





## Capturing Quarantine Transcription

Christen Weeden: Today's date is April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and this interview is for Capturing Quarantine for Columbia College Chicago. My name is Christen Weeden and I will be interviewing

Amelia Wilson: Amelia Wilson.

Christen Weeden: I'm calling in from Hammond, Indiana. And where are you at today?

Amelia Wilson: I'm currently in Whiting, Indiana.

Christen Weeden: So, what is your date of, what is your year of birth?

Amelia Wilson: 1999

Christen Weeden: And then where were you born?

Amelia Wilson: I was born in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Christen Weeden: Where were you raised?

Amelia Wilson: Indianapolis, Indiana.

Christen Weeden: What was your mother's year of birth and where was she born?

Amelia Wilson: My mother's year of birth is 1975 and I think she was also born in Indianapolis, Indiana. Um, my dad's year of birth was 1958 and he also Indianapolis, Indiana. I think that's where he's from.

Christen Weeden: And what is your earliest memory?

30 Amelia Wilson: I'm not entirely sure, but a really early memory I have is visiting my mom in the hospital  
31 when she was pregnant with my sister and I was about four years old at the time.

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33 Christen Weeden: Okay, so who did you, who was is your household growing up?

34

35 Amelia Wilson: So, there was my mom and my dad and then my little sister Emily, who is four years  
36 younger than me. So, she's like 16 now since I'm 20.

37

38 Amelia Wilson: And those are who I grew up with. But for like a small period of time, my aunt Sharon  
39 lived with us. That was like for about two years and then my grandma also lived with us before she  
40 passed away.

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42 Christen Weeden: What were your hobbies growing up?

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44 Amelia Wilson: Um, I was interested in a lot of things. I was like a big nerd. I liked reading like books  
45 about the pyramids in Egypt and you know. I liked reading about rain forests and like a bunch of a bunch  
46 of reading a bunch of different topics like there was a while where I was obsessed with horses. Another  
47 time where I was obsessed with chess like it really was all over the place. Um, I did a lot of singing and  
48 songwriting when I was really young and then it kind of turned into poetry, which is something that I  
49 became interested in in middle school. And so then, I've always been writing. I've always written stories,  
50 always read books. And so that kind of stayed with me. So even like today, like it's just a lot of writing  
51 and reading.

52

53 Christen Weeden: Can you talk more about how you got into poetry and writing and how like what your  
54 inspiration kind of was?

55

56 Amelia Wilson: Yeah. Um, so in like the sixth grade. This is going to be really weird. In the sixth grade, I  
57 had a crush on this boy and I was writing songs about him a lot. And then I was like, you know what, like, I  
58 don't know what happened. I think we read poems or had to write a poem or something like in class  
59 and I was like, "You know what, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to write poems, since I can't sing,  
60 and I don't know anybody that plays musical instruments. So, let's just write poetry instead." So, I  
61 started doing that a lot of my first poems are really, really bad. I still have all the notebooks. But I just  
62 kind of wrote poetry from like sixth grade all the way up and I still do, not as much as I used to. I was like  
63 obsessed with it for a while. Now it's more like I'm more focused on fiction and like creative writing. Um,

64 but I don't know what the inspiration for it really is. I've just always loved writing and then like, once I hit  
65 puberty, like just that was what I became obsessed with.  
66

67 Christen Weeden: So, what was your favorite book when you were young?  
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69 Amelia Wilson: Um, this is going to sound cliché. Again, um Harry Potter. It was my favorite thing. I  
70 really, really enjoyed the Harry Potter series. I was 11 years old when I picked it up and the reason was  
71 because my teacher, my fifth-grade teacher Mr. Madden, he basically taught the class with Harry Potter  
72 references all the time. He was like "You know, how Harry did this thing." And I was like, "No I don't  
73 know, I, who is Harry, like what is this about?" And I'm so confused and to understand this class, I'm  
74 going to have to read the books. And so, I was 11 years old and I read the entire Harry Potter series, all  
75 seven books in the month of October. Like, that was just a big one-month thing. I had way more free  
76 time than I do now, so I was able to read the whole thing and I absolutely fell in love. Like, I love Harry  
77 Potter. And that was like my favorite book, but I also really enjoy Call of the Wild. I've read that like four  
78 or five times now. And that was something that I read around the age of 11 as well.  
79

80 Christen Weeden: Okay. And then, what was your favorite subject growing up, was it writing or?  
81

82 Amelia Wilson: Yeah, I'm not sure if it was English or if it was like the music classes because like the for  
83 like the longest time when I was a kid, I liked songwriting and like music and stuff. So, when I was  
84 younger, I think music was like my favorite class. But as I got older English became my favorite class.  
85

86 Christen Weeden: So, has your music and songwriting influenced your poetry at all?  
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88 Amelia Wilson: It did. It kind of did for a while because I would like rhyme my poetry. So, my poetry had  
89 like a very certain rhythm and was very like repetitive like music can be. But then after a while I was like,  
90 "no, I'm done with songwriting." And I decided to just write poems. And so now I hate it when my  
91 poetry rhymes. I do, I like freestyle, like spoken word. So, that's kind of that happened around eighth  
92 grade, I was like, we're not going to rhyme anymore, rhyming is dumb. So, yeah.  
93

