

Interview with Chloé Nance

Ariana Flores, Interviewer

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Macalester College
Turck Building
Dorm Room**

00:00

[AF] Hi, I'm Ariana Flores This is my second interview. I'm here with Chloe Nance. Firstly, Chloe, I would like to give you a brief overview about this interview along with your rights as an interviewee. And if you agree, I will ask you for your consent, along with your full name and today's date.

So, this interview is for my medical geography class and Macalester College's COVID-19 archive project. The mission of this project is to collect information on the various impacts of the pandemic on our lives, through an array of interviews and images. This will be published through the college and will be available for public viewing. If you agree to participating in this interview, I will be asking you about your experiences during the pandemic. Feel free to provide as much or as little information as you see fit. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, we can stop the interview. Alright, do you agree?

[CN] Yes, I give my consent. My name is Chloe Nance, and today is Saturday, April 24 2021.

[AF] Excellent. Okay. So would you first like to just do a brief introduction?

[CN] Okay, hello I'm Chloe Nance. And I'm a freshman here at Macalester. I'm from Dallas, Texas, but I have French and African American origins. And I am a music major.

[AF] Could you tell us a bit of what life was like growing up in Texas?

[CN] Very hot, as many people may assume. It's always very hot. And it's just at least in the area I grew up in, it was just very homey. Because I surrounded myself with the right people, I guess. And there's not really much to do, unless you're able to have a car. So especially, until recently, when everyone gets their driver's license it's a lot of planning like "oh, Mom, can you take me to my friend's house?" or "oh, can we meet up at the park?" But yeah, just lots of fun little places to eat and places to hang out outside. So yeah.

[AF] If we were to go to Texas right now, where would be the first place you'd want to show me?

[CN] The first place I would want to show you would probably be...wait a second I literally forgot what it's called...

... Klyde Warren Park. It's downtown and it's very beautiful. And there is lots of things to do and you can walk around. There's statues and a lot of art pieces. So it's very similar to the sculpture garden here but I have not been there so I can't tell you.

[AF] Cool. And how did you decide on Macalester?

[CN] Well, I knew I wanted to go to a small liberal arts school. But one that wasn't in the middle of nowhere like all of them are. So Macalester was a really good choice. And it had a lot of features that were on my checklist like a nice campus, and overall nice weather not just hot like Texas. I really needed to get out of the heat. So the snow was very shocking yet a nice change. Yeah, it just overall fit what I wanted.

[AF] Fascinating. What kind of hobbies or interests do you like? What are your favorite things to do here outside of academics?

05:33

[CN] Well I'm a part of an acapella group called Chromatics. And that is really fun, and involves my passion with music and being with other people making music. So it's really fun. And I don't know if this counts, but I just like walking around campus if that is a thing. So yeah.

[AF] So did the pandemic in any way affect your decision on where you wanted to go to college?

[CN] It actually did not at all, because like, I got accepted into Macalester before the pandemic was even a thought. So, I already accepted it, and I was ready to go. So when the pandemic happened, I was still like yeah, I'm gonna do college now. Because otherwise it would just be inconvenient for my personal life.

[AF] Well, I guess we could talk more about life during the pandemic. So when COVID-19, first came to the United States, what were your first thoughts?

[CN] At first, I was like, "oh no it's not going to come here" because it didn't come to Texas really, at first. And there were a couple of people around me like "we're not going to shut down

school, that's never gonna happen". Because there was a school 20 minutes away from mine that had a couple of COVID cases, and my friend's brother went there. And so it still seemed very whatever like, "COVID-19? What's that?"

But then, literally, it was Friday when this person I was talking to said "oh yeah, I don't expect us to shut down". And then that weekend I went out to a really fancy dinner with my best friend, kind of wary of it because there were cases in town, but obviously not to the point where people were wearing masks or anything yet. And I was living my life on the weekend. And then the next day, we got an email saying we're going to cancel school for a couple of weeks. And you know, that turned into now. So yeah, it was really strange

[AF] Sort of an off topic question, but how do you feel going back now that Texas is trying to get rid of the mask mandate?

[CN] Well, yeah, that made me really mad. But you know, what can you do when your governor is a republican? But, right now I'm fully vaccinated officially for two weeks, so I'm just gonna keep doing what I've been doing, which is wearing a mask everywhere and having a bunch of hand sanitizer. Yeah, I'll just be cautious and probably not leave my house because I don't anyways.

