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### *Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal*

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Jacob Cambray  
2/08/2021

# Why Remember?

Documenting the crisis is important because we are currently living in history. Whether we realize it or not, everyday is history and all we go through will be taught to future generations. It's important for them to see and understand what we went through and how much our lives changed since the pandemic. Just how history was taught to us by documents and photos from the past, it'll be taught the same way with the resources we provide now. I believe a college student's voice is important, especially during this time, because our lives have been changed the most due to this. It's no secret college and is more challenging than high school, and that's the point, but since the pandemic hit its been totally different. College students have experienced how school normally is for many years and now once they finally make it to college, it all collapses because of COVID. Me specifically being a freshmen new to college, the experience is totally different from what I heard college is like. College students spend an incredible amount of time in front of a computer screen now, meeting new people isn't as easy as before, and sitting in class on a zoom call can be so draining after a while. College students have had their lives changed the most along with other students as well.



I would've never thought in a million years that I would need many masks saved up for whenever I go to an on campus class. The masks have become so normal at this point that seeing people without them feels weird.

# New Normal

Since the pandemic started, my schedule has a lot more time for me to do other activities. When the pandemic first started and it was supposed to be a “two week quarantine” I learned I had a lot more time during my day to do things such as workout, write stories and even read books. I would plan my day the day before with stuff I wanted to do. I worked in things I both needed and wanted to do. Since we were required to stay home, I figured I would try new activities I never had time for such as playing an instrument or trying different workouts. The pandemic gave me time to do all those things. As time started to go by and the quarantine expanded, I noticed all these things were helping me. Although the pandemic itself was causing ruckus all around the world, I told myself I would not let this slow me down to becoming a better person. I was going through very rough times mentally right before the pandemic hit, and things started to slowly get better until I had to face the obstacle of COVID 19 and all the change it brought to the world. Things were changing constantly in the world so it was hard to adapt. Something I learned that will stick with me during all this is living in the moment and running towards challenges. Since the pandemic is causing things to consistently change, I learned to just live in the moment and handle things when they come. This personally may not work for everybody but it does for me. I have become much less stressful and more at peace with myself. I now cross bridges when I come to them instead of worrying about everything in the future and overthinking. I also love facing challenges now. I'm a big believer in “what doesn't kill you makes you stronger” and with all the challenges and difficulties that came with the pandemic, it made me realize how much we can grow and become stronger from challenges. Due to that I now love running towards obstacles to help better myself and learn something new.

Jacob Cambray

## Normality becoming a memory

What I considered normal before Covid arrived is now a memory I'm hoping to bring to life again. Activities such as going to the movies, sports events, bowling, concerts, and even carnivals are things we all did at one point in time. We often attended these and going out to one of them was normal but enjoyable for us. When Covid arrived it ruined that all. Everything was shut down and personally, I was lost. Not because I felt pain but everything I did for fun was now closed. Even things such as having a family function couldn't be done due to the safety of everyone. At the time it was normal to see family and have a big barbecue in the back while enjoying the presence of each other, and I definitely see it differently now due to it being taken away by Covid. As of right now, April 12, 2021, things are slowly starting to return. I'm excited to get back to the activities I missed the most. I went to the movies for the first time last weekend and it felt like my first time, I can't wait to get back to more this summer as things start to open back up. Hopefully soon we can start enjoying the activities we love even more with no restrictions or the specific amount of people rule that is still in play. A vaccine has been released as well and hopefully once everyone is vaccinated and protected, we can take another

picture like this.



Believe it or not, a quarter of the people in this picture probably wouldn't be allowed to enter a room at once because of the social distancing rules but into play. Thankfully we're heading in a direction to where everyone can be together again.

# The Upgrade

It's been a year since the "Two week Quarantine" and not only have I changed, but the world changed as well. From the start of this whole thing I was a little on the dark side. My grades were dropping, I had no motivation, my day's just seemed to be passing by with no real meaning. The only good news I had received was getting accepted to Columbia. I was happy about the announcement to shut down everything for 2 weeks because all I wanted during that time was a break from everything. I just wanted to relax and find some time to put myself together, and oh boy was this the time I was looking for. The first two weeks went by fast but then they announced we will have April and the rest of the school year off. I was a little bummed because I was missing my senior prom and graduation, but at that point I was so tired of high school I didn't mind it. During this time off I was able to learn a lot about myself and life. I came across shows and people on the internet that inspired me. I learned a lot about how much we can achieve if our mindset is right. I started to workout a lot, start writing scripts, find a new and better paying job, learn new talents such as drawing I never knew I had, and learn to become very dependable when I need to. I dug myself out of the grave I was in from the beginning of quarantine. All this time allowed me to do that. It's unfortunate that it was due to these circumstances, and I know many people had a bad experience, but me personally was able to better myself as a person due to the time the pandemic offered me.