94 Christen Weeden: What mentors, did you have when you were young?  
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96 Amelia Wilson: Um, I guess my teachers and my parents were kind of like my mentors. My parents less  
97 so because they were always at work, so I had more attention, I suppose, from like my teachers and I  
98 was like a straight A student. So, I got a lot of like "Oh you're so outstanding. You're such a great

99 student. You're so smart," that kind of stuff from them. So that was really encouraging. But I really went  
100 in, like, like in elementary school. I think my biggest mentor would be Mr. Madden, because he just, he  
101 was the first I really connected with who like really saw something in me and then that kind of carried  
102 on throughout the years and it became like English teachers, Art teachers. Like it really depended, like  
103 each year was different, but there was always like one teacher who was kind of like, "Yes, you can do  
104 anything you put your mind to. Go do that stuff. Chase your dreams," that kind of thing. So that kind of  
105 influenced my decision to go to Columbia and be a writer.

106  
107 Christen Weeden: So, what was your high school experience like?  
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109 Amelia Wilson: Um, I don't know, I guess like normal. There were like popular kids. They were all awful,  
110 and there were like little cliques of people that are like the jocks, the nerds, like, you know, like really  
111 stereotypical high school. I wasn't very involved in like anything. I had a lot of friends and we had drama  
112 within our friend group but like beyond like social relationships, I didn't have a lot of like academic,  
113 outside of class, experience.

114  
115 Christen Weeden: So how did you change as a person or grow as a person throughout high school?  
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117 Amelia Wilson: Hmm. I don't know. Um, well, this is hard. I don't really know how I changed. I still feel  
118 like I'm, the way I felt freshman year of high school, I feel like I'm in that place. I feel I mean, kind of like I  
119 feel like I changed more through college than I did high school. In high school, it was a lot of like, I don't  
120 know. I mean, there was definitely a lot of growing going on. Especially after sophomore year after me  
121 and my friend like we were no longer friends anymore. That really affected things. But looking back on  
122 it, like at the time. I think I thought I changed but looking back, just all seemed like one big like  
123 continuous trying to find yourself kind of thing. Um, so it's really hard to like, think about. Like, now,  
124 what was I mean I don't know because back like my memory of them is be like, "yes, I have changed so  
125 much since freshman year," but when I look back I'm like really, did I really change? I don't think so.

126  
127 Christen Weeden: So, when you were in high school, what did you think that you would grow up to be or  
128 what did you think your career was going to be?

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130 Amelia Wilson: Um, high school, I definitely wanted to be a writer, or an author at least. Um, in my  
131 freshman year, second semester I started writing a book and I actually finished it. It's not very good. Um,  
132 but it was like a paranormal book about like a ghost or whatever was trying to get in contact with their  
133 sister. And yeah, like a bunch of I don't even know what happened in the book, honestly. Um, but I  
134 wrote an entire novel, because I was so, like, I don't know. I was like, "This is what I want to do. I want to  
135 be a writer." And I think, I think in the eighth grade, that's when I realized I wanted to be one. So, high

136 school and just kind of made sense. I wasn't sure what I would do with it, but I really wanted it, so I  
137 knew that that's what I wanted to do.

138

139 Christen Weeden: So how did you decide to go to Columbia?

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141 Amelia Wilson: Um, so I found Columbia one day when I was just looking up schools to go to for college. I  
142 was really picky. I didn't want to go to the ones like any big-name schools that exist in Indiana. So, I  
143 didn't want to IUPUI. I didn't want to go to U Indy. I didn't want to go to Purdue or IU, Bloomington. So,  
144 like I was looking at all these school and I was just like, none of them, like all of them are too big. I  
145 wanted something with like more focused on the classroom and like you know teacher, student  
146 interaction, but I also wanted something different. I really, when I was in high school, I really hated like,  
147 where I was because I felt like I was stuck. I felt like life was super boring and there was nothing really  
148 worth living for, as dark as that sounds. And when I found Columbia. I was like, scrolling through and I  
149 found this college and I was, "Oh my gosh, like Chicago. I've never been there. It sounds really exciting.  
150 It's not too far from home." But it sounded, it sounded exciting to like, go to a school that had a class  
151 called Origin and Fate of the Universe. I was like that's super cool. And then they had like the Creative  
152 Writing Program, which is something that I had not seen any other schools. Like there was no writing  
153 program. Really, I would have had to like take an English teaching program, which I wasn't really excited  
154 about. It was nice seeing a school that offered a lot of artistic creativity and a lot of diversity and stuff I  
155 just couldn't find elsewhere.

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157 Christen Weeden: So how was your transition from high school or post high school into starting at  
158 Columbia?