[AF] Were there any major changes in your daily routine when the pandemic hit?

09:25

[CN] For sure. A very important thing to me is food, as it should be for everyone. That was just so weird--like grocery shopping. A lot of times I would go grocery shopping with my mom. And it was just so weird because then there's all these delivery services. I mean, they had existed but we never really used that because it's like, what's the point? But then we started using grocery deliveries like Uber Eats more. And just, it was just very strange. And we just kind of had to figure out a system for getting food and our meals every day.

Then another thing that came to my attention through this TikToker--from this very immunocompromised influencer--is that everyone is using these delivery apps and grocery delivery apps, when they could very likely and safely go get groceries on their own. But everyone was using the delivery apps. And there was no time to get your food delivered. It was backed up. But then she was like "well, I actually need this because if I go to the store, there's a high chance I'll get it, and there's a high chance I could die from this, unlike any other average person". So it made me think a bit and I talked with my mom about it. And so we found this service called Imperfect Foods, which I highly recommend. So it basically takes, as it says in the

title, imperfect foods, like the ugly looking tomato, or the cucumber that can't be put in the supermarket, because people for whatever reason don't want to eat the ugly looking fruit.

And so we started ordering our produce from there, and a couple of other of our main groceries. And then my mom would go to one or two grocery stores a week to get the rest of what we didn't order from Imperfect Foods. So then that became our system. And yeah, it was very nice.

[AF] Besides food deliveries, how else were there changes? How were online classes, and how did you spend most of your time in your home?

[CN] Yeah, online classes were a drag as I feel like it was for everyone. It was very unmotivating especially because with at least me and my friends, we would be in our beds while we're in class. And that does not help at all, but it was the end of the year and we were kind of over it. And so were the teachers if I'm being honest.

So it just was what it was, but it was very comforting at a point because I didn't have to leave the house or really do anything. And so it was good for a while, but then after a month or whatever, I needed to do something. So I started doing classes in my backyard. And if you know me, I never go in my backyard ever, because we have wasps and stuff and I don't like that. But I started doing classes outside because spring in Texas is always sunny basically. So it was nice to get some vitamin D which I highly lacked.

Other than class itself, it was just very little movement, which also didn't help because I have chronic back pain. So I started doing this thing, where I have a goal of doing 5000 to 6000 steps everyday. So that kind of helped motivate me to stand up and not just lay around and be lazy all day.

14:24

[AF] How was your family affected by the pandemic?

[CN] It was hard because my dad is a self employed musician. So mostly he has regular gigs. And he also has a recording studio in our house. So people would come over and obviously, with COVID-19, how can that happen, especially when it first hit and everything shut down. It was very difficult.

For my family, we just didn't really know what to do. But then, we had savings and stuff, and there was going to be the stimulus checks and unemployment checks, but that takes a lot of time to fill out the paperwork, etc. So thankfully for the internet, my dad started doing Facebook Lives and streaming him performing with this singer and asking people to Venmo or CashApp if they felt generous enough. He still does that now, even though stuff is opening up again. It shows

a nice little form of community because the internet's a wonderful place, even though it can be bad at times. But it was good and bad.

And oh my god, it was actually really bad at one point because we thought my dad had COVID-19. And I freaked out because I don't deal well when there's a medical concern for me or anyone that I care about. So when I heard my dad might have COVID-19 because he had a fever and stuff, we all just kind of went into panic mode in my house. And my best friend's dad actually had just gotten over COVID-19 because he was in California, the hub of where it all started in America. And so her mom was so kind to give us all these things. We got to make these health juices and teas to build up the immune system. And we started wearing masks in the house and isolated my dad until he could get a test. And it was negative, thankfully. But yeah, that was really, really scary. I would not recommend it.

[AF] Was testing easy to get in Texas?

[CN] At first it was. I remember the way we got it. My best friend's mom actually told us about it, because that's where my best friend's dad got his test. There was this testing drive at this Medical Center or grocery store parking lot--I can't remember. But the lines were very, very long as I feel like they were everywhere. So my dad woke up really early one day and went to get it. So he didn't really have to wait in line that long.

But yeah, it was difficult. You had to know the right people at the right places to go at the beginning.

[AF] And your dad still does his job mainly online?

