

Interview with Jack Muller

Anna Jones, Interviewer

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Macalester College
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[Interviewer is in bold, interviewee is unbolded]

[00:00]

AJ: All right. To start with, could you just say your name, pronouns, what year you are at Mac, and what you're studying and where you're from?

JM: Yes. My name is Jack Muller, I use he/him/his. I am a junior studying biology, and I'm from Indianapolis.

[00:35]

AJ: Great. Okay, so in terms of the pandemic, can you just like walk me through where you have been geographically from March till now?

JM: So, when we got—I think they changed the spring break from like one week to two weeks was the first step. I was going to go to Florida with my family for a week. And so I ended up

going there for a week, and by the end of the week they had almost shut everything down so we actually had to leave early so that we could get home and fly.

After that I stayed home until—I stayed home until I came back in the fall. I wasn't planning on coming back for the fall I guess—due to online classes and stuff—but for soccer we started practicing pretty much, as soon as we were able to. So I kind of had to be here.

And then I—when we went home for Thanksgiving break I went to Florida with my friends from home. And then, spent the rest of the time back home in Indiana, and then came—or I've been here since like, end of January.

[2:20]

AJ: Back in St. Paul?

JM: Yeah.

[2:31]

AJ: Great. [pause] And then, could you also just talk a little bit about, who you've been with during those times? So, who was home? Who was with you, like, at the different stages?

JM: Yeah. Um, so when I was home. My—I have three siblings also, I have three sisters. So I have two older sisters and one younger. My oldest sister lives in DC and she was finishing up her last year of law school last spring. So she actually didn't come—or she lives with her fiance

there, so she didn't actually come home during the pandemic. But my other older sister came back from her job in New York to stay because everything was shut down in the city. So it was basically me, two of my sisters and then my parents and my dogs at home.

And then when I came here—I live with three guys on the soccer team, and pretty much the only people I've been able to see since I've been in St. Paul are the guys on the soccer team. Just because, you know, it's not smart anyways but because we're in athletics we're kind of under a pretty big microscope, I would say, in terms of who we hang out with and stuff.

[4:18]

AJ: Do you feel like—like what will happen—what do you mean by under a big microscope?

JM: Oh, yeah. So, actually as an athletic department, Macalester has had some trouble with students outside of the department reporting, I guess, like teammates hanging out with each other, or teammates doing this or that. And so, you know, we get—or if that happens—not only are you affected but you know your team can't practice or your team can't play in competitions and—and stuff like that so there's a lot on the line I guess, just for a little bit of risk.

And I guess I also didn't say that—when I went home I hung out with my friends who live there also, so I saw them.

[5:37]

AJ: Would you say in terms of—this is maybe opening up a different question, but like, how do you think your relationship with friends from home versus friends from Macalester, or whatever have changed due to the pandemic?

JM: Yeah. Um, I think I'll start with, I guess my friends back home. They are—I would not have seen them nearly as much as you know I did. And I think it's too early to say if that's a good or bad thing, because you know, you always want to like, leave and do new things and stuff. So, I never expected to be hanging out with them that much, especially after leaving for college. So it was fun to see them for that long. And I think it strengthened relationships for the future too, you know, have lifelong friends.

But in terms of Macalester, I have seen a significantly less amount of people or significantly fewer people, just in terms of like interactions and going to class and all that. So, not to say it's been, you know, hard, by any means but it's definitely been more difficult.

[7:17]

AJ: Do you feel like with the people that you do see, so I guess the soccer team, have you gotten closer with people, because of the pandemic, or do you feel like your level of friendship would be about the same regardless?

JM: Yeah, I think, in terms of the full team it was hard to make new relationships with, you know, with the first years coming in because, I mean, I don't even know what their actual face looks like or, you know, let alone their facial expressions. But, like the guys I live with right now,

I have to see them, you know, all day every day. So, I think our relationship definitely got better because we have to be online and inside all the time.

[8:12]

AJ: So you feel like in terms of those people, it's been like, in some ways a good thing. You've been closer because of this.

JM: Yeah, I think I got lucky that I live with people that I enjoy being around, because I know some people, you know, in terms of like subletting or whatever the situation might be, they had to live with people who they might not be the most compatible with and, you know, that would be really tough if you had to see them all day, every day, and didn't leave and do other things.

