

Columbia College Chicago

Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago

Public History Journals

Response 2020

Spring 2021

Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal

Christopher Osburn

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/journals>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 International License](#).

Christopher Osburn
Public History: Presenting and Interpreting the Past SP21
Prof. Erin McCarthy
February 8th, 2021

Student Journal:
Coronavirus and it's Multitudinous Side Effects

Journal Entry #1

Since I am still somewhat unclear about what the possibilities are for carrying out this assignment, this first journal entry will prove as a proposal and rough assessment of where I stand now in this class, in this pandemic, in my life, and in the world.

My proposal is to make a video diary, impromptu and likely poorly written, featuring myself and my journey in my unexpected stay in Florida. My mother bought a home here some years ago, and she has been trapped outside of the country for the duration of this pandemic. Unbeknownst to me, this home has suffered damages during her absence, and she is currently under doctor's orders to "avoid stress at all costs". So, I propose my journey, captured in video, as I deal with the clandestine undertaking of fixing a moldy condominium in North Miami, dealing with Homeowner's Associations, Contractors, Insurance, and the like. Of course, I'll keep most things confidential. However, this is something I never expected to have to deal with, and what I am learning is some useful, and headache inducing, stuff about being a homeowner. I know what you're thinking, we're all millennials, we'll never buy houses anyway. Well, if you thought you were missing out, you might just be happier renting after you hear this bologna. And please tell me if I sound like some high-falutin' egg-head complaining about first world problems. I have no argument for that, however I will maintain that not all that glitters is gold.

Anyways, I hope this is enough for now. Oh yeah, I think it's important for us to document our individual experiences during the Coronavirus pandemic because they are likely all unique and offer insights into different manifestations of the effects of a global pandemic. Did you know the air down here can reach 98% percent humidity? I certainly didn't, but I found out!

Cheers,
Chris

Christopher Osburn
Public History SP21
Prof. McCarthy
March 22nd, 2021

Public History Pandemic Journal Entry #3:

It is hard to keep focus in so much chaos. Every day feels like a new start, and time skips in and out like a beat-up CD player. I've learned to look for an anchor every day. Something that keeps me grounded and moving forward. Responsibilities alone don't do the job that well, and the mistake of only focusing on responsibilities, for me, can lead to confusion and disorientation. Music has helped me more than I can put in words. Some say music is the language of emotion. It's an understatement to say that these are emotional times. I'd like to put forth, for this journal entry, a song and a bit of its history.

When I hear a song, and it really hits me in my soul, it fascinates me to explore the history and legacy of the song. One of my favorite anchors is taking some time out of the day to find some new music, and if the feeling is there, explore it to discover its DNA and how it's been used otherwise and since. This song is a case of a breath taking original, which happens to be quite relevant to what we are studying in this class, and the extrapolation of what it might have been before.

Os Tincoãs are a Brazilian music group from the northern state of Bahia. The north of Brazil saw the heaviest influx of enslaved people, and it is, in large part, the source of Brazil's vibrant and unique culture today. The lasting African influence in Brazil is somewhat more prominent in Brazil than in the United States; a prominent example being the widespread practice of the religion Candomblé, which is a syncretic religion mixing traditional West African religions and Catholicism. The song by Os Tincoãs that I'd like to share in this entry is about a goddess named Nanã. It is called "Cordeiro de Nanã" (1977). The description of this book on the University of Central Florida's website explains the exact significance of the song.

Cordeiro de Nana is a Brazilian samba song adapted from a slave hymn, a prayer to a deified ancestor goddess who comes in the form of Nana, a wise, elderly woman. The song defies forced conversion to Christianity, explaining that their lack of resistance was not a sign of weakness, and that the slaves were still praying to their original gods.

I found this song so beautiful, and even more so after learning its history. This pandemic has changed me in a sense that I now have more time to take a second and explore things such as this wonderful music. It's bewildering to think how many versions of this song may have existed before this was recorded into this more famous version in 1977.

Cordeiro de Nanã - Os Tingoãs (1977)



Cordeiro de Nanã (Live) - Os Tingoãs (1982)



Cordeiro de Nanã - Mateus Aleluia e Thalma de Freitas (2010)

A video of the last living band member of Os Tincoãs and a young collaborator, Thalma de Freitas.



