

Interview with Ashley Rodriguez

Ariana Flores, Interviewer

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Macalester College
Janette Wallace Building
Piano Room**

00:00

[AF] Hello, I'm Ariana Flores. I'm about to interview Ashley Rodriguez for my first interview for the COVID-19 archive project. Firstly, I would like to give you a brief overview about this interview along with your rights as an interviewee. If you agree, I will ask you for your consent along with your full name and today's date.

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 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. Do you agree to being interviewed?

[AR] Yes.

[AF] Okay, give your full name and today's date.

[AR] My name is Ashley Rodriguez, and today is April 19 2021.

[AF] All right. So I'm gonna first ask you a little bit of your life like background information like before the pandemic. So, would you like to briefly introduce yourself?

[AR] So, again, my name is Ashley Rodriguez. I am ... 18 years old. Yeah, I forgot my birthday. But, I guess I live with a family of five. I have an older sister named Jocelyn. She is currently 24. And a younger sister named Samantha, she is six, and my parents. And before, kind of, before the pandemic, my grandma started living with us - my maternal grandma. When she's ... yeah ...

she's been around, she usually goes to Mexico. But because the pandemic hit, she was able to stay with us. And also in my home we have our dog Bailey. So she is an important aspect.

[AF] So you live in the outer suburbs of Chicago?

[AR] Yes, I'm from ... I'm kind of like an hour away from Chicago. So like, honestly, I'm closer to Wisconsin than I am to Chicago.

[AF] What's life like there?

02:36

[AR] Honestly, it's very ... like you stay in your house .. kind of like it was different coming here because it's just like you're walking everywhere, obviously, because I don't have a car. But back home, like, everyone usually drives around or like before I would ride my bike everywhere. And it's a very close community just because it is predominantly Hispanic. So it's like - literally - I know all of my neighbors; everyone talks to my parents. Like if I go to the store, someone sees me, "you're like - oh - you're like" - they call my mom Chilzer. So they're like, "oh, your Chilzer's kid". So yeah, it's a very close community.

[AF] That's sweet. So what were like some of your hobbies or interests, going into Macalester or like in general?

[AR] Well, sometimes I like to run a lot. Not as much anymore, just because it hurts my feet. But yeah, it's still something that distracts me. I also enjoy .. since I have a little sister I enjoy spending time with her. Either we play - she likes to play Barbies, or like Minecraft. So that's what like a big hobby of mine [is]. And I spent a lot of time with my older sister as well. So we go on like little painting dates. So that's been a big hobby of mine. I also picked up baking; like my favorite thing to bake is like banana bread. So those are just a few benefits. Yeah.

[AF] That's fun. And ... how did you decide on like, Macalester. Like, how's your academics? Or - you know - did any of this influence you like when you decided to come here?

[AR] Um, well I guess. My community is very close; I was kind of looking at that when I was picking a college. And also since I do come from a predominantly Hispanic community, like, I guess, the academics. The academics aren't ... I don't know. It's hard to explain, but it's still like we had a college access program where it allowed, like, first generation, lower class students to be able to have, like the extra help extra assistance. So they're kind of the ones that like, brought Macalester to me. So this was the first college that I visited. And honestly, I just enjoyed the location, and their emphasis on community. And yeah.

[AF] I also remember that, like, even you got to go here with your best friend.

05:31

[AR] Yeah, my best friend is also here.

[AF] And since there's a pandemic, did that like affect your decision, coming to college or picking your final choice for college?

[AR] So, also, because of the college access program, they had a big push on applying early decision. So I did find out where I was going to college, before the pandemic hit. So that was kind of like, I guess a good thing, but it's also stressful because I'm, we're like, "whoa", like, "now I'm really going to college during a pandemic".

[AF] Did you get to - sorry - I don't know. Did you get to visit beforehand? Or like, you know, was your knowledge of ... did you have like a lot of knowledge about Macalester?