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160 Amelia Wilson: Um, after high school, I took a gap year, mostly because I knew I wasn't financially stable  
161 enough for college and also because I ended up meeting a boy and we started dating and I was like,  
162 "You know, I don't want to move away and lose this valuable relationship." And so it's like, "You know,  
163 I'm going to take a gap year," and during my senior year, I also had a really bad case of senioritis, which is  
164 just like where you don't want any of your work. And so my grades kind of fell my senior year. So I was  
165 like a gap year will be good for me. So, I spent the whole gap year working and just looking forward to a  
166 future the whole gap year was kind of like a transition for me, because I was like, I'm going to school, but  
167 I'm here for now I'm going to come here, though it was a really big transition. The move was a lot harder  
168 than I thought it would be, a lot scarier and like going to college was just, it was in a whole new place  
169 and a whole new world to me. So that was a lot harder than I thought it would be. But it was also really  
170 worthwhile in the end.

171

172 Christen Weeden: So how did you deal with that initial transition or that initial shock of it just being so  
173 different from your hometown, or how you grew up?

174 Amelia Wilson: Um, well, like so, like Chicago is definitely more liberal than my hometown, but I'm, to be  
175 honest, that wasn't what I was focusing on when I first moved. I wasn't really like, the things that  
176 bothered me most, when I first knew was the feeling of loneliness. I didn't have any friends up here. I  
177 didn't have my boyfriend up here at the time. I didn't have my family like up here with me. So, it was a lot  
178 of like I was really alone and isolated. And I started a new job. So, I didn't have any of my coworkers. It's  
179 a lot of just like being alone and not really knowing where to go or what to do. And then when school  
180 started, I was so focused on trying to do good with my schoolwork, that I just didn't have time to make  
181 friends and like things were really like. If anything, the thing I think of most is just how lonely and sad I  
182 was the first semester and I became really stressed and anxious, all the time. Because I just, I don't  
183 know. It was weird because I was worried about things that had nothing to do with school. I was worried  
184 about being alone at home, not being able to afford groceries because I was really, really broke. I was  
185 afraid of like my car like getting broken and all that stuff, which happened later. I was afraid, like not  
186 really afraid, but I was really upset with how it took me 50 minutes to get to work and back. It took 50  
187 minutes to get there, 50 minutes to get back. So, it was a chunk of my day just gone from driving to  
188 work and work itself wasn't, I felt really outcast from it. So like my semester was really rough and I was  
189 really afraid of pretty much everything. So, it was really hard to focus on like anything that had to do  
190 with Columbia, specifically because life was so difficult.

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192 Christen Weeden: So, has that changed? Have you, from your initial feelings, your first semester has that  
193 change throughout this semester?

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195 Amelia Wilson: Yeah, definitely. Um, so one of my friends from high school actually goes to Illinois  
196 Institute of Technology. So, I was able to meet up with him and we became friends. We were kind of  
197 like, I mean, we were already friends but like we were able to hang out more and then my friends from  
198 home would visit me before the shutdown and everything. They would visit me, and we would like hang  
199 out once a month and go out and do some go like explore the city and my boyfriend would visit me and  
200 then eventually moved up here and that really helped because then I had someone at home. So, I wasn't  
201 like taking care of everything by myself. And things were like things got a lot better after my first  
202 semester during that like winter break when I started going out to more events, hanging out with people  
203 who were still on campus or, you know, I'm friends with people and we all scheduled classes so we could  
204 have them together again next semester and it was a lot nicer. Stallings like second semester because I  
205 had people to hang out with. I had events to do. I had my boyfriend up here and I moved jobs to  
206 Munster, so I wasn't working super far away. I was able to work closer to home and knowing like  
207 different places makes you feel better make. you feel more at home and just as weird as that sounds like  
208 knowing that there's like a really cool pizza place near where I live and knowing that there was this really  
209 cool like bookstore, where I live, like near where I live, accessible to me. It was really nice knowing that  
210 those things are there because it made living here more bearable instead of just being stuck in your  
211 house and like lonely.

212 Christen Weeden: So, did you live on campus?  
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214 Amelia Wilson: No, um, I actually chose to live off campus, mostly because of how it was a lot cheaper  
215 than living on campus. Um, so I have an apartment in Whiting, and I really like it. It's definitely more  
216 spacious than a dorm, a lot cheaper and the only downside is commuting to school, but by second  
217 semester I learned to take the South Shore Line and I also learned different routes to take to be at  
218 school faster. So my commute time was either not as noticeable because I was on the train doing  
219 homework and or it like 30 minutes or less because able to take like a certain highway and then Park  
220 near school instead of parking far away and like taking the Red Line.

221  
222 Christen Weeden: So, what has been your favorite course at Columbia so far?  
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224 Amelia Wilson: Huh. Hmm. Gosh. I really liked Foundations for Creative Writing my first semester. I  
225 really connected with Doug Whippo, and it was, he was really nice. He was really like, like he pushed me  
226 to like try to continue writing, even though things are really crazy. And he was like, hey, I know things  
227 are rough, but you, you can use this in a creative way, and it was nice because it kind of got my mind  
228 away from all the stress I was feeling. Um, so his class, um, definitely one of my favorites. But I've also  
229 really loved both of my marketing classes that I've taken. I took Intro to Management my first semester  
230 and I took Intro to Marketing my second and both those have been really, I loved them a lot. I didn't  
231 realize I loved marketing as much. I kind of took it just in case this creative writing thing fails, but now  
232 I'm like, wow, this is like really interesting and I actually I care about how we advertise and how we  
233 market. And as a person who doesn't completely love big corporations, even though I work for one. Um, I  
234 like the idea of like learning how to advertise and to be able to help out smaller businesses or online  
235 like communities and stuff. So, it's really, I like, I don't know, it's really cool.

