like, persuade other people and what they think what you think and all that kind of stuff. It's like, I think we should have more you know, more different types, like, you know, educators and scientists and things like that, like making decisions for our country instead of just these people to say, the points for like they're wrong, and I'm right, and that's the way it is.

**MM:** Like, that's, like what our president elect is trying to do. Because our current president has been so like, for lack of a better term toxic, the only word I can think of right now, like, I feel like even with our new president, like, no one's gonna take him seriously.

**BD:** Yeah, and I think just the just the total control the bipartisan party system, it's just it doesn't work.

**MM:** Yeah, it kind of comes down to,

**BD:** there's too much finger pointing at each other. And there's like readings, like, one or two other ones to be like, Okay. There's, there's other points of view in the room. And I think that help out, but I mean, will it ever happen? I'm not sure, maybe. But yeah, hopefully, in my lifetime.

**MM:** It also kind of goes with like everyone saying to like, defund the police and like, bring in social workers to help with drug addicts or people with mental health issues. It's like, it's kind of like that same concept, like put people that are qualified to de-escalate a situation, rather than just going in and making it worse.

**EM:** Yeah,

**BD:** you know, the, the human experience is highly subjective, you know, you can look at the same thing of somebody else, and they can think of something completely different of it. And that's just what's hard about it and all that then that's, you know, it's kind of like the, the bane of the beauty of our minds. It's like, we can take something, you know, look at this, you know, this is a sheet of paper English writing, and you'd be like, No, I don't understand that. You know, it's like, I know.

**EM:** Yeah.

**MM:** Yeah.

**EM:** Wow. Yeah. So, you know,

**MM:** Emily's just like, baffled

**EM:** You know, like, I knew this was gonna be insightful. And but I'm like, wow, like, this is like, cool. So young.

**MM:** I was kind of afraid we wouldn't have anything to talk about.

**EM:** But here we are, like, an hour and a half in is what time did we I think we started at like, 540. And it's seven o'clock. Whoo. Yeah. Yeah. This is cool. You know, and I almost going back to, like, you know, having different kinds of people in charge. Like that makes me think of, you know, like what we're all doing as historians like, I don't know what your guys' like path looks like. I think, Brian, don't you want to go on and get your PhD? Okay. Well, bless your soul.

**MM:** Yeah. I know, I'm not even doing the thesis option for this program.

**BD:** Yeah, I just this is my first semester of it. No, I kind of came into school at the game where I didn't start school till about 2425. Like undergrad, yeah, undergrad, to like, figured out what I wanted to do with my life, and then decided to grow up. And

**MM:** I wasted a lot of money because I thought I wanted to be a vet tech took one biology class, I was like, uh uh

**BD:** Oh, yeah. And I was a terrible student in grade school in high school. Like, I there's points in my life, I didn't think I was gonna graduate high school because I just didn't want to do the work. And I was just lazy, you know, and I, personally, I think I made the right decision of just taking those years off, and like, when I'm ready, and I'm finally deciding to grow up to do it. And I think it's helped me in the long run. I see so many young people, like get forced into college out of high school, and they and they just want to do as party and it's like, I get that it's like when I was that age that's all I wanted to do is have fun, but I couldn't imagine being your guys' ages and had not being able to go and do what you want to do or am I just like, you know, being 31 I kind of grew that, you know, like one to go on have fun, all kinds of stuff. I just want to sit home and read my stories.

**MM:** It definitely made me appreciate, like getting plastered at home rather than going to a disgusting bar with disgusting people. Like I do appreciate like, my time at home.

**BD:** I I definitely catch myself every time I like I went on it's like I look over at the young kids having fun. My god they're just like, whippersnappers

**MM:** Oh gosh, Yeah, it's like seeing people like go out during COVID just like really like but it's also like, well, I probably would have done the same thing to what that age

**EM:** that age

**MM:** even though that was like two years ago.

**EM:** Oh man. And like I was never one like in my undergrad I rarely went out like never really went to parties or you know out to bars like I did maybe a handful of times like I'm I'm more on like the studious side and like staying in with my friends and watching movies.

**MM:** Nerd.

**EM:** I'm okay with it. You know, kind of you know, and just seeing all of these people just out and about, you know, especially going to the bars on the Like Yeah, like bars are dirty? Like, why would you? Why would you risk that?

**MM:** I know I look back at like this type of places that I went to and like I would be out till bar close and now I'm just like, I don't even want to stay up past 10 o'clock.

**EM:** Like, I want to be home, in my bed in the comfort of my own home and just drink by myself. Yeah, that's that's what it comes down to.

**BD:** The only person I like here is me anyways so so I'm going to drink.

**MM:** Oh, man, there's just my cat just like silently judging me in the corner. Don't look at me.

**BD:** I definitely see like, you see, like in the news, like this bar handle had a case of COVID and all that kind of stuff. And like people are still going off to that bar. And it's like, like it kind of it kind of makes you really question the intelligence of humanity at a time this is like this, they're literally saying this place has this disease. Don't go there. Please don't go there. And like, Okay, well, I'm gonna go there and they're not no,

**MM:** But also, it kinda goes on to the bar that decides to stay open, even though they know they had a case. It's like, normally you would close and like, take your time to clean maybe like a month, two weeks, whatever. Figure out how to safely reopen or reconfigure your plan, like, a lot of the bar

**BD:** and I had a coworker as soon as all the bars and all that stuff opened up like he does went, and he went on does the same thing that he did before. And he got COVID he caught it. And I told him, I'm like, I don't even feel bad for you. Like they literally told you. It's here. And he went there. And he got it like what did you expect?