[AR] Honestly, yeah, just like, they would take us on different college trips. So like, for our spring break junior year, we're able to go up to some schools and like, the north, east, but also with Macalester it was the first school that they ... that I came on a trip with. And then I wanted to show my parents around. So we came up before the pandemic as well, like, literally, I think the day after I submitted my application early decision. So yeah, so I came to visit like a good two times.

[AF] That's good. So I guess we can transition more into life during the pandemic. When you first heard the news that COVID-19 came to the United States, what were your first thoughts?

[AR] Um, I didn't really think much of it, just because I think when they confirmed, like, a few cases in Chicago, I literally went to a concert. So it was like, now looking back at it, I'm like, Whoa, like, I feel kind of, like, scared and dirty to be in a group of all that people. But it was also like, I was an AP bio during that time. And my teacher, he was very, like, he was showing us the trends in China. And he's like, "well, it's not going to be just two weeks, like you guys should expect to like, not come back". So it was something that like, I was kind of prepared for, but I was wishing that I wasn't prepared for. So I remember like the last day of school. He told me like, "I'm not coming back so everyone help me go get my plants". He had like 30 plants. And we had to put them all in his car. So yeah, I feel like I was kind of prepared for it. But it was, I didn't expect, like, this long or this extreme. So yeah.

[AF] Were there any sort of major changes in your daily routine? Or like, how you live life in general?

08:35

[AR] Honestly, yeah, it was like a big change because I went to being like, a very, like, involved student to like, obviously being on a screen the whole day. So before pandemic, I was in cross [country], track. I was on exec board for a student council, like National Honor Society, the college, this SHUAA college program, and then some other things, but it was still like, literally, I'd go out early in the morning to school, go through school, and practice, and some more meetings after. So it's like, the whole day I was out. And like usually on the weekends, I'd spend time with my family or my friends. So then once a pandemic hit, obviously, I didn't want to get it. I didn't want to risk being sick. And I also didn't want to risk getting other sick, especially since my grandma was staying with us. So it's like, there was a big shift in how active I was and how involved I was. So yeah, it was definitely like way different.

[AF] Would you say it came with any benefits or...?

[AR] I feel like it did, just because like now looking back at it, it allowed me to spend time with my family because again, since I was really committed in school, it's like, I rarely come home, do my homework, like I couldn't even eat dinner with them because I would get home so late. So it's like it allowed me to be with them. And also since it was like, my last couple months before I came to college, I'm like, whoa, like, I needed that. So, definitely, the family time was like, a very good thing out of COVID. And then, yeah, like I would spend ... I spent my nights with my dad; we were playing dominoes, or I would bake with my grandma, or yeah ... so it was very nice.

[AF] So, would you say baking was like a new hobby that you developed? Or was that something you always had?

[AR] Well, I guess before I would like, bake a few things. But obviously, they were like, straight out of the box. Like I buy the cake box mixes and buy like cupcakes, and that's about it. But like, we'd only burn something or they wouldn't come out right. So like, you know what I have all this time, might as well start making things from scratch. And I don't know why, but banana bread is just so good. Like, let's just try it. And so I remember, my grandma was there. And I don't know, she has no trust in me. So like, she like - she didn't pray - but she like she said something. She's like "Jesus, please help". And I'm like, oh, okay, so yeah I definitely picked it up over quarantine. So I was making banana bread and carrot cake. I learned how to make like Boston Tres Leches by hand, which took like five hours. And then I don't know what else. Yeah, I made

like ... since I couldn't really get to see my family, so I would bake them birthday cakes. So that was another favorite part.

[AF] That sounds so wholesome. Did you ever do any of the trends? Like sourdough or dalgona coffee. What would you say was your favorite initial part of like, the pandemic, you know, when everyone was so positive? Like, what were your favorite ... I guess ... activities?

[AR] I think my favorite, obviously, what was it called ... dalgona coffee? Yeah. Oh, that one was my favorite. Because literally, we made it once. And my grandma, she shouldn't be drinking coffee, but she's like, "you know what, I'm gonna die either way". So she drinks coffee. So when she saw it, she was very interested in it. Like she loved it. So every morning, my sister would get up, and like, make like a big batch for all of us. So it was like, me, my sister, my grandma, and then my dad, we were all drinking that coffee. And then I know ... I think during ... I don't know when this TikTok user started to blow up but like, his name is New.