236  
237 Christen Weeden: So, what inspires your motivation?  
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239 Amelia Wilson: Motivation for like writing or?  
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241 Christen Weeden: Writing or just your work ethic.  
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243 Amelia Wilson: Um, I don't know, um, I don't, I don't really get how to explain this. I don't really get  
244 motivated necessarily to write. It just is kind of like a necessity, like I have to do it. So, I do it to make  
245 sure it's like, like eating, like you have to eat to stay alive, right to stay alive. It's the same. As far as like  
246 other things, after my car accident, um, my whole like philosophy of life changed in a really weird way.  
247 And I was like, you know what, "I need to focus on what I do with my time instead of worrying about  
248 how things aren't getting done. I need to make sure they do get done." And so, I got really invested into



249 organization and list making and I started auditing my time. So, I would do things and it made me feel  
250 really good to wake up early in the morning and like tackle a to do list and then continue on throughout  
251 my day like doing designated activities. And that gives me motivation. Completing tasks gives me  
252 motivation to complete more tasks. And it also gives me motivation to, like, you know, when I have free  
253 time to read a book, write, or to watch that Netflix show that I never got to do because I was too busy  
254 worrying about all the stuff I wasn't doing. So, yeah.

255  
256 Christen Weeden: So, do you mind talking more about the car accident and how that's impacted you?  
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258 Amelia Wilson: Yeah. Um, so the day of the car accident, I, up until this point, I was like super stressed. I  
259 don't even know how to express it. I was super, super stressed, super anxious all the time, hardly gotten  
260 any sleep. And like I was super overwhelmed with work and like with not seeing anybody, being really  
261 alone. Like, I realized I am not an independent woman like that is I don't know how people do it. I could  
262 not um, so the day of the car accident and it was October 31, it was Halloween. And I was like, "I'm  
263 going to dress up and go to work". And so, I was like, "let me get like a little witch hat type thing to wear  
264 to work." I didn't have one. I had to go to the dollar store. So, I left the Dollar Store. It was snowing was  
265 the first snow up here of winter. And I got. And then I pulled out of the dollar store and I went to the  
266 back alley, then I came back up to like go on this road to turn and a UPS truck came up and was like  
267 sitting in my line of sight, but I was like, well, it's okay. I don't see anybody coming. I don't think so. I like  
268 started to go and there was another person coming and I just, we both stopped, but we both ended up  
269 hitting anyway. Um and I remember thinking like, first of all, how broke I was. That was my first thought  
270 was, "I can't afford to fix this." Because I was just living off of like paycheck to paycheck, like no savings,  
271 like nothing. Like it was literally paycheck to paycheck. I was like, "I can't fix this. Like I screwed up," and  
272 then my second thought was "My dad's going to kill me. He's going to be so mad. He's going to yell at me  
273 about how stupid I am or how awful I am," and I was just really worried about that. But I was  
274 worried about like going to work and going to school, like everything just kind of like hit me and I just  
275 started crying and I'm not the type to really cry in front of a lot of people that I don't know, but I just  
276 started sobbing like I was shaking so bad. And like so scared. It's weird like how much I can remember of  
277 the moment, like I can probably go on and on as a writer. Of course, it's expected, I'm sure for little  
278 details. Like, "oh, the snow was falling and landing on my shirt in a certain way." You know, like that's  
279 very writer-esque of me, I guess. But, um, I remember going home and I cried, and I called my insurance  
280 company just so that way they could handle the insurance for the other lady and then I just went to  
281 sleep and I didn't wake up until the next day and it's weird because up until that point I was very, this is  
282 going to sound so bad, I was very like suicidal and I was self-harming and a lot of bad things that hadn't  
283 happened since high school. Like previously senior year, those all came back to me. It was very similar to  
284 the feelings I felt after I lost my best friend. Because again, I had nobody. But like this time, it was like  
285 physically I had nobody. Like I had my parents when I was younger, and now it was like nobody. But  
286 after the car accident, it was kind of like, I realized that this was no way to live. Like I can't keep going,  
287 day to day anxious about what was going to happen. And I can't keep being stressed over things that I  
288 can't control and I just kind of was like, "I'm not going to worry about it anymore. If things happen, they  
289 happen if they don't, they don't. And I just kind of like kept this new mentality like this, that things will  
290 happen as they were meant to happen, and I can only control so much. So, I couldn't have stopped the

291 other car from hitting me, it was an accident. That's how, it's just what car accidents are. Like it's taken a  
292 lot of effort mentally on my part to kind of come to terms of all of this, but yeah, it was like a defining  
293 moment in my college career because it also changed the way I looked at my classes and the way I  
294 looked at continuing college in general. So, sorry that was super long.