18:25

[CN] He does an online show once a week. And then there's this restaurant where the stage is very far away from like the customers. And obviously, everything's regulated. And he wears a mask because he plays the keyboard so he doesn't need to sing or anything. So there's a couple of places like that, where it's still in person, but safety measures are respected, thankfully.

And then there was this Dallas musicians Association, I think that's what it's called, where every couple of months they did this 24 hour streaming of music and art and whatever. And so my dad did that a couple of times. So there's a lot of things going on in the area to try and support local musicians, which is nice.

[AF] Has it been difficult for him?

[CN] I don't know. Being an artist and local musician, during the pandemic, for sure has tough factors. I don't know how to pinpoint one thing.

[AF] Do you have a relatively large or small family living in your household?

[CN] In my household it's average. I guess we're five people. I don't know.

[AF] How was it all living together at the same time?

[CN] Oh yeah, oh my god, it's all coming back to me. So I have an older sister and a younger sister and I'm the middle, and my mom and dad. And so my older sister was in college at the time, she was actually doing a study abroad in France when everything happened. And she was told "you have one week to pack everything and go back home". So that was really difficult for her. And then I was in my senior year of high school, and my little sister was in fifth grade. We were both doing school online at the same time. Then when my sister came back, she was going to be doing school online at the same time. So the Wi-Fi quality sucked. It was not good.

But then also we had to plan when my sister came home. We had to get a room prepared for quarantine and get the sprays, the master gloves, all that jazz. So my sister quarantined in her room for two weeks. It was so weird. It was kind of like being a hotel. We kind of tended to her like "okay, here's your food". So I don't know, it was strange.

But we lived through it. It was alright. Yeah. But then after her quarantine we were all just kind of moving around the house at the same time. It was normal-ish, because she had been away for college for two years already. And she would only come and visit in the summer and winter break. So having her there for such a long amount of time was kind of weird. It reminded me of when we were all younger, which can be good and bad. But yeah, overall, just.

[AF] Do you have any fond memories from when you guys were all in the same house together?
22:51

[CN] During COVID?

[AF] Yeah.

[CN] Well, one thing that we all did together was binge Netflix as a family. So that was fun because we never really spend time together as a family as a whole because my dad works weird hours, like super late at night or early in the morning, or just all day, it really depends. And then it was finally a time like where he was at home all the time. And we had time to spend together and even though there was online school going, obviously there was the summer so it's kind of

more chill. I don't know, it felt nice at some point. But also it got annoying as I'm sure everybody can. I went a little bit crazy and didn't want to see the family at one point.

But yeah, I guess just to redirect to your question, bingeing Netflix together. And also, I would cook for everyone. So then, I guess it's not communal, but just everybody eating together something that was made from scratch and homemade. It was nice. I guess.

[AF] Did you take up any new hobbies?

[CN] Well, like I just mentioned, I cooked which is not necessarily new, but I never did it as much. But, I made a lot of things. I made bread from scratch, which was something I have never done in my life. I made pretzels, which was an experience. I made cinnamon buns from scratch. I tested a bunch of different recipes to try and find the best chocolate chip cookie recipe. Just to name a few.

But then I started making earrings from polymer clay, which was actually my older sister's idea, but I kind of stole it from her because she bought all the material. And she was like, "oh yeah, I'm gonna do this". And I was like, "oh wait, that kind of looks fun". And so I just kind of stole her clay and she was mad because polymer clay is actually kind of expensive. And all the materials you need to make the earrings. But it's whatever. We're siblings. So yeah, I made cloud earrings, strawberries, watermelon, just like quirky things. And that was really fun. And it was something I could do while having Netflix on in the background or music on in the background and just kind of zoned out for a couple hours. Because honestly, it took a while. To make clouds, you would think it would be easy. But it took me like four hours.

[AF] Did you ever sell them?

[CN] No, I didn't sell them. I just either kept them or gave them to friends.

[AF] I still love the cow earrings you provided me, just to say.

[CN] Keep that in.

[AF] And did you ever partake in any of the trendy things to do? Like, dalgona coffee?