[AF] No, I don't recall. But...

[AR] Yeah, but yeah, he kind of blew up and he posts a lot of like, just a lot of recipes. So that's where I got the banana bread from. So it's like, I kind of wanted to keep following his recipes. But then I'm like, oh, that requires me to go to the store. Yeah, but the coffee was definitely my favorite.

[AF] Did you develop any other sort of hobbies?

[AR] I don't know. Well, again, since I was in cross [country] and track, I definitely didn't want to run anymore, just because it was very tiring. And like, I couldn't even go out to see my friends. So we couldn't even like, go on runs together. So like, literally them being on the run with me is the only thing that like, kept me going through practice. So instead of going on runs I told my dad, we should buy some weights. So I think I started like, lifting a bit and trying to learn some new like, exercises and trying to get more like fit I guess and to like ... yeah. So I think that's another thing that I've picked up. And I know my dad definitely did it because he bought like, he bought a treadmill. He bought like a bicycle. I don't know what he was buying. But yeah, it's definitely something that my dad and I picked up.

[AF] Would you like ... besides [being] in a kind of like community, kind of like you and your family being close together or whatnot ... was your family affected by the pandemic like in any other kind of way?

[AR] I guess I feel like my grandma would be the big one. Just because the winter is really hard for her here just because like obviously she can't go out. It's ... she can't walk that much

anymore. So it's like, we can't really take her anywhere. She can't be in long car rides. So it's like, if we take her out, we'd have to like go there and back. And since she usually spends the winter in the summer, it was like a big change because - the winter in the summer, the winter in Mexico - sorry. So in Mexico, like obviously, she has her own house, she has people living with her, and she also owns a store over there. So it's like, somehow she always has some kind of interaction, or like she's watering her plants. So she is more active over there. So that was like, a big change for her. And then my sister, she works in like an office that works with immigration and their naturalization process. So that was, I think, another big shift, just because she ...she had to work from home, which was really frustrating just because like, I'm in the house, they're on zooms, my little sister, she's home, my mom had to stop working for a bit. My dad, he was still working, but he was still around most of the time. So it was like, two different worlds colliding for her. And it was just a very stressful time. And then obviously, a lot of her clients weren't able to work either. So she had to deal with like, trying, and they couldn't even get like a stimulus check or anything. So she had to try to get them aid or try to see where they can like get different resources. So that was another one. And then my mom stopped working for a bit. Yeah. So it was a lot. Yeah.

[AF] Do you think the pandemic has changed the way you think about experience in different kinds of aspects? Or take that question how you wish.

[AR] I think, probably, yeah, just because, like, again, before the pandemic, I was really involved. And like, I wouldn't necessarily say that I would forget about myself just because of how much I was involved. But I did like, I'm like "Oh, I have to do this. I have to do this, like I have to do this" But now it's like, you know what, like, take time for yourself. Like, it's very needed. And like, take time for your loved ones. And also like, checking up on people is like, big in my life now just because like it was hard not to see anyone anymore like during the start of the pandemic. So yeah, definitely. And it also changed like I don't know, just like life view that like, just enjoy the moment, I guess. But yeah.

[AF] All right. So since like coming to Macalester, do you think it has been easy making connections with people in the pandemic?

[AR] It's definitely getting better. But at the beginning, it was hard, because it's like, we're all coming from different places. And I was still worried about like, having COVID or like other people having COVID like, I was being safe back at home. But it was still like, I don't want to, like be in contact with a lot of people, but I wanted to meet people. So it's like, I want to be safe. But I also want to meet people so it was like, a conflict. And like, I would meet people like here and there. Like I met my floormate and yeah, so it's like it was little It was a slow process. And it did get like I guess like lonely just because it's like, you think of college and you're like, "oh, like you're gonna make so many friends you're gonna have a great

experience” and like now in COVID it's like, I know it's different for everyone, but it's like, whoa, like I did not expect this. So yeah, and then but it did get better as you go on because like once professors started having in person classes or like also met people through work like how much you so yeah, so it did get better.

