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Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal

David Olvera

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MAR

PANDEMIC BEGINS

11

The World Health Organization declares the novel corona virus a pandemic. This is the date that will be on a quiz during a history class in the future. I really didn't know what was really going on. I knew my heart dropped and I felt scared because I didn't know what was about to happen

RISING CASES

26

The total number of reported confirmed cases in the United States surpasses that of China with over 85k making it the country with the highest number of coronavirus patients. Panic begins to set in within my family. Work becomes more stressful, and I worry about my older parents every time I come home. I shower every time I come home from work, and I separate my clothes.

NO MORE MASKS?

28

Trouble with the national stockpile of emergency medical equipment emerges. State and hospital leaders are unable to secure enough masks, ventilators and other essential gear. At this point my family and I were trying to come up with different ways to cover up. A bandanna was my first source of protection. Every store's shelves were barren of masks... and toilet paper.

2020

NO MORE JOBS

2

In just a few weeks, the pandemic put nearly 10 million Americans out of work. I was very fortunate to be employed at a retail store that was considered essential. Several of my family members were not as fortunate, as they ended up being placed on furlough or let go.

NOTHING NEW

7

Emerging demographic data confirms that covid-19 is infecting and killing Black Americans at an alarming rate — a devastation that people in predominantly Black communities know all too well. It's really upsetting to continue seeing this trend. Black communities always seem to get short end of the stick. They are the ones that suffered the most from this pandemic.

WHO?

14

Trump announced his decision to halt U.S. funding to the WHO. Of all the idiotic things Trump has done during his presidency this is one of the worst. At such a pivotal time, he decides to separate the American people from an organization that could've helped with the management of the pandemic.

WARP SPEED

19

Trump announces his administration's vaccine development program. He dubs it Operation Warp Speed. The first glimpse of hope. Beginning to develop a vaccine came with optimism and hope, but it was also met with skepticism and fear. Was it going to be rushed and ineffective how long will it take? But at least there was something to look forward to.

GEORGE FLOYD

25

The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis rang throughout the country. His unjust murder at the hands of police sparked a wave of unrest that led to protesting and rioting. I was shocked and appalled as to why and how his life was taken. I remember having to enforce the doors at my work because our corporate office was scared we were going to be looted.

AS REAL AS IT GETS

27

U.S. coronavirus deaths surpass 100,000. This reality has been solidified in my mind. My classes never returned on campus and it seems as though online learning will be the new norm for a while. The end of the semester was a mess and from there school lost all of its splendor. I no longer was learning, I was just doing work.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

3

A Post investigation finds that U.S. cities squandered early chances to protect Black residents from the virus. Many of the first testing sites were set up in areas with many White residents. Even with a global pandemic raging on, we can see where, or who, is being prioritized. Systemic racism doesn't seem to go away and covid-19 has made it very clear where the local governments stand.

OPEN UP

25

The country records its highest-ever single-day case count, yet leaders push ahead with re-openings. I remember having a conversation with my girlfriends family. We all agreed that this was a bad idea, things are going to get much worse before they get better. We tried our best to be safe and responsible

NAME OF EVENT

30

The European Union prepared to open to visitors from 15 countries on July 1, but not to travelers from the United States, Brazil or Russia. The fact that the US was named as a do not enter country really shows how unprepared, or indifferent we are with this deadly pandemic. It always seemed as if other countries recuperated much quicker than us.

**MASKED
PRESIDENT****11**

Trump wears a mask in public for the first time, more than three months after his own public health officials recommended face coverings for all Americans. I applaud whoever finally convinced Trump to wear a mask in public. Maybe this would help his supporters feel more at ease when wearing a mask. This was short lived though.

**PFIZER V.
MODERNA****27**

Two coronavirus vaccines – one from Pfizer-BioNTech and one from Moderna – mark a major milestone: The beginning of 30,000-person trials, the final phase of testing. The news of the success of these two vaccines brought smiles to many of relatives faces. We just hoped it would be done well and that it didn't lead to any weird mutations.

**NATIVE
LATINOS****31**

The official U.S. death toll passes 150,000, a mark it was never expected to reach. Latinos and Native Americans represent an increasing proportion of the deaths. Watching Spanish news with my parents became more frightening every night. I always worry about my parents so this was a very stressful time.

UNHAPPY TEACHERS

3

Teachers across the country protest school reopenings, carrying symbolic gravestones and caskets. We still don't respect teachers the way they deserve. They are voicing their concern for not just their safety but their students. Parents rally to get kids back in school, all the while many of them are becoming infected and spreading the virus. Teachers are still not being respected.

MASK NEEDED

13

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden calls for a nationwide mask mandate. At this point, I was getting a small collection of fabric masks. I try not to use the blue masks or the very rare N95 masks because those should be given to medical providers who are in the thick of it. I can't recognize the new people at work because all I know is them with a mask.