295  
296 Christen Weeden: No, um, so how has your career path changed as you've been at Columbia?  
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298 Amelia Wilson: You know, it's funny because it is changing. And I think I'm in that position where it's  
299 changing now. Um, so I walked in going for creative writing. It's what I wanted to do, and I wasn't really  
300 sure what I wanted to do with it. I just knew I wanted to write. And I ended up choosing to minor in  
301 marketing as like that safety net thing. Then I found out I really love marketing and I was like, wow, this  
302 could totally double major in these two things, like I love them both. Um, and then my first semester I  
303 wasn't entirely sure that I'd be able to continue Columbia for my second semester. And then here we  
304 are second semester and I am unsure as to whether, actually I know I'm probably not going to be at  
305 Columbia next semester just I don't know if I'm going to come back. I don't know if I'm going to  
306 community college. Like my education is kind of up in the air at the moment I didn't um, I think that just  
307 not being able to afford a lot of things and having this uncertainty has changed like what I want to do for  
308 like the rest of my life. Like, I'm thinking of marketing now with another college of maybe I will like start  
309 taking classes at another place and transfer back to Columbia and then continue what I'm doing. I've  
310 also been doing a lot of freelance writing. So, that could be a thing that I do. There's a lot of, I don't  
311 know, there's a lot of possibilities out there beyond what I thought I was going to do. And I'm, I don't  
312 really know what's going to happen. But I've been applying to a bunch of different jobs, especially in like  
313 the marketing and like content creation fields. And so, I don't know. We will see. I'm in that transition  
314 period. So, I haven't completely figured out what the change is, but I know it's changing

315  
316 Christen Weeden: So, if there was one thing that you could change about Colombia or multiple things,  
317 what would you change about Columbia?

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319 Amelia Wilson: Cheaper. Um, I, I walked into my Origin and Fate of the Universe class the first day and  
320 Luis Nasser was like, "No you know where your tuition dollars go?" and we were all like, "No we don't,"  
321 and um, he was like, "Okay, let's do some math." And since it's a physics class, you know, it's full of math  
322 and so we did the math of how much tuition each student pays where just as tuition. Like, if you go on  
323 your statement, it has all these other resources, but then there's one that just says tuition, nothing else.  
324 So, you look at how much your tuition is then you look at how much like each student pays. You see how  
325 many students are in class and then you, he talked about his own salary and talked about how many  
326 teachers were on campus. And we did a bunch of like equations and mathematical things and we kind of  
327 came up with a weird number. We were like, well, so a certain amount goes to the teachers for their,  
328 you know, whatever and maybe a certain amount goes to like the buildings or something. There was like  
329 a couple hundred like thousand dollars that we just didn't know where, like, I think it was over that  
330 amount, honestly. It was a lot of money. And we were like, "Where does it go?" and nobody knew and

331 so, I think that's a problem, not just with Columbia. It's like a problem with college. You know, like  
332 they're all just big corporations now. So, you know, they're just there to be a business and make some  
333 money. So, I think I kind of expected Columbia to be different. And in a way, it kind of is. Like the  
334 teachers are definitely, they care more about you. But as far as like Columbia itself, you know.

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336 Christen Weeden: So, transitioning into the coronavirus. When did you first become aware of the  
337 coronavirus?

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339 Amelia Wilson: I worked at the Hyde Park Target. Um, and there were a bunch of like, it was really  
340 specific, and there were a bunch of like Asian kids from UIC coming in and specifically requesting face  
341 masks. Like it was just like them. And it was really strange. I had no idea why. And I was like, "Facemasks  
342 like, why do we need those?" and or like, "Why do you need them?" Yeah, because it everybody like all  
343 of them from you were asking, and I was just really confused and one of my coworkers was like, "Yeah.  
344 Did you know that there's a virus over in Wuhan, China?" And I think the President, or someone called it  
345 the Chinese virus and said that it was only going to affect Asians or something. And so, like, "Yeah, that's  
346 why they need them because they don't want to get sick here." Um, and I was just really confused by it.  
347 Um, so, the first time I heard it was definitely when someone asked me for a face mask.

348  
349 Christen Weeden: So, what news or media outlets have you gotten information from?  
350

351 Amelia Wilson: Um, so at first, for the longest time, I just wasn't really like looking at the news,  
352 specifically for like the coronavirus. I saw it, I was like, and whatever, like it's in China, like I just kind of  
353 didn't think it was a big deal. Then it did come here and I was like, "Man, people are making this bigger  
354 than it needs to be," like I wasn't really seeing anything other than like maybe some people who wore  
355 facemasks. Um, it wasn't really until about the beginning of March that I started like thinking, "You  
356 know, this is, this might be bigger than I thought it would be." And so I was looking at news on Twitter  
357 and I was looking at news on like, I have a Google News app so you can follow CNN, and you can follow  
358 NPR and like a bunch of other places and see what they're saying. Um, so I was just kind of like all over  
359 the place. I took a lot of my news from other people. So, people at work, what they would say, or my  
360 boyfriend what he would say. Um, and it really wasn't until the week before Columbia shut down that I  
361 started getting like really like into it like, "What's going on, what's happening?" So, yeah.

362  
363 Christen Weeden: So how much information did you get from either your professors or the college  
364 administration, especially in the earlier stages, like before the shutdown?