Jacob Cambray

# Remembering The Past

So much has occurred in the past 14+ months, not only for me, but for the entire world. Everyone has their own stories and events that they're always going to remember during this time. I also have a lot of memories and events that will forever stay with me as they had a huge impact in my life. I don't remember the exact dates for everything, but for the most part the dates are accurate and the events that correspond with them are significant.

January 2020:

This was when I first started hearing about Coronavirus. Little did I know at the time that this virus was going to shut down the entire country two months later. When hearing about this at the time, I thought this was similar to Ebola, a disease that broke out in Africa a couple years before Corona. This event became important to me later down the road after realising how serious this is, because it was the first time that Covid-19 was introduced to me.

February 2020:

This month was when I got accepted to Columbia College Chicago. This was super important to me because Columbia had been a dream school of mine. I always wanted to get into the film industry and Columbia is an amazing school to help do just that. I wanted to stay home too, so it being in Chicago benefited me that much more. I was stressed out so much as well at that time trying to find a school I wanted to go too. This will forever stick with me because of how happy I was at the time finding out I got accepted.

March 20, 2020:

Ah, this day was when the "two week quarantine" came into play. This was technically our last day of school, and the crazy thing was I wasn't even there. I was at Columbia's orientation tour, and my mom received an email saying that school will be shut down and everyone has to stay at home for 2 weeks. As everyone knows by now, that was a lie. This is important though because this was when the whole world started to transition into the Covid lifestyle, changing how we do everyday things.

March 2020:

I can't tell you the exact date, but I know that a couple of days after the quarantine began, I was introduced to a show called Dragon Ball. This show has been out forever. Since I was a child I always knew about it and the references that came from it because they were popular, but I was never interested in watching an anime. I got so bored I decided to give this show a chance, and it was one of the best choices I've made. This show helped cure my boredom and also motivated me. The show is about a lot of things, but one of the main topics it focuses on is training and working out. This show helped me get more serious about my fitness and also guided me to a sport I love today, mma. This show and when I discovered it will always be special to me because of how much it changed my life.

March 26th, 2020:

I mentioned that watching Dragon Ball led me to finding interest in mma. I've always been a UFC fan and loved watching fights, but I was too timid and shy to ever try it. Dragon Ball gave me the courage and on this day, I went to my first gym and trained. My first day went really well and I discovered how much fun fighting was for me. Unfortunately I was only able to attend 3 practices until they were forced to be shut down due to Covid, but because of how much fun I had, I continued to train myself till this day and I can't wait to go back in summer 2021.

March 30, 2020:

My previous job had been shut down due to COVID as well, so I really needed to find a job to help bring in money. On this day I went to Jewel Osco in Palos Heights to apply for a job. I walked in and asked if they were hiring. They only schedule interviews online, but I got lucky and they decided to interview me on the spot ( im guessing because they needed more employees because of how busy they were getting with the pandemic). They liked me and hired me on the spot. Not only did this job pay much more, I enjoyed it more and met a lot of amazing people. This job was the highest paying job I've had and it felt good to be fortunate enough to have a job in a pandemic at all.

April 13, 2020:

Jewel hired me as a front end worker, which means I handle the register and bagging. I've been on the register for both of my previous jobs, so it wasn't anything new. I was grateful to have a job, but sometimes it would get stressful there. People were always an annoyance while working on the register, that's never gonna change, but sometimes the register at jewel would act up with no one around to fix it, putting me in awkward situations all the time with customers. I also couldn't scan liquor, and a lot of the time it took awhile for a manager to come scan it, so customers would lose patience and get mad at me. After a couple of weeks I started to hate working the register there, but it was still doable considering the time this was in. On this day however, I was offered the chance to switch to the Produce department. This move made my life so much easier. In produce, the job is less stressful. I also met a lot of people who would end up becoming really good friends. Moving to produce was a huge step because for the first time, going to work didn't seem like something that was forced for me. I genuinely enjoyed the job and have no problem with it.