[CN] Oh yeah, for sure. I made that. That was actually--that was a funny thing. Because my older sister is the one who finds all these TikTok trends because I don't personally have TikTok. But she's always like "oh, I want to do this, let's do this" and I always want to make it. For example, the dalgona coffee. She was like "oh, I want to make it" and she tried. And it

didn't work. And I was like, "I'm sure you're doing it wrong". And I did it in like 10 minutes. So maybe it's just a question of skill or maybe a question of her actually just being lazy. But I'm not gonna tell her.

And then she found this video for super crispy potatoes. And she was like, "yeah, I'm gonna do it". But then she was like, "can you just boil a potato for me?" and I was like "okay, fine, sure". And when the potatoes were done boiling. I'm like, "hello, where are you at, what are you doing?" And so I just ended up making that myself too.

But yeah, what are other trends that were the thing? I was not part of doing TikTok dances that was not for me. I have no coordination. What else?

28:20

[AF] If we can't think of anything, we can move on to some new questions. Alright. So, since the pandemic hit, you were a senior. You miss out on some senior year of high school experiences. What were like some things that you wish you had experienced?

[CN] I feel like that doesn't really apply to me. I don't like prom. People love prom and all that stuff. And if I'm being honest, I don't really care for it. I bought an outfit and everything. But I made sure it was something I could wear for another special event, not this big extravagant dress because that's not my style. So you know, I can wear that for something else. And I know a lot of kids didn't have graduation but in my case, I went to a very small school where my graduating class was twenty people. So we were able to have like an in-person graduation outdoors with the six feet spacing and everything and people's immediate family were invited. And so although it wasn't the big thing that was planned originally, we were still able to have it. So I guess I'm kind of lucky in that way. And it was still fun in a way. I don't want to bad mouth my school so I'm just gonna stop. So it was just a nice way to say goodbye to everyone and to see them one last time.

[AF] Do you miss talking to your friends, and do you miss any parts of going to school in-person? Or were you okay with the transition to online school?

[CN] I was okay with it. But it was also just really strange not being around these people all the time. Because they were like half of my life, you know, every day. So it was weird. But even though it was online, the people who would not shut up in class still wouldn't shut up. The people who would interrupt would still interrupt. So it kind of made it better in a sense, and not feel as strange, but it's still definitely something you had to get used to.

But there were new funny things we could talk about. I remember a professor was like, "oh, everybody has to turn on their cameras" and a girl in my class was just literally, straight up,

laying down in bed holding her laptop overhead and just being comfortable. And the professor was like, “are you okay, are you in bed right now?” and she's like “yeah, I'm just chillin”. You can't do that in person, you know? So there were ups and downs.

32:04

[AF] What did you do last summer, during the pandemic?

[CN] Well, I had a tutoring job actually. So that was good because you need money when you go to college. But other than that, honestly, I feel like I don't even remember. Preparing to go to college, I had to buy a lot of stuff. And that was kind of stressful. And thinking about going on a plane, because I already don't like planes, and then being on a plane in confined space when there's a disease going around. That's not fun to think about.

Surprisingly, I started a Tinder profile. Which, you know, dating during a pandemic, that's not safe. But you know, that's what the internet's for. So that was very interesting.

[AF] Did you find it easy to connect with people online as opposed to in-person?

[CN] I feel like I'm overall a people person when I want to be so it was not bad. There was obviously, your average Tinder people who just wanted to look for sex even if it was like a pandemic. That just shocked me and just made me disappointed in the world. But there were also really nice people. And I still talk to some people I met last summer today. I'm glad that that's gonna be able for anyone to see.

[AF] I remember you came here by yourself, right?

[CN] Yes.

[AF] Was that because of the pandemic that you traveled alone? Or were you always planning on moving in by yourself?

[CN] Good question. Honestly, I don't really even know what I was gonna do if there wasn't a pandemic. I feel like I probably would have come here alone because it's inconvenient for my mom to leave my little sister at home with my dad who works these weird hours and she knows she can't drive herself. She's 12. So, I probably would have come alone.

[AF] Was it hard? Not having them here for your first few days?

[CN] You know, honestly, it was just hard because there was a lot of heavy stuff to carry. So, honestly I said my goodbyes.

35:32

[AF] Since there's things you missed out on your freshman year, is there anything you wish you could have had coming into freshman year?