MY BIRTH- DAY

20

This was one to remember. I usually try and go out and do something with friends, but this year was clearly different. A lot of phonecalls and video chats as people wanted to wish me a happy birthday. I kind of liked it though, this is the first time in a while that I spent my birthday at home with my family. It made me feel like a kid again.

WINTER IS COMING

5

Epidemiologists predict a cold-weather virus surge. Just like flu season, the Winter weather was going to be rough season. Living in the Midwest, we don't have the luxury of warm weather all year round, our winters are hard and this virus just made it harder.

THE TWIN TOWERS

11

I remember when the twin towers first fell on this day in 2001. I was sitting in my second grade class when our teacher was frantically trying to turn the tv on. We all watched in confusion because we didn't know what was happening. Our teacher looked concerned and was focused on the new coverage. I feel like this experience for me might've been how she felt, confused and unsure.

1 MILLION

28

In the 10 months since a mysterious pneumonia began striking residents of Wuhan, China, Covid-19 had killed more than one million people worldwide. So many dead in a relatively short amount of time. At this point I was asking myself not when if I'm going to get Covid, but when.

SICK PRES- IDENT

2

Trump says he and first lady Melania Trump have tested positive for the virus. Less than 24 hours later, he is flown to a hospital for treatment. When the news broke that Trump had gotten covid, I wasn't surprised. I never wish ill on anyone, but I had hoped that he might have changed his path and actually started caring about this pandemic, but instead he played it down.

TRUMP VS SCIENCE

19

Trump claims that "people are tired of hearing Fauci and all these idiots" and says journalists covering the pandemic are "dumb bastards." This whole pandemic felt like it was split in two: number tracking of cases and deaths, and how much Trump was downplaying this whole thing while not taking science seriously.

9 MILLION CASES

30

The U.S. passed 9 million COVID-19 cases. Just a couple weeks prior, the US reached 8 million cases. 1 million cases in a few weeks! This virus is spreading so fast. My family is trying to stay positive but there just seems to be a cloud looming over us. It doesn't help that some family friends were contracting the virus.

GO VOTE!

3

It is Election Day, and many Americans already have cast their ballots in a record-setting, pandemic-spurred wave of early voting. I was part of that early voting wave. It was pretty cold the day I went, but nothing was going to stop me from voting Trump out of the White House.

SWEET RELIEF

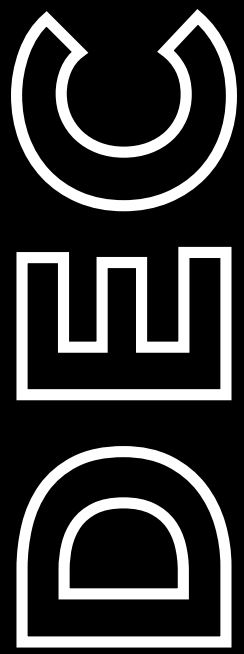
7

Biden wins the presidential election, officially inheriting the public health crisis as the country enters the worst-yet stretch of the pandemic. I've never been so invested in an election. I would be more interested in them counting the votes than what was going on in the class. It felt like a sporting event, I just wanted to see my vote matter. In the end, it did.

90% EFFECTIVE

9

Pfizer & Moderna report that their vaccines are more than 90 percent effective at protecting people from the virus. Everyone in my family was so excited to hear that the vaccines were having good results. For the first time in a while, it felt as if everything was going to be ok.



TOO MUCH DEATH

2

The U.S. passed 14 million cases and also set records for the highest number of daily deaths. Not too long after this date we received a phone call from a relative back in Mexico. One of my brother's childhood friends had gotten Covid and passed away. This is the first time someone we knew had died from the virus. It was a sad day indeed.

100 DAYS OF MASK

8

Biden announces his plan to address the pandemic during his first 100 days in office, including a federal mask mandate, striking a sharp contrast with the Trump administration. Not even in office and President Biden has already made an impact. We needed a leader that sees the situation and who believes in science. Science is bringing us the vaccine after all.

I GET COVID

27

Days following Christmas I went into work and I felt a bit off. As I worked I began to feel weak and just felt ill. I asked to leave work early and went to go get a covid test. I was waiting in the car when I received a call, "you have tested positive for Covid-19." My heart sank and I began to panic. The next few weeks were hard and stressful, but luckily I had a minor experience. What a way to start 2021...

2020

A NEW HOPE

3

Entering the new year with Covid seemed like a bad omen. I was feeling down, constantly worrying about if/when my symptoms would get worse. At 1:25 pm my phone rang. It was my girlfriend, she had news for me. My heart sank and tears started flowing as she showed me a pregnancy test she had taken, she was pregnant. I have never been more excited, and I knew I had something to look forward to, I was going to be a Dad!