19:22

[AF] What were some struggles you had like for when you first came to Macalester?

[AR] Well, since I spent a lot of time on quarantine with my family, like I really honestly attachment I got ... I guess we had a stronger connection with each other. So like my sister and I, we used to hate each other. Like, before she went to college like we did not get along and then once you came back home after she graduated, like we're together 24/7, so that was like a big struggle. And then also my little sister obviously I've been around her for a while. So that was another struggle like leaving her because she would tell me She's like, “oh”, like, “who am I going to play with?” Like, “oh”, like, “who's gonna dance with me” and all this. So that's another one. And then I'm really close with my dad. So it was like, dang like I can't just go knock on his bedroom and be like, I need to hug. So yeah, that was definitely hard. And then my mom, too, we aren't that close but like, definitely being away from her is like, wow, I really need her in my life. So yeah. And then, obviously, since my grandma was her first time, like being with us that long, so like, I got attached to her, and I was like aw like, my cat. Like, bake for her anything. So yeah, though, I think like, leaving my family was the hardest.

[AF] Have you been keeping in contact with them often?

[AR] Yeah, honestly. I feel like too much. Because I call them ... well, they call me every day. But sometimes my parents are like, one of them is upstairs and one of them is downstairs. So like, I have to call my mom first. And she doesn't want to call my dad to go upstairs. So I'm like, okay, bye like, let me go call dad. So I call my dad. And then right there, that's like a good half hour. And then my sister's like still working. So she calls me at night. And that's like, another half hour. And then sometimes my little sister wants to talk. So she calls me randomly. So like, every day I talk to all of them. So yeah. And like when we don't talk, when we don't call, they text me. And they're like, “What? So you want to talk today?” I'm like, oop, so yeah we do keep in contact.

[AF] Have any of them visited you?

[AR] Um, first semester, they did not. But now they went through like, a whole COVID thing. So like, my sister can't get COVID. So I think she's gonna come up next or this weekend. So I'm excited for that

[AF] Exciting. What do you think you'll show her and, you know, favorite parts of the cities?

22:24

[AR] I don't know. Because since I don't have a car, it's so hard to like, find things also because of COVID. Like, we don't know what to do. And but I think I really want to take her, we've, we always go to the waterfall. And then down by the river, like down Summit, she didn't know there was a waterfall there either. Like she's been on the rocks, but we didn't walk farther down. So I think we're gonna show her that. I also - I want to go to a museum. I've been I don't know, before COVID I would go to a lot of museums, too. So I think that's another thing on our list. And I want to take it to Nelson's for sure. I'm excited for that. And then I don't know I just literally I'm just so excited to spend time with her. So...

[AF] Alright. I'm going to ask you a few questions about your job.

[AR] Oh, okay, our job.

[AF] So, you are a sports medicine assistant here at Mac. How would you describe like, what is that? Like? What are some of your tasks or routines?

[AR] Yeah, so I mean, it all depends on what we work. So like, if we work office hours, we're in there helping the trainer's with any treatments, if they need any GameReady or STEM (ice and electrotherapy), like we have setting up cleaning, a lot of cleaning, obviously, we have to keep everyone safe. And then also like laundry. And if I work practices, we have to make sure that the athletes are all - have all their treatment done before their practice. And because we want to keep everyone safe, we make sure that everyone has like, checked themselves and like doesn't have any symptoms. So I think that's like some of the big things for practice, but also like, we also worry about, like their recovery, and them taking care of themselves after a hard practice. So if they need ice or any treatment after like, we're there for that, too.

[AF] I know that you're only a freshman so you can't really compare non COVID times to the COVID times. But what are some like things they have changed, like protocols they've changed because of the pandemic?