Journal Entry #4

What I miss most about the pre-covid era is probably the ability to see and enjoy live performance. For many people this instantly brings up the idea of music festivals and concerts, however what I miss most is being able to see local improv, stand-up comedy, and one particular local big-band jazz group called The Model Citizens. It was going to see shows like this that gave my life in Chicago rhythm and these shows served as a sort of monthly punctuation or cornerstone. Without these, I no longer saw many of my friends who would meet up to see these shows. Not only were they a great time, but it was a great place to meet other artists and like-minded people that also gravitated to this type of local live entertainment.

This is a good segue into what I also most look forward to now that vaccines are being distributed and things seem to be returning to a state of semi-normalcy. I enjoy performing stand up comedy myself, and have felt drained of a certain life-energy ever since I could no longer perform due to COVID restrictions. While I was in Miami working on my mother's home, I was able to get out some nights and get around to the open mics there, since the restrictions in Florida were either non-existent or mostly ignored. This did not sit well with me ethically, however it was just something I couldn't resist. I found some success in the comedy scene there and integrated quite quickly. In the span of a month or so, I knew almost everyone there was to know and managed to get booked on a number of shows. This makes it that much harder now that I am back in Chicago, and I am counting the days until Chicago reopens its comedy scene so I can continue to work on my stand up.

Journal Entry #5

Personal Timeline

March 1st-15th — 2020

Event: “No Way”

I remember hearing my professor saying to our Directing I class “I don’t know about this corona stuff. Do you think it’s real? I think they’re blowing it out of proportion.” We did not meet the following week.

March 16th-30th

Event: Beginning of Lockdown

I remember thinking that a month wouldn’t be so bad. I thought I could use the rest and let my reclusive side run rampant for a little while. Tiger King and home-cooking.

April 1st-15th

Event: Realization

This was when I began to realize the impacts that this virus would really have on my parent’s and older family, as well as the older population of the United States. I remember shifting my perspective from “well, even if I get it it wouldn’t be that bad” to “everyone is a potential vector for this deadly infection”.

Event: Barren Grocery Stores

I had never seen anything like this before. I remember the walk to the grocery store being normal enough. Then, when I entered, most aisles were empty, especially the aisle with home supplies and toilet paper. They were out of bread. I never thought I’d see a day when the supermarket was out of bread.

April 16th-30th

Event: New York

I’d hear stories about how bad things were getting in New York, and I reached out to friends who lived there. Some had already had the virus and recovered, others were staying sheltered. I was lucky that no one was affected severely, as so many others were.

May 1st-15th

Event: New Normal

With the quarantine timeline beginning to extend, I started to see that this would take much longer than anyone had predicted. Even then, my predictions did not see it going for this long, however.

May 15th-May 31st

Event: New Job

My boss from an internship I had taken about a year prior emailed me about a new series that the production studio planned to do. They wanted to interview local filmmakers with the head of the company acting as the host of a show called "E-Luminate". This turned out to be a less than ideal choice for host of the show, but we soldiered on through a series of bad episodes, learning a little more with each one.

Event: Police Killing of George Floyd

This event made the whole world stop. The protests held by Americans sparked protests all over the world for racial equality and against police brutality. In our home, we spoke at length about how we felt, exploring the issues of ACAB, defunding police, police culpability, unequal treatment, etc. This was made even more interesting because my roommate, Renee, has an uncle who works for the LAPD.

June 1st-June 15th

Event: Protests

My roommates and I debate at length whether or not we feel it's safe enough to go out and join the protests. Ultimately, we decide against it since Renee is immunocompromised. We show our support as much as possible still, and stay in touch with friends who do attend.

Event: Lease

We are supposed to move into a new place, however the landlord, two days prior to our move in date, tells us he no longer wants to rent to us. This leads to a scramble to find a new home, and we end up finding a lawyer who will help us with the case on contingency. This is still ongoing and a major pain in the neck (as of May 14th, 2021).

June 16th-June 30th

Event: A lost summer

Living with an immunocompromised person is not easy. Even the smallest excursions had to be taken with great care, and our ways of life changed dramatically to accommodate everyone's comfort and feeling of safety. We stayed inside mostly, and luckily were able to focus on decorating our new place.

July 1st - July 15th

Event: A summer of strange birthdays

I've always been familiar with an annual rush of subsequent birthdays in the summer. But this one felt particularly strange since, at each turn, everyone was finding ways to still make a celebration possible without putting anyone at risk. This was a challenge that was fun at times, but somewhat depressing too.

July 16th - July 31st

Event: Job stop

Things slow down as more restrictions are put on the city of Chicago. Operations at the studio, including any editing, had to stop and we spend a month doing just about nothing.