[8:47]

AJ: Yeah, totally. Um, what are some—I guess we'll talk about both, like, what were some of the things that you and your friends did this summer. And—yeah, let's start with that—and like how would that be different than what you usually did?

JM: Um, yes. So, I guess. We didn't do much like that was noteworthy, I guess, or not just like hanging around doing whatever. Whatever you can find in Indiana to do. Luckily, a couple of my friends have lake houses or something similar and so we spent a lot of time just hanging out

doing that because none of us had a real job because nothing was open in Indiana so you couldn't really be working if you didn't have something online.

[9:52]

AJ: Cool. Um, so in terms of work, did you do any work this summer, not, not really, like what was that process like—did you try to get a job or did you sort of kind of decide it wasn't gonna happen?

JM: Yeah, I was supposed to do research last summer at Johns Hopkins, and so it got canceled. So it kind of got—not only the experience I couldn't get, but also the money I couldn't get, which was unfortunate. And so in the summer I kind of just did odd jobs, random stuff, outside for my friend's families or whatever. I wasn't spending too much money so making money wasn't too big of a priority, I would say. I tried to volunteer at a couple of places—I'm planning to go to med. school so I had to get like shadowing and volunteer hours and stuff—and tried to get that but it was not really available in the summer.

It ended up being good for me. I think I got a big break that I wouldn't have gotten. And I think it kind of, I don't know, fueled me more, than if I were to have been doing something the whole time.

[11:20]

AJ: Yeah, that totally makes sense. Is that research opportunity postponed or is it just not going to happen anymore?

JM: Yeah, it was cancelled and then I was hoping they would have it this summer but they also cancelled it this summer.

AJ: That sucks.

JM: That was unfortunate but can't really do much.

[11:51]

AJ: Um, I would say—so, looking back, what were like the immediate changes that were most dramatic—back in like March?

JM: I think the immediate changes we're just living with my family again, it made me feel like I was sixteen. You know, like going to high school every day. But it was awesome to spend time with my family, kind of like you said just doing things you wouldn't have normally done, you know, watching TV together and honestly just talking and eating dinner and stuff like that. So, that would probably be the most immediate changes like in March, I would say.

[Technical Difficulties]

[12:58]

AJ: Just kind of wrap up this relationship with family and friends type of questions. I guess we can, yeah—take a moment to talk about—how about your relationship with your family, like, were there individuals you got closer with? Things that were difficult?

JM: So my grandpa also was in a nursing home, like yours [referencing Anna's oral history]. I don't know if—I don't know what your grandpa has—but mine was diagnosed with Alzheimer's like five or six years ago. So he was kind of on as his last legs. And he passed away right when the pandemic started actually so like before the lockdowns.

[13:48]

AJ: Oh I'm sorry.

JM: Oh, thank you. So that kind of took one—or I guess it wasn't easy. My dad kind of—it was my dad's dad. And so he visited him all the time and stuff and so, I was coming home at the same time that he was dealing with that, or we are all dealing with that I guess, and so it was kind of a conglomerate of things happening. But in terms of strengthening relationships I think that, because of that, I got closer with my dad for sure.

And then also just my other set of grandparents, because they're also getting a little bit older in the same way. So just kind of enjoying that while you know it's still there. But in terms of my siblings, I would say, I'm way closer with the two sisters that I was there with. I'm already

a little bit closer with my youngest—or my younger sister regardless, but now it's a little more drastic I would say. So it's kind of tough because I didn't get to see my oldest sister a lot. So that, that discrepancy I guess between—my relationship between my siblings is interesting now.

[15:15]

AJ: Yeah, how would you say, like, she interprets it? What would you say about how she feels about not being around and stuff?

JM: I think she misses it—she actually got married in November or October and—and so I think she definitely is jealous or was jealous that we were all spending so much time together. Which makes sense because you know she wasn't doing too much, but she had to stay out in DC for her job. So yeah, I would say that I'm sure she wishes she could have spent more time with everyone but at the same time I know she would have not liked it once you've been there for too long.

I don't know if you can hear me.

[16:17]

AJ: Yeah, I can. So there hasn't been like a conversation yet about that, where she's been like, "I feel left out?"

JM: Luckily, no. My mom has kind of hinted at—hey you need to call your, you know, older sister, just asked her, you know what's up or whatever. And it's hard to do because, not that I wouldn't have done it normally ,but just seems so forced you know.