[CN] Oh, yeah. Because there's so many things that would be happening in-person. I heard they're supposed to be--correct me if I'm wrong, I'm not sure about these facts. But I know, there's like some sort of winter ball or something, even orientation was supposed to be in-person. I feel like it would have been way more engaging and fun. The orientation leaders were doing their best, and I applaud them, but it's online, so it's just me. And clubs and a bunch of these events that could have happened, and some of them did, thankfully, while the weather was nice, but you know, it wasn't always like that.

[AF] Would you say it has been difficult trying to make connections with people at least here? With online classes do you think it's been difficult to reach out, connect and make friends?

[CN] I think it's difficult to an extent, especially for someone who kinda has social anxiety, and doesn't want to intrude on people. Just coming up to a random person takes a lot of guts and just being like "hey, let's talk, maybe we can be friends". That's also kind of really awkward. So yeah, that's kind of hard. But then, also, you gotta make that decision because otherwise you will be so lonely. So for example, with the online classes and stuff, what I have done personally, in the past, was if I saw someone that I might vibe with and want to be friends with, I'd dm (direct message) them on zoom and just be like "hey, you seem nice, here's my Instagram, we can talk more or get lunch and whatever". So I think that's been useful.

[AF] Yeah. How'd you spend your Thanksgiving? Did you visit your family at any point in the first semester or second semester? Did your family visit you?

[CN] Well, I spent Thanksgiving here with just a friend. And we didn't eat Thanksgiving food, but we got takeout from somewhere. So that was nice to not have Cafe Mac food for once. But I mean, the only time I saw my family during the year was during the winter break. So when I went back home.

[AF] How would you celebrate holidays and birthdays? Has it been weird during a pandemic?

[CN] I guess it's been weird, but also I don't care for holidays. But some holidays like Thanksgiving, the only thing that we do special in our house for Thanksgiving is me and my mom cook for our family. And it's just a really nice meal. And obviously, I can't do that here. So I kind of found an alternative for other nice food.

And oh, it was weird at Christmas because even though I was home with my immediate family, normally during Christmas we see like the cousins and aunts and uncles and all that stuff. And we go over to her house. And we're all this big family cramped into this one house. And so obviously we couldn't do that this year. So it was kind of weird. That was really weird and kind of felt abnormal, because even though some years I don't want to go, because I'm going to see these people again. Sometimes there's people who are like "oh, I haven't seen you in forever". And I was like "I don't know who you are". So it's awkward. But yeah, it was strange doing nothing, because we didn't really do anything. We open presents, we put up the tree. But other than that, it was just average, I guess.

And birthdays. So I've had two birthdays already in the pandemic, and last year it was kind of nice because my two best friends came over. And we sat in my backyard on the blanket. And they came over for a little bit, my mom gave us a glass of champagne--she's French, don't worry about it, it's fine, doesn't matter--and then we ordered whatever I wanted to eat, which we normally do on my birthday. So that was nice. And then this year, being away from home was kind of hard. But I have my lovely friends who I could celebrate it with.

And it was honestly better than I expected because if I'm being honest, which is kind of depressing, I really thought I was going to be doing homework because it was my birthday, nobody cared. But that didn't happen. And so it was great, I got to see you. And that was fun.

42:18

[AF] Yeah. So for closing statements, what are you hopeful for looking forward to with vaccinations being more available? And what do you think?

[CN] I'm just hoping that everyone will be able to get vaccinated and will get vaccinated. First of all, I know some crazy people out there don't want to get vaccinated. And to be able to, see more people and interact with people, because I'm not a very social person all of the time. And even for me, it's been hard not really interacting with people. And I'm glad that Macalester said that everybody in the fall next semester has to be vaccinated. So that gives me a little bit of hope.

[AF] And do you think you've grown as a person in the pandemic? Do you think you've learned things?

[CN] Yeah, I've learned who really cares about me and who doesn't. And I've grown to enjoy having alone time even though it's like yeah okay, I'm alone, I'm just doing whatever. And I'm on Netflix, but really it's just like, being with my thoughts, which is scary. But it's also very nice.

[AF] So do you have any last comments? If you could describe the pandemic in one sentence to anyone looking at this in the future, what would you say?

[CN] That's a lot of pressure. Give me a second...Really scary and lonely, but also time for self exploration.

[AF] I think that was beautiful. Well, it was a pleasure to interview you, and I'm glad I could learn about this. This will be readily available on the college's website, and I can send you the link to that in the future. But yes, thank you for being here.

[CN] Thank you.

[AF] Alright. Goodbye.