May 5, 2020:

My mom got tired of being cooped up in the house, so we decided to take a trip to Michigan. We only went with the 3 members in our immediate family and 3 other members of my moms friends family. I decided to go on this vacation over graduation because graduation wasn't the same. It was held in the lunchroom and people had to stay in their cars. I understand because of the circumstances, but it just didn't feel special. This vacation was important for me because it was my first time away in a while and it was just nice to swim in a pool while enjoying yourself in an airbnb with family.

May 9, 2020:



This event is important for personal reasons. I mentioned I'm a UFC fan, and my favorite fighter is none other than Tony Fergouson. This day was a sad day for all Tony fans because this was the night he lost to Justin Gathje. I know losses happen all the time in UFC for every fighter, but Tony was on a 12 fight win streak, and he needed to win this one fight in order to have a chance at the belt. This day was just a day of dissapointment for all Tony fans and one we won't forget for a while.

May 21,2020:

On this day, my family decided to have a drive by celebration for my graduation. We had a party planned, but due to Covid that was cancelled, but it was nice to see my family still made an effort to come and congratulate me. I was super grateful they came and I also received a lot of money that day from cards and gifts which I'm super grateful for.

May 25, 2020:

This sad day was the day Geroge Floyd was murdered. I first saw the video on facebook and was disgusted. This made me more upset then I've been about police brutality. As news spread about the killing, this enraged the world and this was the start of the violence that would soon follow.

June 2020:

Many protests broke out around this time. These protests would unite everyone together and begin the BLM movement. Many athletes and celebrities used their power to speak up, and the whole world showed their support and worked to stop police brutality. This was important to me because this was the first movement that I've seen attract so many people, actually having an impact on America, trying to achieve something better.

June 2020:

The protests were one thing, but from that good came an ugly. Protests turned into looting and riots. This was truly something I've never seen before. Cities all over the country were on fire and buildings were burning down. People were breaking into stores and small businesses and taking everything they have. It was so sad to see these business owners cry, and it was sad to see how ugly this whole situation became. This will forever be remembered as a dark time in America to me. We were truly divided.

July 4, 2020:

This was the first 4th of July I stayed at home. The pandemic restricted everybody from gathering in big groups so we couldn't have our huge family barbecue like we wanted too. It felt weird hearing fireworks go off while I'm in my room watching the Office. This was significant because it was new and something that came along with the COVID lifestyle.

August 2020:

I had to attend an online freshmen orientation for Columbia. I can't remember the exact date, but this was my first time doing anything Zoom related. The orientations were fun and the

leaders were great, but this was my first time logging into zoom, a platform I would go on to use for the rest of the school year.

September 8, 2020:

This was my first official day of college. It was a theater class and being on zoom was different, but this day was the start of my college journey, and that day is important for every student who has a passion about the field they're in.

October 2020:

Around the first two weeks of October, I had my first on campus class. My mom works downtown, so she drove me there before she went to work. It was fun getting to explore campus and walking to my mom's job after class, exploring the rest of the loop. This is something I will never forget because although I grew up in Chicago my whole life, I never truly knew the city and how beautiful it really is.

November 7, 2020:

On this day, Joe Biden won the election. 2020's election was wild. It felt I was watching a back and forth stressful sports game. After Biden won, it was nice to relieve some stress. I was never very political, but I saw how the current president didn't seem to be helping the country's current situation, so I was interested to see what Biden would do differently.

November 2020:

I had finished Dragon Ball and loved it so much, I wanted to see what other anime would catch my interest. I tried a couple out but couldn't seem to find one that caught my attention. I then stumbled upon One Piece. I could write a whole paper on how this show has changed my life, not only is it the best story in a show that i've ever seen, but i've learned so much about life and it even affected the way I act and how I see the world. The show's main character is very optimistic and has a deep love for his friends and family, and that has transitioned into my life as well. This has made me a much happier person.

November 28, 2020:

On this day, I shot my first Columbia project. The story I originally had planned went down the drain when one of my actors caught COVID the day of filming. In just 6 hours I had to make and shoot an entirely different movie. I looked at my friend who was another actor while we were in the car and said "lets just have fun at this point". From there we made a hilarious comedy and I would end up getting an A on that project. This was important to me because I impressed myself on what I was capable of doing when things go wrong.

December 15, 2020:

This day is my birthday. Nothing special happened on that day, but it was my first time experiencing the happy birthday song on zoom. It touched my heart seeing my family still trying to find a way to celebrate my birthday even though we can't be together. On a boring birthday, this was nice to see.