[16:44]

AJ: Yeah. Yeah. How much older is she?

JM: She is six years older than me.

[16:55]

AJ: Okay. So, six years older and then what's the next, what's the next one?

JM: Four years. And then my younger sister is four years younger than me.

AJ: So you guys are kind of spread out.

JM: Yeah. Yeah, because you were talking about your family and I was like, oh that's actually a pretty good age gap from oldest to youngest.

[17:24]

AJ: Yeah, I guess mine is like eight years total and yours is like ten, so I guess it's not that different.

So, um, I guess, looking back on this year, what aspect of the year, would be most surprising, or shocking to your former self like back in March? Like what do you think has happened? What relationships are the most different? What part of your life is most different like interest-wise because of the pandemic?

JM: Yeah, I think—I think the biggest thing, probably, is that and was not able to do that—so I was going to study abroad this spring and was not able to do that. So instead of—or I guess there wasn't another side, but I chose to study for my MCAT this semester, so that I could take it. I'm actually taking it next week.

[18:51]

AJ: Oh, good luck.

JM: Thank you. I was gonna wait a little bit, like a year or two. Just because I wouldn't have been able to do everything if I studied abroad. So I guess that's kind of like a silver lining. I was able to take classes here this semester that I needed to take. And so, if I do well I kind of have a head start and be able to fast track things a little bit more hopefully.

[19:21]

AJ: So do you feel like that has become a goal, like beforehand, it was med. school maybe when I'm 23-24 now it's like maybe I'd go right after I graduate?

JM: Yeah, I was always kind of deciding, you know, is it worth it to go right after, if I have to rush through all this stuff with study abroad. You know, it wouldn't be that big of a deal if I took a break, and now I kind of see it as an opportunity to do what I want, you know, faster, I don't have to like waiting around. So in—in that way, yeah, I would say my goal definitely changed.

[20:05]

AJ: So, what do you think was the transition process for you going from bummed that you weren't able to study way to like figuring out that this actually could like work out better for what you wanted?

JM: Yeah. So I think it started kind of with my season getting canceled in the fall. And so I was like—that was the first time I was like oh, this, you know, this might affect more things than just like my summer, or like finishing classes in the spring. And so, yeah, it started with that and then I think—I can't remember when they canceled the spring study abroad but it was sometime in those months. And it kind of just got me thinking you know I don't want to—not waste a semester because I don't think that's what it would be—but I had the opportunity to do it and I knew I wanted to. And so, not the might as well attitude, but I guess more of the why not. Yeah, I had all the prerequisites and so, yeah.

[21:31]

AJ: I mean, it's not like you can go back, or anything, but if you could look at this in the future and then go back and then, you know, say you got the option to study away or do the MCAT this spring. Which do you think you would have chosen?

JM: I think I would have studied abroad. I'm minoring in Spanish also, so I think it would have been cool to use it for something. Yeah and get better.

AJ: So it's more—this MCAT thing is more like taking advantage of what you, what you're left with sort of.

JM: Yeah, I figured it would be better than just kind of being up in the air about it. I think either one would have been fine, but I prefer, or I chose to do this one.

AJ: Yeah I—you know I've been doing those EMT shifts I've been talking to more pre-med kids. The MCAT seems crazy.

JM: Yeah. It is a beast.

[22:56]

AJ: How has the studying process been for you?

JM: I bought an online course that I've been using since January. I'm just kind of going through each topic and taking practice exams every couple weeks. But there's definitely a lot of information, and I think they have definitely been times where I have just kind of accepted that I'm not going to be able to know everything. And so I'm just kind of taking the approach of, you know, if I know enough I can make an educated guess on the most questions.

AJ: Yeah, I feel like that's what you have to do with a seven hour test.

JM: Yeah, exactly.

[23:57]

AJ: Okay, so I guess you kind of started to answer this question, but what hobbies have you picked up, or how have you been filling your time since a lot of normal stuff has been taken away? Maybe also like what was your way of coping early on with like all this free time?

JM: Yeah I would say initially with extra time and not being able to see anybody I really got into like cooking and fitness I would say and like nutrition just because it was so easy. It was like the only thing you could control, you know, like what you ate, because you're in the same place every day and doing the same things. So I ended up working out a lot. Cooking you know, every meal, which ended up being really useful, because now I cook instead of buying a bunch of frozen food.