365  
366 Amelia Wilson: Honestly, a lot of like college professors and like the campus itself, like nobody was really  
367 talking about it. It was kind of like a meme, like people were like, "Oh, the coronavirus. Hahaha." I like  
368 heard it like from students laughing about it. It really wasn't until like the end of March, where teachers

369 are kind of like, "Oh, we're supposed to talk to you about this. We're not really sure if it's going to come  
370 here." Some teachers would be like "Oh no it's not going to, we're not going to close," or

371 "Oh yeah, we're going to close" and each teacher was different. Each person said different things and  
372 some teachers were like, "Let's, don't even think about it, let's just work on our work." You know, so and  
373 it depended on the class, but I didn't really get a lot of information. I mean, the day we got the email,  
374 um like, I was in my fiction class with Doug Whippo because, this is also crazy. Our teacher that we had  
375 before passed away. Her name was Katora. She was our fiction teacher and after a couple weeks she  
376 ended up passing away with your son. And so, then Doug Whippo became our fiction teacher, but he  
377 was saying that he wasn't really sure if the school is going to shut down or not. I'm like, you know, to  
378 move off campus and it was like literally 10 minutes after the class I got the email saying that we were  
379 moving off campus, so.

380  
381 Christen Weeden: So how did you feel when you initially got the email that classes were, that the  
382 campus was shutting down? How did you feel about transitioning to online courses?

383  
384 Amelia Wilson: Um, honestly, at first, I was really excited because a lot of my friends, like my two best  
385 friends from home, they go to U Indy and U Indy had closed about a week before. And they were talking  
386 about how great it was not having to wake up early and it was great not to have to commute to school  
387 and like benefits that they were having going on. And I was kind of envious because my schedule was  
388 literally like wake up at 7 am, be at class by 9. Get out of class by 3 or 3:30. Go to work at 4. Like it was  
389 work from 4 to 11. Like I mean it was insane. And I was kind of like, "Yes, I need a break." Um, so I was  
390 like, kind of excited at first when I found out that it was online because I was like, "Oh my gosh, it's so  
391 much more free time." Um, but at the same again, at the same time, I really didn't think the coronavirus  
392 was as big of a thing. I was like, "Yeah, I guess it's important if they're closing school." But again, I wasn't  
393 kind of, I wasn't like, "Wow, it's really serious. They're doing a good thing here." So, yeah.

394  
395 Christen Weeden: So, have your feelings changed since the initial excitement?  
396

397 Amelia Wilson: Yeah. I don't like online classes as well as I thought I would. It's definitely not the same  
398 as being in person, people, it's not. It's not. I like being on campus. Again, mostly because I knew how  
399 frag my time was with this college. I miss being able to go to the student center. That's something I will  
400 not be able to do maybe ever again. And I miss being able to, like, just walk on campus like walking into  
401 buildings and really take in like Columbia's vibe and stuff. It's strange but like, just like the like going  
402 into buildings and being like, "I'm a college student. I'm in college right now," was a nice feeling. I really  
403 missed that. I'm saddened a lot of things have moved online. I find my classes are probably a little  
404 harder because it's more work and you don't get that like face to face interaction. So, no longer excited  
405 how everything being moved.

406 Christen Weeden: So, um, did you have any spring break plans since the college shut down right around  
407 spring break?

408  
409 Amelia Wilson: Um. Yeah, kind of. I mean, I wanted to visit my family on spring break, like I wanted to  
410 drive to their house and just be with them, which I ended up doing. Um, despite you know, the end of  
411 March being like you're not supposed to do that. Um, but, like, I really missed them. And it was really  
412 important to my mental health to like go see them. So, I was like, "You know, I'm not going to be seeing  
413 any other anybody, anybody else. And I'm not going to see other people. I'm just going to see them,"  
414 which like, looking back on it is a mentality or not a very good one because I work at Target. So, like  
415 seeing them maybe bring it to target you know like. That'd be bad, but and like they have their jobs too,  
416 they're not unemployed or anything. They still have their jobs and my mom works in a baby wipe factory  
417 and my Dad works in a tire distribution center so looking back when I probably shouldn't have visited,  
418 but so.

419  
420 Christen Weeden: So, you can you talk about work and how that's been continuing to work throughout  
421 the coronavirus?

422  
423 Amelia Wilson: Yeah, um, and the weirdest thing for me is I didn't really feel the effects of the virus for  
424 the longest time because I was still going to work, like other people were being unemployed and schools  
425 are closing but like for me, I was still going to work. So, it didn't feel like anything really changed. Um,  
426 work though, Target like just recent, like literally the last this last week on Sunday, they were like, "You  
427 have to start wearing face masks." So, they finally implemented that. And you, it's like almost May,  
428 May's tomorrow. So, you see how they're handling it. Um, we had to start cleaning things more and  
429 slowly been like they've been slowly been implementing more and more precautions. So, at first, we  
430 were just like spraying stuff down between every few guests. And then we were spraying after every  
431 guest. Then we were wearing gloves. Then we have plastic dividers. Then we had face masks and it kept  
432 getting, it kept changing. Um, so yeah, work has been really weird. I don't know if Target's taking the  
433 best steps for it. We're really understaffed at work. So, one person, like if you work guest service, then  
434 you're not only doing the service desk, you have to wipe down all the returns. You have to do drive up,  
435 which is where you take orders out people's cars. You have to do the pickups, which is a separate line.  
436 You have to make announcements every 30 minutes about social distancing. You have to answer phone  
437 calls and to do return to stock and for one person that's just way too much. And I feel like they upped  
438 our minimum wage, but then cut our hours. So, everybody's making more, but there are less people  
439 working and it makes it really, really hard. And with all these new like cleaning rules and stuff we have to  
440 do, it's only possible to actually get people through in a timely manner and stays sane for your shift so.