THE INSURRECTION

6

In a last ditch effort to stop the count, Trump's misguided supporters storm the capitol building, forcing Congress to evacuate. This was so frustrating to see, the same people that were so intent on "backing the blue" were the same ones pushing, harrassing, and disrespecting the "blue." Aside from proving everyones point about Trumps supporters, they accomplished nothing and once congress reconvened it was official, we had a new President.

TRUMP IS GONE

20

Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th President of the United States. Kamala Harris becomes the first woman, first Asian American, and first African American to become Vice President of the United States. I have never been more invested in an election and this day paid off. So many good things happened, Trumo was finally out of office, and a huge step for Asian Americans, African Americans, and Women as Vice President Harris enters the White House.

B

W

E

SUPER BOWL

7

Although I am a Bears fan, I wasn't going to miss this super bowl between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers & the Kansas City Chiefs. I was excited to see two of the best quarterbacks duel it out, the GOAT Tom Brady and the mini-GOAT Patrick Mahomes. Being able to watch a sporting event like this was a good reminder of pre-Covid days. The Bucs beat the Chiefs 31-9.

TEXAS SNOW

11

Following a strange snowstorm system, over 100 vehicles were involved in the crash on I-35, and multiple people were trapped in their cars, at least 6 people lost their lives. I was watching the news coverage on this and could only think of the effects of climate change. It was strange to see so much snow land in Texas, and this tragedy made things worse.

ROVER ON MARS

18

NASA successfully lands its Perseverance rover on Mars, seven months after launching. It was so cool being able to watch the feed of the rover on Mars. This was such an amazing achievement for space exploration. Having something land on a distant planet is unimaginable for someone like me, but I applaud the team that made it happen.

2021

VACS FOR ALL

3

Biden Says Vaccines Will Be Available for Every US Adult by May. Even though May was only a couple months away, it felt like forever until I would be able to receive my Covid vaccine. It was difficult enough to get my parents an appointment for their shots, and they were considered a priority.

STIMULUS

10

The United States House of Representatives votes 220–211 to pass the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The stimulus bill was signed into law by President Biden the next day. This came at a really good time for many people, including myself. I was able to catch up on some bills and it gave me some breathing room financially.

RELIEF

25

I was finally able to get my parents the Covid vaccine. We had to drive an hour and a half from our home to get to our appointment. I didn't care though, I was just happy we were finally able to get them vaccinated to protect them.

CTE

7

Being a fan of the NFL, I was saddened to learn of the six people that were killed in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Phillip Adams used to play for a few different teams. His father suggested that the game of football played a role. Many players have suffered the effects of CTE. One of the more famous cases was that of Aaron Hernandez, formerly of the New England Patriots.

GUILTY

20

Trial of Derek Chauvin: Derek Chauvin is found guilty on all counts in the murder of George Floyd. I was in class when we all found out the verdict of the trial. Though there was a big sense of relief, we knew there was still so much work that had to be done to fully feel like justice.

FRESH AIR

26

The CDC says that fully vaccinated Americans can go outside without wearing a mask unless they are in large crowds. Although I wasn't vaccinated just yet I was beginning to get excited for the day when it would come.

DOSE NUMBER 1

3

I finally was able to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated. I went to my local hospital where I was in and out in no less than twenty minutes. I felt so good to have finally been able to get vaccinated. The next few days didn't feel as good though, the side effects kind of kicked my butt.

ATTACK ON FUEL

25

An oil pipeline in Houston is hacked by DarkSide causing the pipeline operator to shut down its entire network, the source of nearly half of the U.S. East Coast's fuel supply. The news coverage showed so many people scattering to fill their gas tanks, reminiscent of the toilet paper shortage. I jokingly asked my friends why these hackers couldn't have hacked something more useful like student loans.

DOSE NUMBER 2

24

After waiting my three weeks, I went back in to get my second dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Same results but less harsh side effects. Finally I can go on about my day without that worry over my head.

JUN

SUMMER CLASSES

1

My summer semester starts. I am so excited to get the summer semester over with. I want to get to fall where I can finally experience Columbia College to the fullest, at least until I graduate this December.

MOVE IN DAY

10

My girlfriend and I are graciously allowed to move in to her parents basement until we are able to get our own home when the baby is here. It was a sad day for my parents and I.

JUNE-TEENTH

19

The first Juneteenth under federal holiday status is celebrated. This was a really good day to commemorate the day when the last enslaved African-Americans were informed that they were free. A very proud moment for so many people!

2021

JUL

HOUSE FIRE

4

This was somewhat of a normal Fourth of July celebration. Cookout with the family and relaxing at night while watching the neighbors light fireworks. It all turned when a house on the street managed to catch on fire and all we could see was a huge cloud of black smoke rise. Luckily no one was injured.

FIRST COVID TRIP

23

A few buddies of mine were able to take a weekend trip up to Wisconsin where we went to a few attractions including the House on the Rock. I really needed this weekend to step away and unwind a bit.

2021