[AR] I guess, obviously, we have hand sanitizer everywhere. So, I don't know, I feel like we should probably have that even before, like, regular protocol. But also, it's like making sure we clean everything like if an athlete uses a resistant band, or if they use like a sleeve for their game ready, making sure we clean that off. And then everyone has their own water bottle, I guess before, I think we would fill it up for them. So that's definitely different. And then obviously,

before the pandemic, we didn't have to check their symptoms. So that's another addition to like, their practice time. And oh, another big thing. It's like, athletes have to sign up for a time. And I guess before they could just like stop in whenever they could, or whenever they wanted to. And now it's like to make sure we limit the capacity of people in there. It's like, there's certain time, and a certain amount of people that can be in there.

[AF] How has your overall experience been this year as an SMA?

26:26

[AR] Honestly, really fun, I guess. I feel like once things start to get better, the job will - not funner - but more fun. So yeah, it's just like, honestly, I feel like that's another place where I got to meet new people, because like you meet different athletes, and right now, obviously, because of COVID they're separated. So like there's sometimes you don't even realize who's on the team or like that there's more more students here just because they live in a different, a different home, like really separated from us. So yeah, I think I feel like that's a really cool part. And like, I'm not sure what I want to go into in the future, but I do enjoy, like being able to help people. So I feel like that's a big plus about this job.

[AF] Is it everything that you expected in a job?

[AR] Well, I don't know what to expect coming into this job, just because I'm like, well, I don't want to work in the, in the cafeteria. While I also kind of want to work at a desk. But I know I'm gonna get bored. So maybe I got to do something else. And I mean, SMA, it's like, I'm interested in ... interested in it. You also get some downtime to do your homework. So I feel like maybe a little bit better than I expected. So that's a good thing.

[AF] Looking forward, what are you excited for come fall? Do you think COVID will have any lasting impacts on athletics that Mac?

[AR] I think. I don't know. I feel like, that's hard to tell. Just because I feel like COVID is really unpredictable. So it's like, we're hoping things are gonna get better, especially now that we have vaccines. So I don't know. Can you repeat the question? Sorry.

[AF] Oh, you want me repeat the question? Looking into the future, like, what do you ... how do you think COVID will be impacting like, the athletic department?

[AR] Yeah, sorry. But I think like, besides COVID being unpredictable, I feel like now, I know, one of the trainers that head trainer, Paula always says that like now the athletes are capable of getting water by themselves. So I feel like now that we know they can do it, that will

probably change. And I feel like we'd probably be more busy. Just because I know us first years we weren't really taught how to tape ankles or like, their, their wrist or anything. And I feel like that will most definitely change just because it's like right now a lot of people aren't able to be in the training room. So like, I feel like some athletes don't really go in just because if they don't see a time slot, then they can't. But like, in the future, if COVID is, you know, it'd be, like busier. And yeah. And I feel like COVID will also, I feel like it'll change, just like cleanliness and like, how we take care of different things and like making sure we wipe everything down, because like, right now, we clean everything because of COVID. But like, if you think about it, like, we should probably be cleaning a lot of things, you know. So yeah.

30:37

[AF] I think I'll shift back to some other questions just about how it's been living on campus, and like your overall experience this year. But I guess one thing I'm interested in is like, how was it? I guess I'm going a little more back. As a senior in high school coming in to being a freshman at college. That's a big change. And like, all through COVID, none of it's been very typical. So like, was there anything like you wish that you wish that you could have experienced as a senior in high school?