August 1st - August 30th

Event: Almost back to school

The start of a fully online semester is upon us, and I hear fervent groans from my social circle about how they'd be better off going to a much cheaper online school. I believe this debate of charging full tuition for online schooling is still ongoing. I'm just happy to be done.

September 1st - September 31st

Event: More projects

The editing job starts back up again, however E-Luminate has been put out of it's misery. It's a harrowing thing to be responsible for the final touches of a project that was quite doomed from the start. It makes someone feel like they are the reason the outcome was bad. It takes a good amount of mental discipline to avoid thinking this as an editor. I tried my best. Luckily new projects were on the way and I was able to continue working with Third Beacon Studios as an assistant editor and editor. I will say that this preserved my sanity a good deal, and kept me from being totally sedentary at home.

October 1st - October 31st

Event: Brazil

My family in Brazil, as well as the country, start to feel the effects of coronavirus more. I hear accounts of how differently the quarantine is treated in Brazil in comparison to the United States. Although the situation was handled badly in the US, I am reminded how lucky I am to primarily be a citizen of the United States and not reside in Brazil during crises like this.

November 1st - 30th

Event: A very thankful Thanksgiving

Renee's dad comes to visit for Thanksgiving and we have a great meal together. This was a breath of fresh air. It was nice to spend time with family, even if it wasn't my own.

December 1st - 31st

Event: Vaccine and Anxiety

Talk of the vaccine begins to get us stirred up with anxiousness, and we decide to break the quarantine for a bit to drive down to Miami and quarantine there at my mother's home. We spend New Year's there, but it's still a quiet affair and we maintain safety measures at all times.

January 1st - 31st — 2021

Event: Giving back to family

After spending some time at my mother's home, I realize that I am the only one capable of restoring some things that had been damaged and gone awry since my mother left. She's been stuck in Europe with my sister, as the pandemic broke out during her trip. So, I make the decision to drive back to Chicago, pick up some things, and then return to Miami for a crash course in contractors, insurance, homeowners associations, and much more.

Event: Insurgency

The nation watches in awe as a group of radicals storms the capitol building in Washington DC. I have numerous arduous conversations about this with my dad; which differed tremendously from the conversations I had with the rest of my family. It becomes even clearer how the United States lives in, at minimum, two entirely different realities and understandings of what reality is.

February 1st - 28th

Event: The Return

I hadn't done stand up since 2017, however after spending so much time pent up inside, I decide to take some calculated risks and go out to an open mic. The first night goes considerably well, and I make a handful of friends in the process. Comedy kept me afloat in a city where I knew nobody at all.

March 1st - 31st

Event: Success in Negotiation

After more weeks than I expected, I managed to settle many things that were wrong with my mother's home, including filing an insurance claim to cover damages and dealing with multiple contractors successfully. This was a feeling, and an accomplishment, that I had not experienced before.

April 1st - 30th

Event: Return to Chicago

I was booked on a show the night before I was supposed to return to Chicago. This tore me apart, since I did not want to leave the comedy scene on a bad note, but also could not put my roommates at risk. Ultimately, we reached a reasonable conclusion and all tests were negative.

Event: Vaccination

THE RELIEF OF GETTING VACCINATED! GOODNESS GRACIOUS!

Event: Call to action

My boss at Third Beacon got married at the end of April, leaving me to take over some hefty duties that he would leave behind on his honeymoon. I even got flown out to Oxnard, CA to edit on-set because of fast approaching deadlines for a poorly produced commercial. This gave me a wealth of experience in the post-production world and with dealing with people.

May 1st - May 14th

Event: More Notes

The commercial, initially slated for a May 1st deadline, drags on and forces me to make a decision between my future career and the successful culmination of my academic career. As I write this, I am still hoping that I can finish this semester successfully, having only finished the commercial this week. Rounds and rounds of notes on an edit that seemed like it would never get approved. Effective chain of command in commercial production is key.

Event: Graduation

I never thought it would be like this, but tomorrow there will be a pre-recorded commencement for Columbia College's class of 2021. What a day to be remembered. Although my family will not be here to celebrate with me, I have tried my best to organize ways to celebrate with both branches of my family, in classic Osburn fashion. One zoom scheduled with my mother and sister, and another for my father's side of the family. Oh happy days! Please pass me. And if you see any of my other professors, tell them to pass me too! I'm a good student at heart!



<http://colum.duracloud.org/durastore/casc.public/08-05-PH-osburn.mp4>