441  
442 Christen Weeden: So, what precautions have you taken personally, outside of work or during work to  
443 keep yourself safe?



444 Amelia Wilson: Um, during work of course, I wear the gloves and the facemask, I touch a lot of things at  
445 work, so I do that. When it comes to like outside of work, I haven't been going out as much except for  
446 maybe to like a park, where I keep more than six feet distance from people and it's because it's easier to  
447 do when you're outside. You don't touch anything. You just go through like wherever the park is so  
448 that's been kind of nice just to get out and I honestly am totally fine with that. I try not to go out too  
449 much other than like to parks or something when it comes to like grocery shopping and stuff. I usually  
450 try to do it while I'm at Target. Like, I figure I'm already at Target. I've been here for five to eight hours,  
451 you know, during the day. They can handle one more like ten minute segment of me being here. And so,  
452 I can like, wear my gloves, and I can go do my grocery shopping and then I can go home is the easiest

453 I did go grocery shopping at a different place today at Strack and Van Til's, just because it was closer  
454 and Target at the moment doesn't have a lot of produce because again, we only have a couple people  
455 doing it. So, there's hardly and um, so I went there and like I the precautions that I would take, I need to  
456 like wash everything when we get all the produce and stuff, which is what we got. Just so that way,  
457 we're not like going to be sick, which you should wash produce anytime anyway, but.

458  
459 Christen Weeden: So, can you talk a little bit more about, you talked a little bit about how your wages  
460 have gone up for your hours have gone down. How have you been financially impacted by the  
461 coronavirus?

462  
463 Amelia Wilson: Honestly. Everything seems a lot better than I was when I was in, not like when it was  
464 October, um, I got my tax return. So that made a big difference for me. So, I have that money and then I  
465 got the stimulus check, which I used to pay off the car. That was a big problem for me from like

466 November, December, January, February, March, I think I paid for April as well. So, six months I paid on  
467 a car I couldn't drive. Um, and that was like \$300 a month, almost out of my paycheck and it was really  
468 crippling so when I got the stimulus check, I used the whole thing to pay off the car. Which it should be  
469 mine. Now that I've been struggling with this company. I don't know if they're going to send me the  
470 salvage title, but I should be getting the car, so I don't know. We'll see. But, uh, yeah, financially doing a  
471 lot better than I was. um, I will say I don't make I haven't, I haven't made as much from Target since  
472 being in school, but like, I have more time now to be at Target and they're not getting me the hours so  
473 that really sucks. Like one week I only had 10 hours, like that's really going to hurt my paycheck. It's  
474 really hard to like get hours, because everybody's struggling to get some because they aren't giving us  
475 any. So, I'm worried for like this next month how my paychecks are going to look but for the time being,  
476 it's been, it's been nice enough at least. Like I can't complain because I have had the stimulus check and  
477 my taxes.

478  
479 Christen Weeden: So, can you talk a little bit more also about how you've been taking care of your  
480 mental health during all of this?

481 Amelia Wilson: Um, it's weird because I'm an introvert. So, I haven't struggled too much with not seeing  
482 other people. Um, again, I keep comparing all this to how awful it was before my accident. But like I  
483 think the biggest part like, okay the biggest issue is just not being able to see my friends, except for like  
484 through FaceTime, which I'm kind of used to now not seeing them, but I usually see them once a month.  
485 And so, like not seeing my family not seeing my friends, not really talking to my sister or anything like,  
486 it's stuff that I was used to doing once a month, at least, and now I can't really do that. I can't go to  
487 school and see my friends. I can't, you know, go see Moid or anything. You know, I just have me and my  
488 boyfriend, which is fine, but we're kind of like, we're stuck at home. And we're like, you know, getting  
489 like kind of like agitated, because both of us are like doing our own thing. And when you're cooped up  
490 with someone for too long, like that, you just problems happen so. You know, it's, it's been interesting. I  
491 am we're doing okay, but like mentally, I don't know. I just am in this weird state of like uncertainty and  
492 yeah.

493  
494 Christen Weeden: So how has your living situation or just your living environment been altered by  
495 staying at home or not being in school, or at school?

496  
497 Amelia Wilson: I mean, it's different now because I am like almost always at my desk or like in my bed to  
498 be comfy like doing schoolwork. Um, so I've been home a lot more, um, which changes things but the  
499 house is messier because I'm home more and it's also messier because I'm so focused on work and  
500 school that like I don't really have that free time to like clean and stuff. Um, which I don't like because I  
501 like having an organized environment. Other than that, I can't really say the home life has changed too  
502 much. It's boring trying to find things to do. Like, I can only write and read so much before I, you know,  
503 get bored. It's kind of like, that's been the hardest part.