But in terms of hobbies, I asked that question because I wish that I would have picked up something, you know I tried to like—I played—or I was in band in middle school, and I used to play the drums and I like never really continued with that, so I know how to like read music and stuff. And so I try to teach myself how to play the piano. But it didn't work too well. And my parents kept getting mad at me because I played during the day at home and was loud.

And I'd say right now, you know, I live in a house that's, you know, super old. And it's not that big. So, especially in the winter, it was kind of like, little bit of cabin fever. And one of my roommates is really into yoga and meditation and stuff. And so I tried that out. I still do it and it's actually pretty nice. I'm not entirely sure what all the benefits are but it makes me feel better about myself, I guess. But yeah, I would say those are probably my biggest hobbies right now.

[26:58]

AJ: Yeah, awesome, that, that totally sounds like you're picking up hobbies. Do you, do you feel like you do them, yoga and meditation like on a weekly basis now or a daily basis?

JM: I wake up and I don't even like calling it like meditating, but I just use this like heads—have you ever heard of the app headspace?

AJ: No.

JM: It's like a mindfulness meditation app, I think. So there's a bunch of different things you can click and listen to. I think you can pick like a female or male voice and then they just walk you

through what to do and some of its pretty cheesy, and you kind of just have to get through it but I do it most mornings, and it's just nice to sit in silence and not think about—.

[28:00]

AJ: Yeah that's super cool. I have a friend who has gotten really into meditation and he's tried to convince me and like I want to, but it's just ,you know—maybe I'll maybe get this app.

JM: Yeah, I didn't do it until I got that because I was like no way I'm just gonna sit there and set a timer for ten minutes.

[28:22]

AJ: Yeah that's a great idea. Um, okay, so obviously now like things are kind of opening up-ish. It looks like people are getting vaccinated, you know. So what, if anything, are you anxious about as restriction sees up? Like, for example, are you kind of worried about social interactions? What's kind of, like, on your mind when you think about, you know, this summer and next fall?

JM: So, I was kind of in the same boat as you. I was working as a volunteer in a hospital back home over winter break. And so I got to get vaccinated in January, also. So I guess from that standpoint I've just been thinking about everyone getting vaccinated, and hopefully things, you know, going back to normal-ish. I haven't had too many thoughts about like, no, I don't want to see people in public because I might get it. And I don't know if that's selfish or not. But I haven't

been too worried about getting it myself and so I kind of have a skewed opinion because I want to do things like that but I know I shouldn't until we can.

I don't know if I've been thinking about too many other things. This summer, I'm doing research at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and I think most of—not most, but some of their restrictions I think are lifted already. And like back home they lifted the mask mandate in Indiana, which I don't think has changed much but it's apparently now not a state law, you know, to have a mask mandate. So it's interesting to see where things could go I think.

[30:54]

AJ: What is the situation with this research? Will you be living in Arizona?

JM: Yeah, I just signed a lease for an apartment and it's in-person research, I just have to be vaccinated. And I think the lab still—I have to do like safety stuff online, and all of it still has all the COVID restrictions for when you're inside the lab, so I think I'll probably still have to follow all those guidelines this summer.

AJ: Cool. That's exciting though.

JM: Yeah, it's something to do.

AJ: Are you living with people, or will you be living alone?

JM: Um, I am living in a studio apartment with my girlfriend. She found a job out in Tucson, so.

[31:53]

AJ: Um, do you want to talk a little bit about that, like, how long have you guys been dating and what has that been like during COVID?

JM: Yeah, we've been dating for I would say like three years-ish. So, during COVID, it was—she goes to Indiana University and I've been able to visit her pretty often. I have a bunch of friends who go there too so it kinda has worked out in that way. And then it was kind of nice being able to see her from going home until, coming back to school, and then kind of since then—since she's all online she can come stay with me. But I can't really leave because of soccer. So, kind of been odd in that way but it's—there's also been some good things about it so.

[33:03]

AJ: So you guys were together for like five months, and then how often have you seen each other since then?

JM: I saw her a couple times in the fall semester, and then we saw each other, I would say, like a handful of times every week, when I was home up until February, and then she's been able to come and visit you know for a week, two weeks at a time, this semester so it's been nice.