[AR] Definitely. Alright, I feel like definitely graduation, I feel like, that's a big thing in my family, because not a lot of like, my parents didn't graduate from high school, I think they got to like sixth grade. And like a lot of my aunts and uncles as well, like, they weren't able to work - they weren't able to go to school, because they had to go to work. So like, seeing their kids, like graduate and moving on to college is like a big thing for our family. So it's like, that was definitely something I would have missed. Because like, I mean, like, we have little moments like on zoom, and like my parents taking pictures of me, even though I was sitting like in front of a computer. So I feel like it would have been like, a really big and proud moment. And also prom, like I know it sounds kind of selfish. Like I understand why I would stay home. I understand everything, but it's like, if I could, I'll definitely have prom just because like, I was on like the exec board for student council. So we were planning it like - we saw the venue. We ordered a whole bunch of things for prom and like, literally, I think the weekend before we were ... were put on like the stay at home order, I found the dress that I wanted. But it was like it was like 400 bucks. I'm really glad I didn't buy it then. Because I'm like, "oh, I'll come next weekend". So yeah, but prom, just because like a lot of my friends didn't go a year before. So I feel like that would have been a big moment. And then I don't know, I know the AP test suck. But like the people, I spent a lot of time with the people in the AP classes, just because not a lot of us took it, it was like a group of like 30 kids. We literally spent a whole day together because a good environment - not a good environment - but it feels like a good community. And like just to like, experience that one more time. Because since the AP test were online, it's like, you never

really knew how we were doing. It was really just you; I was literally alone in my basement doing it. So I feel like I want to ... want it to experience like that atmosphere one more time.

[AF] And what about like, coming in as a senior--not a senior, a freshman--in college? Like, how do you feel like you've missed out on a lot like, you know, does feel like how you expected your freshman year of college to be?

[AR] Well, no. This is, I feel like there's totally different literally. I think the first weekend of the semester my friend came with me. We were watching a movie in my dorm. And then my sister called me and she's like, "Wow, you guys are so lame". And I do can't do anything. She's like, "yeah, my first night. I got a noise complaint because people were being too loud in my room". Like she left her door open and like, that's how she made some of her closest friends because like everyone just came in they're playing like dominoes or something. So yeah, I feel like I definitely missed out on like, meeting people. And like, what is that called? Freshman orientation? Yeah, that was weird, because it's just like all on zoom, and like you'd see people from your orientation group. But like, you didn't know if you should say hi, because like, you've just seen them on screen. So it's like, it's very confusing. And it's like, I don't know, I feel like we didn't experience a lot of things that like people hype out about college. So yeah.

[AF] If - when, let's say - COVID is gone. You know, it's a new day. What like, are you most looking forward to in a normal college experience?

[AR] Honestly, I'm kind of scared for the classes, just because I'm like, whoa, now they have to see me struggle in real life. But now, I think being able to go to like, I guess like, clubs, or like, actually be able to join clubs, because I know that right now. Some of them are going on, but it's still like, you get zoom fatigue, where it's like, I really don't want to be on zoom more than I have to. And like, as much as I really want to meet people, it's like, zoom is not ideal for that. So I really, I don't know, I really want to experience that just like being able to, like, see people in your club in like different club. And I don't know, I just want to be able to like, be in people's room. Like, I know we can now but like, obviously, it's like one person. And it's like, as want to be able to like, knock on a door and like hang out with people. So...

[AF] Yeah. What are your plans? Like I guess, this summer compared to last summer, what are you gonna do this summer?

[AR] Well, last summer, I spent like a lot of time working. So this summer, since I am taking the summer courses, it's going to look ... yeah, I'm taking like two but they're like at different times. So it's like I have to work out my work schedule, because I work at Starbucks inside of Target. So that'll be interesting. But yeah, I'm pretty much just going to work and take those summer

courses. And then hopefully, I don't know, kind of stressed about those two things, but hopefully spend a lot of time with my family. So I'm excited for them.

[AF] Do you think you're going to be able to like, go out more? Go on, like a small vacation or, you know, be able to feel a little more ... have a little more freedom?

37:56

[AR] Well, since my family got a couple weeks ago, and I'm vaccinated, I know we're not like immune to it and we still have to be safe. But like, we are like, starting to like, see my family more. And like, especially for my grandma too like before, we're really cautious about her. But now it's like, yeah, like she needs to be out and like, see her family as well ... like her kids. So we'll definitely be at my aunt's house more. And not necessarily vacations, but like, I feel like we'll probably take like, small trips to the lake or something. So I'm excited for that.

[AF] And you mentioned your family got COVID recently, what was that like? Who ... was it scary for them? Like how'd they take it?