December 20, 2020:

After receiving some birthday money, I wanted to do some shopping. Me and a couple of friends decided to take a trip to Michigan City Outlet Mall, but before we got there we saw this sand hill which was near a running trail. We got curious and decided to see what was on the other side. This was special because of how much fun we had getting to the top. The hill was very high, so climbing up the sand was both challenging and fun. And once we reached the top we saw a beach and a lake on the other side with an amazing view. We also rolled back down which was super fun. Me and my friends never explored anything like this and it became something we enjoyed doing, exploring new places.

December 25,2020:

On this day, I got a new TV for christmas. This was special to me because my previous tv was so small and playing games and watching tv was challenging. My mom got me a new tv and I was very geeked. It was so much bigger and I decided to put it up that night. The new tv has so much cool features and is one of my favorite Christmas gifts ever

January 25,2021:

This day was the first day of the second semester. It was also the first day I was introduced to adobe premiere pro. I took an editing class and found out Columbia has access to all adobe platforms. This is special because I want to start a youtube channel soon, and learning to use adobe premiere pro is a huge tool to making good content.

February 5th, 2021:

This was one of my best friend's birthdays. He has been a little down in the dump lately for many reasons, so we decided to throw him a surprise party. He asked us all to hangout that day but everyone told them they were busy, and he seemed bummed out about it. Our one friend invited him over for a cake and he expected it to be just them. When we surprised him it was wholesome to see his face smile back up in joy as we celebrated together that whole night.

March 2021:

This month I was down in the dumps as well. I was stressed out and overthinking about a lot. I decided to take a break and go on youtube to get my mind off things. I stumbled across a youtuber called Jidion. His content consists of pranks and I found him to be hilarious. His videos helped me find joy in the darkest of days which I really appreciate. Till this day I look forward to seeing what he posts every week.

March 2020:

After watching Jidion for a while, a couple of weeks later I found a channel called Nelk. Nelk is also a prank channel but they take their stuff to a whole new level. Jidion made me feel better while Nelk inspired me. I see how much money these guys are making just for having fun, so it inspired me to start my own brand and begin a youtube channel as well. Without them I wouldn't have big plans for the summer.

April 17,2021:

On this day, I went to the movies for the first time in over a year. Going to the movies was something I always enjoyed, and it's a big reason for my love of film, and when I heard their opening back up for Godzilla vs Kong, I had to go. Me and some friends went and it felt so nice to finally see the big screen again. It felt like a reunion to me.

April 24, 2021:

This day we filmed my second Columbia Project. Last time everything went wrong, but this time everything went right. All Actors were ready and prepared and we also finished in a shorter time than I expected. This was a special day because it was my first time working with other Columbia actors and we had an amazing time shooting.

May 4, 2021:

I had ordered a brand new camera for my channel and it came in on this day. The camera has so many amazing features my other one didn't have to offer. I'm very excited to learn more about how it works. If the channel does really well, this camera can be a memory and an important object to the brand later down the line.

Jacob Cambray

## The Man I've become

This pandemic was a first for me and something I'm going to tell my kids and grandkids about. The pandemic came with a lot of bad occurrences that spiraled this world out of control. From places shutting down, to people getting really sick and dying, to not being able to leave the house without a mask, the pandemic really changed how things were run prior to it. As bad as it was for the world as a whole, it benefited me without me realizing it did until later on. The pandemic gave me an opportunity to find who I was. The times alone made me find interests I never thought I would have such as anime. Anime even changed my physical health by being motivated by the show's characters and story. I got into really good shape which led me to find interest in MMA. I would've never found my joy for combat sports if the pandemic never gave me the time to find it. I started to train in my free time and get a lot better which helped my physical and mental health a lot. I was very timid and shy but recently I've been more energetic and carefree. During these times I started to become more grateful for what I have as I started to see I have more than others have. The pandemic opened my eyes to how truly blessed I was. I became humble, grateful, and open minded because of what the pandemic has shown me. While being alone, I started to watch a lot of youtube as well, and that inspired me to start a youtube brand with my friends with the idea of one day getting paid to just have fun in our lives like a lot of these other youtubers do. It sounds selfish and I hate to say this pandemic helped me more than it hurt me because I know it was a lot harder for others, but the time alone and away made me more appreciative of the time together with people. My whole mentality and who I am as a person changed for the better, and it was because of the opportunities and moments the pandemic provided.



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