[33:49]

AJ: So quite a bit. Has that been similar to pre-pandemic. Or have you seen each other more because of the pandemic?

JM: Yeah, I would say we've seen each other much more, which has been great, but unexpected, so it's going to be interesting when we had to go back to, you know, not online classes where you don't have as much flexibility.

[34:19]

AJ: Yeah, especially after living together for the summer too. So, what would you describe as some of the more difficult parts of the pandemic for you?

JM: I would say, kind of the stuff I do for fun I couldn't really do. So like, you know I—not to say don't take playing soccer seriously but there is a reason that I played Division III sports, and it's because I enjoy it, you know, and don't have to be like doing it every single day, and all that. But I did miss it a lot more than I thought I would, I would guess I would say. So it's tough. You couldn't really play with other people. It's kind of just training on your own.

And I would say in that same line of thought—or train of thought the season has been pretty tough. We've been practicing since we came in September, and we only just played our first games last week, and we just played our last one yesterday.

AJ: Oh, that was it?

JM: Yeah, we're only playing four games for the spring. So it was kind of tough to do all that, you know, we were doing something, six—six days a week for however many months which is not normally what we would be doing. So it was, it was weird, like I didn't get to play, but I still had to practice and lift and stuff so that was kind of tough. Just because I felt like I was taking a lot of time.

[36:29]

AJ: Yeah. Did it feel like—like why was it tough? Was it because it's taking away the fun aspect of the sport or like, because you just never knew if you're in a play and that's your favorite part? Could you describe that a little bit more?

JM: Yeah, I think saying that it took away the fun is pretty much exactly what it did. It felt like I was just getting burnt out, I didn't want to go to practice anymore because it wasn't fun and we didn't get to actually do the things that we normally would do. So I think doing something like that kind of, initially, you know, it's so easy to complain. But then if you shift your thought to I'm glad that we get to do something than I think I started looking at other things in my life, kind of like that. So like, I'm glad I get to still take classes online and have as much flexibility as I do. And, you know, I had the chance to study for the MCAT because I'm taking online classes. So yeah, kind of like seizing the opportunity rather than only focusing on the hard parts.

[37:50]

AJ: Yeah, that's a great mindset. Um, do you think that the fact that you were kind of feeling burnt out affected your relationship with like teammates, or your coach or did you notice that among other people on the team?

JM: Yes, I, I would definitely say that affected—just like in general. You know some of the guys on the team were, like, just taking it super seriously, and I'm kind of on the opposite end of that spectrum in terms of like—if I'm practicing indoors, you know, in the middle of February, when it's negative something outside I'm not gonna—I'm not going to be trying the hardest, I'd rather enjoy it.

[38:52]

AJ: From your perspective, did that seem to be a coping mechanism—other people taking it seriously, or is it just that they take soccer more seriously, or like, why do you think there was that discrepancy among players?

JM: I think that's a good question and I don't really know the full answer, because I've been thinking about the same thing. And I think a huge thing is that I'm getting older. And so, I didn't have my junior season so it seems like I kind of skipped a year a little bit, so I went from not being naive as a sophomore freshman but you kind of get a different perspective I guess like, I'm not going to be doing this professionally or, probably, you know, that much afterwards.

So, I think that mindset is in a lot of the older guys, and the younger guys still have the mindset of, you know, this is my life, I'm going to—I'm going to work the hardest I can at this, you know to be the best that I can, because I can, you know, I have the time.

[40:06]

AJ: So you would say like it's kind of a split between like the older people versus the younger people.

JM: Yeah, I would definitely say that's true. And it adds that our freshmen didn't really have a real, you know, season and stuff so they don't really know how everything works and it's hard to instill the same culture, and stuff like that, when they just don't experience the same things.

AJ: Yeah. Yeah, totally. Like, how can you explain how they're supposed to act when it's like a completely different thing.

JM: Yeah.

[40:49]

AJ: Um, what about with the coaches, has your relationship been similar to the past or worse or better?

JM: I would say, much more formal, if that makes sense. Just because you can't stop by their office and say, what's up, can you talk for five minutes? It's like—I think it goes for every relationship that's not like texting or something like that, you have to set up a time to Zoom. And it just seems way too formal to have like a regular conversation. So I would say, yeah, more formal interactions and kind of—them getting on the players for, you know, not doing the best that they can be doing and then it's kind of tough just hearing that and putting your head down and working.