**MM:** Mm hmm.

**BD:** Did you expect not to get it with it's it's a really communicable diseases like, why don't go to the bottom like, Yeah, but the person and you're the bottom at it,

**MM:** or the people breathing in your face? Because close quarters? I'm sure no one was wearing a mask?

**BD:** No, no, that's the thing. Like, yeah, that's another thing I don't understand. Like, you go to restaurants, you have to wear masks to the table, but then you get to the table, you can take it off and eat and it's like

**MM:** I haven't been to a restaurant since March.

**BD:** But I mean, I've gone to restaurants, so I guess I'm kind of a hypocrite in that area.

**MM:** But what do you do your research before you go?

**BD:** Yeah, yeah.

**MM:** Yeah, so you're taking some sort of precaution.

**BD:** You know, at the same time, like I'm still taking the precautions to or like I'm sanitizing everything I get any chance I get, and you know, I try to keep socially distant, all that kind of stuff. I try not to touch things out, you know, wouldn't normally touch and it's like it's crazy world we live in now. But it I mean, it'll get better.

**MM:** Yeah. Yeah. I haven't been to a restaurant since March. I mean, I've gotten like takeout.

**EM:** But not to sit down.

**MM:** Nope. I don't even Remember what that's like anymore, or like going to the movies. Like I used to go to the movies all the time, like over the summer is when I would come home. between semesters like my cousin and I we would hit up every single \$5 movie Tuesday. And like, I miss going to movie like,

**EM:** Yeah,

**MM:** I don't pay attention to movies. When I'm sitting at home. I'm always like, mindlessly doing something on my phone. And then I'm like, wait, what was that about? Like?

**BD:** I just missed the popcorn. That's the only thing that's good about a movie for me. I love the popcorn.

**EM:** Cost like \$50 for a small popcorn.

**BD:** Hey, don't judge me I walk in there I'll just buy the popcorn and walk out like I just want the popcorn

**MM:** movie theater so I I'm from River Falls originally and we have a small-town movie theater that's like the history of the town like it's been there since like the 1930s or whatever. But what



they did to kind of help with their like sales during lockdown was they would do curbside pickup for popcorn candy soda for the people that wanted to have their movie nights at home.

**EM:** That's cool.

**MM:** You could go and get like the jumbo tub and get your drinks and you can go home and movie night

**EM:** that's cool

**MM:** I almost wish I was home to partake in that because they're popcorn is so good. I don't know what they do to it, but it tastes so much different.

**EM:** It's butter and salt

**MM:** exactly like I don't I don't know why it's so different, but it does

**BD:** I don't know but you go to the store to get the movie. Theater popcorn is just not the same. Oh, I think it's the oil.

**MM:** I bought an air popper cuz I was like maybe that's what it is, it's a microwave. Oh, yeah. trying to think of other stuff that I missed. I missed. I did really like working at a bank where it was just the drive up. Made the days a lot longer, but I didn't have to deal with annoying customers.

**EM:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, one thing I definitely miss is going to concerts.

**MM:** Yep. I missed out on three concerts this year.

**EM:** That sucks.

**MM:** Well, it's like me and my mom's thing. We go to concerts with one of her friends that's known me since I was like two. So, my mom and my grandma and I, we were gonna go see Reba in April. But that got postponed. And then in August, we were gonna go to Cedarburg. They do like an outdoor show. They started it last year, but it's like, kind of like a fundraising concert. And we couldn't go to that. And then I was going to try and get tickets for me and my dad to go see George Strait, at the Xcel Energy Center. But that didn't happen either.

**EM:** So sad.

**MM:** Yeah, I missed that so much.

**EM:** I just yeah, I hope because like next year, Motley Crue, def, lopper, poison, and Joan Jett are gonna be at Miller Park in Milwaukee. And my boyfriend and I are huge fans of like all of those, so we bought tickets. So, I am hoping and crossing my fingers and toes and arms and

everything, that something gets better, because I'm like, you know, that's a whole year and some odd months away.

**MM:** So, I just have the medical official saying 2022

**EM:** I love it.

**MM:** crossing my fingers for you, though.

**EM:** Thanks.

**MM:** Well, that's why I'm excited too, because the content that we were supposed to go to in August, they said the people that have already bought tickets they get so they're going to turn next year's into a two-night event. And the people that already have tickets, basically get a free night of concerts and then you get a whole other lineup of people

**EM:** dang

**MM:** and me and my mom's favorite country musician Kip Moore, will be headlining one of the nights. I swear to God, if I cannot go to that I'm gonna be so mad

**EM:** like, I'm gonna find Kip Moore myself. Tell him to sing to me.

**MM:** I don't know what it is about him. But I just love his music.

**EM:** That's funny.

**MM:** Funny, huh. And for the sake of my grandma, I want us to go see Reba because she has wanted to see Reba her whole life and I'm just like, we have to go see,

**EM:** that woman needs to see Reba.

**MM:** I mean, granted in her condition, it probably won't happen it anyways. But it couldn't be better buy than no issues, right.

**EM:** Yeah. Now. Well, do you guys have any other questions for anyone? I think we covered a lot.

**MM:** I think we did. I think we got a lot of great content here.

**EM:** Yes. I mean, we can keep going if you guys want, but I know we probably all have papers that we have to work on. Yay. We love it. No, I yeah.

**MM:** I'm glad we could do this as one of our ones though. So

**EM:** me to a good one to start with. Well, at least for me. I know. Cuz Brian, you already did one. Nice. Cool.

**MM:** I got one on Tuesday scheduled.

**EM:** I went tomorrow with one of my friends. So awesome. How do we wrap this up? I know it's recording but

**MM:** I don't know what we say.

**EM:** All right, well, I'm just gonna pull this Well, that concludes I guess our oral history interview with the fall 2020 and grad students in intro to public history. So, thanks for watching.

**MM:** I'll just stop recording here

**EM:** Sounds good