[AR] I guess ... so since I've been here, they literally ... my sister just called me and she's like, I have COVID and I'm like, "oh are you okay, like, is everything fine?" And like she was already working from home. So like, that wasn't like a big like shift, but it was still like, oh, like she has rheumatoid arthritis. So I was really scared just because like, if she gets sick, it automatically like hurts all her joints and everything. So I was really scared for that. And like she's been taking - she'd been taking a lot of care of herself - just because like she wouldn't go out. Like her friends were going to bars and everything. And she's just been staying home because she's like, "first of all. I can't get sick", and she doesn't want to get my grandma's sick. So like, it was definitely frustrating just because we're like, oh, like we've been taking care of ourselves and still happens. And then the first few days were hard for her. Like she was just ... she couldn't eat and then she just felt really out of it and I think she had a fever. And then my mom, she doesn't like to stay home. So it was hard for her too because it's like, she didn't have COVID until like, a week later, where she started feeling the symptoms. And then it hit her hard too just because she already has like some other health problems. So it's like she was in bed for like a good three days, like she would call me. And it was just hard because I'm like, I can't even be there or help. And then I think like, my dad, he had some symptoms, but he didn't want to say that he had COVID. And then one day he called me he's like, "yeah, I think I have COVID". And he was just like, coughing, but he was like the one that was taking care of my sister and my mom. So like, after a while, they're like, "you know what we all have COVID, we can all be around each other". And then my grandma, she was vaccinated. So luckily, she didn't get COVID. And then my little sister, it was really hard for her, because like, the first few days, or the first week, my sister had to be in isolation in her room. And like, literally, since I'm not there, that's the only person my

little sister talks to. So she would like write my sister notes. And she's like, "Can we play? Bring me a letter back?" And so they're ... they were just playing back and forth with each other, like, under the door. So, yeah, I feel like, it was definitely hard for them. And hard for me too because I'm like, I can't even be there to like help them. Or like, I don't know how to help them if I'm over here. So yeah, it was like, yeah, it was weird.

[AF] Is your family planning on getting vaccinated?

[AR] Yeah well, I think ... I think they were supposed to get the vaccine last weekend, but I think you're not supposed to get the vaccine if you have COVID. So they canceled it. And they're probably going to get it soon. Because I think in Illinois, since I think since today, everyone can get it. So yeah, they're most definitely gonna get it. And then my sister, I think she's registered as well. So I'm happy about that.

42:14

[AF] That's good. So, I guess, closing statements ... like some positives, I guess. Do you think you've grown as a person? Since the pandemic hit...

[AR] Let's see. I think, yeah, just again, like, I feel like I've talked a lot about my family, but it's like, I spent so much time with them that, like I realized, just like, how important they are in my life, and just like how much I actually do need them in my life. So I think I am more family oriented, which I really, which I really like about myself. And then obviously, I didn't get to see a lot of friends during quarantine. But it was probably a good thing. Because like, you finally saw how people were and like, just leaving certain people makes you feel so much better. Because like, you're not really brought down or anything. And it's like, I guess it's just the shift of like, having a healthier lifestyle, healthier mind. So yeah, I feel like even though the beginning of the pandemic like, really sucked, it was like, you know, a little bit of good, a little bit of bad. So...

[AF] And if you could say anything ... I guess to your future self, what would you say to anyone watching this in the future? Yeah, tips for the *pandemic 101*.

[AR] [Laughs] *How to survive the pandemic*. No, but I think just take everything day by day, and don't take anything for granted. Because like, it's a cliché, like, literally, you see this all over the internet, like, we see like our life change one day to another, but it's true, like, as much as like we will, we realize it now that everything can change in an instant. And like, I know some people; I personally lost some people because of COVID. So it's like, check up on loved ones, and it's like, make sure to keep yourself healthy as well.

[AF] Do you have any last positive thoughts?

[AR] No, I think that's it. Enjoy your life.

[AF] Well, it's been a pleasure to get to know a bit about you through this interview and I'll see you later.

[AR] Thank you. Bye.

[AF] Bye.