AJ: Yeah, that makes sense.

JM: I guess I only have to have a couple more practices, so, then I get a break.

[42:02]

AJ: Back to like kind of thinking about—so like this might be a hard question, but you could think about like this year and a half what was one of the worst days? And then on the opposite what was one of the best days? And maybe, like, why, and if you can think of an exact, you know like, I don't know—.

JM: Yeah. It's a good question. I would say one of the best days was when I found out that I would be able to do research this summer because I didn't think that would even be an opportunity. And so I was stressing out kind of about what I could be doing this summer and,

you know, you're always thinking that you could be doing more, so it's tough. So I was really happy to have gotten that opportunity, and for it to be something interesting to me.

In terms of worst days. There were you know, when I feel like when everything was shut down kinda you can see anyone at all, in like April, and March there were definitely times where I did not want to be, you know, at home, not because of family or something. But just because I felt like I should be doing something else, you know, like, not living at home for that long, and doing nothing.

[43:54]

AJ: Yeah. That totally makes sense. Um, what is, what is the research about?

JM: I'm working in a lab of a researcher who's doing intestinal disease and cancer. So I'm basically just working as like a lab tech and doing all the busy work basically.

[44:24]

AJ: I feel like I've heard that doing some research is kind of like a good thing to have on your med. school resume.

JM: Yeah, yeah, I've heard that too. It's, um—I've gotten a lot of kickback actually for applying this early because apparently being young is a huge disadvantage even if you have the requisites

or prerequisites, I guess your age is important. So, I guess that feeds into getting stuff on your application.

[45:22]

AJ: I guess I would want to know a little bit about, so we talked a little bit about, like, the protests that have been happening. And have you been involved in anything like that, or like what—how do you feel about what are some of your opinions or thoughts on what's going on?

JM: Yeah, I think I agree with what you said earlier about the amount of time, people have, I think, because of the pandemic definitely affected the—I don't know the widespread nature of it, and like, how prevalent it was, you know, everywhere you went everywhere you've—I mean, every like professional sport has taken up some sort of stance against it—against or for whatever they're supporting. I don't think something like that would have happened if it didn't—

I wasn't, I've not been involved in any protests so I have not been to any just because I have not been really been involved in that kind of stuff. I fully support it, but I just haven't been educated enough. I would like to go to the places that need to be, you know, went to. And I don't think I—I don't think I have as much courage as a lot of people do to stand up for what they believe in and, even if it means, or even if there's a lot of negative consequences that come with it and so I really respect people that do that.

But I also think a lot of people like in our generation wouldn't have the ideas that they do. Now, not only in terms of being exposed to different ideas about, you know, institutional racism and things like that but just ideas on how to combat it. And I think it's going to be really

interesting in the future, because you know we are the people that are going to be in charge, at some point, and I think companies and business models and all that are going to change a lot—for better worse you know I don't know, but I definitely think there's a lot of changes coming in the future.

[48:20]

AJ: Yeah, great response. Like, do you have any thoughts on the election. How did you vote, if you voted? It was our first year voting. So, what did that feel like?

JM: Yeah. I voted mail-in with the absentee ballot, and for Indiana. And so, yeah, I think it was, I think for people who paid attention and wanted to be involved it helped it being like in the situation that it was so having like increased resources online and people our age posting like, you know, read this for platforms for each candidate like simpler summaries then maybe watching—I mean, I don't know about you, I wouldn't really ever turn on the news and listen for like an hour or something, watching or listening to people—what people are saying. I think the debates got a lot more coverage because of that also. So yeah, I think, for people who are involved. It was great and I think for people who weren't it was tough because either people had to tell them how to do it. And, you know, not forced them to in any way but like expose them to what they can do. But it was also easy to just like look away I guess if you didn't want to deal with it.

[50:08]

AJ: Another topic I wanted to just like to touch on, quickly was holidays. So, how were holidays, different for your family year. Did you celebrate at all? Yeah, what are your thoughts on holidays during a pandemic?

JM: Yeah, I actually kind of forgot about that. For Thanksgiving I normally have my entire extended family on both sides come to my house. And it's like the most hectic day of the year every year. My mom stresses out about it all the time. And it was really weird to only be just our family, for Thanksgiving and not having to clean the whole house and make food all day and and all that stuff so I think that was definitely odd.

For Christmas, you know, I had to Zoom with my grandparents and like my other extended family members, which was weird. You know family interactions I think are not always the most normal and then putting it on Zoom makes it that much weirder, I think. So I tried to stay off the camera as much as possible and let my sister's talk. And I think, I mean that was bas—those are basically the only holidays, right?

AJ: Yeah whatever—those are the two that you guys mostly celebrate?

JM: Yeah.

[52:17]

AJ: So yeah, I like this normal Thanksgiving sounds pretty hectic so was it like nice to have a break or did you miss it? How'd you feel that day?

JM: Yeah. I loved having, like, to not do anything, but it also. I was like, I didn't realize it then, cuz I'm like oh this is awesome we don't have to do this, whatever. And now I'm like why I actually haven't seen you know my family members in a long time. So, I kind of forget that that's basically one of the only times I see everyone at the same time. So I guess there's good and bad things to that.

[53:13]

AJ: Are most of those family members from out of state or do a lot of them live in Indiana?

JM: I actually have a significant amount of my relatives do live in Indiana. So, yeah majority actually come from Indiana, and then a couple families from out of state.

[53:40]

AJ: The only other holidays I'm thinking of right now that maybe you don't normally celebrate, like, do you usually do something for New Years Eve or like Fourth of July, like more friendly based holidays—were they different this year or not really?

JM: For New Year's Eve this year, I think for the first time since I was—I don't know, maybe like twelve, I spent the night with my parents just watching—I don't actually know what the show is called but like the ball dropping. And that one dude's New Year's Eve show, I can't remember his name.

[Techincal Difficulties]

JM: I don't know if you can hear me but I looked it up and it was—it's Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin Eve. But yeah, I did that for New Year's. Fourth of July last year, got to spend with my family at my lake, which was nice to enjoy, you know, being outside.

[55:25]

AJ: And that's pretty normal?

JM: Yeah, yeah, that's pretty normal it didn't change too much. I think it—you know, I think you get away with some of the guidelines being like outside and it being summer that, and you know like swimming and stuff, and being on boats, you don't really see too many like wearing a mask while doing that.

[55:51]

AJ: Would you say—kind of connected to that, like, COVID sort of increased your appreciation for like outside time, like doing those certain types of activities?

JM: Yeah, I think honestly one of the biggest things I've noticed is just like walking outside during the day, and like getting dressed in a different outfit every day. Because I'm definitely guilty of waking up and putting on the same sweatshirt if I'm just going to be walking around my house. And so, yeah, I've definitely appreciated—appreciated like walking to class, walking anywhere outside especially when it's nice.

[56:39]

AJ: Do you feel like you've been doing more walks? That type of thing?

JM: Yeah, you know, I—I would never pictured myself at twenty one, in college being like, I want to go on a walk outside, you know, through the neighborhood or something but that's, that's the point I guess I've gotten to—to do something.

[57:10]

AJ: I definitely feel that. This really isn't necessary for my interview but did you sister have a wedding in person? Were you there?

JM: She was getting married or got married to a guy in the JAG Corps, which she met him in law school, and he's going to be a lawyer like in the army, or for the Marines. And so he has to do certain schooling and live in like “the barracks,” I guess I don't really know the technical details. So they did it so that they could live together, not on the base while he was getting trained and stuff. And so it was kind of like, it was just his family—his immediate family and my immediate family and they just went and took pictures and that was basically it, and had dinner.

[58:15]

AJ: Was it in DC?

JM: Yeah, it was in DC and because, you know, there wasn't like a celebration now my sister wants one of course, so I guess there might be a second celebration or something I don't know, with more people later.

AJ: Yeah getting married right now is kind of crazy.

JM: Yeah, people have been doing a lot of different stuff, I would say.

AJ: I know I've heard of some Zoom weddings, kind of more early on, but—

JM: Yeah that would. Yeah. Imagine getting married online? That would be weird.

AJ: I remember one that was really early on that was like the Today show host, like did the wedding for, like, did the wedding for someone like on TV.

JM: Oh wow. That's funny.

AJ: Yeah, I guess they really liked the today show, I don't know, it was cute. Yeah, that was like early on when everything was really crazy. Um, I think. Yeah, I think that's everything.

JM: Awesome.

[End of Interview, 59:42]