504  
505 Christen Weeden: So how do you feel living in Indiana, since we are almost at May 1<sup>st</sup>? How do you feel  
506 about speculations that the stay at home order will be lifted?

507  
508 Amelia Wilson: Um, honestly, I don't know, because in, I know that Texas lifted theirs. I think Florida  
509 lifted theirs for their beaches, like people are slowly lifting them. Not sure where Indiana has to do,  
510 especially like Lake County, because it's, you know, in Northern Indiana. I don't know what Lake County  
511 is going to do when it comes because we live right next to Chicago, like we are right there and there's a  
512 bunch of people in Chicago. So, I don't know if Indiana is going to treat it like county by county or if they  
513 are just going to open up Indiana. I have concerns if they just open it up. I'm, I'm hoping they do it like  
514 gradually like if you open say like, restaurants, you can open again. But maybe the restaurants, you  
515 know, only had like 25% capacity or something. Or like, you know, they do I want more. I want the  
516 precautions to stay because I'm worried that it's just going to like have a huge spike in spread again, um.  
517 So, I don't know, it's, we're like in the heat of it. And I don't know if they should lift the stay at home  
518 thing this month. I would like it to in a way, but like also looking at it like analytically, that's probably a  
519 bad idea.

520 Christen Weeden: Can you go into that more?  
521

522 Amelia Wilson: About how it's like not good? Um, so I guess like my worry is that say, they open  
523 everything, and they don't really put a limit on capacity, people will have been, they they're going crazy  
524 not going out. Everybody's going to flood out. Go to like the stores, like the shopping malls, they're going  
525 to go to the restaurants and all that stuff. And I'm sure that the stores and restaurants are going to try to  
526 maintain some semblance of like cleanliness and precautions, but I don't know if people are going to. I  
527 don't know if we're going to continue wearing face masks or not. Um, I also don't know how that will be  
528 in Lake County since like, if Chicago doesn't lift theirs', people that are still allowed to drive places. So, I  
529 don't know. It has Indiana opens their restaurants, like people are in Chicago are going to come over just  
530 because they're bored as well. Like, I mean, we're all bored and stuff, you know, at home, it's, it's been  
531 awful, so I mean I can imagine if I was in Chicago, I'd probably want to go over to Indiana too if they  
532 opened up. So, you know, I don't know what's going to happen or how it will affect things, but I'm  
533 worried about a big like, spike in cases as soon as things open up, like completely.  
534

535 Christen Weeden: What precautions would you like to be, would you like to see be taken in order to  
536 keep people safe if the state does open up?  
537

538 Amelia Wilson: Um, I would like to see limits on capacity like, that would be really good. If restaurants  
539 open, maybe like six feet distance between tables. I don't know. Um, I think it's important to people to  
540 like, continue with masks and gloves. Again, I don't know how that would work in a restaurant but like,  
541 um, you know, like wearing masks and gloves to the grocery store for a while, at least until we can kind  
542 of like find a vaccine or until cases are like dwindling like at least until, until then. I know that at Target,  
543 there they are doing capacity, like they are like marking off a certain limit for people, which I like. I think  
544 it's important but their numbers are a bit too high. Still, I think they should be stopping at a lower  
545 number, but they are letting like 300 people in and they're all going to grocery so it's like, are you really  
546 helping the situation? But I would like to see like, people like, ordinary people, um, still trying to like stay  
547 clean, wash your hands, wash down when you get home from the store, or I'm just to stay safe. Even  
548 after things open back up.  
549

550 Christen Weeden: So, what, how do you feel or what do you feel Columbia should have done differently  
551 in this entire situation?  
552

553 Amelia Wilson: Um, I think I wish they had more communication. I really do. I wish there had been more  
554 communication with the teachers at least. Because a lot of our teachers went uninformed. I mean like  
555 Doug Whippo didn't even know the school was closing that day. You know, nobody knew until they sent  
556 that initial email to everybody at once. I kind of wish they would have told all the teachers. They would

557 have been like, "Hey, we're going to do this. This is where we're at," like, I wish there was more  
558 information. Um, one thing that I really wish they would have done or wish they would do is like, this fall  
559 semester, a lot of us don't know if we're going to stay online or if we're going to go back to class, like  
560 nobody knows. And I kind of wish they would like keep us updated and informed about those decisions.  
561 Right now, and even before like the initial shut down, they were kind of like waltzing around those  
562 questions. So, for example, like if we were to be like, "Hey, are we going to be in school next fall? Is it  
563 going to be in person?" They would be like, "Will school continue? Yes, yes school will continue," but  
564 they won't tell you how it will continue and I kind of wish they would have been more open about those  
565 things.

566  
567 Christen Weeden: So, what would you like to say to President Kim about this situation or how it's been  
568 handled?

569  
570 Amelia Wilson: Um, I'm not sure. Um, because I don't know enough about President Kim to know what  
571 to say. I don't know what he was trying to do, or he's still trying to like, how much control he has over  
572 the situation really. Um, but in general, like to anybody who's like a leader of a company or a  
573 corporation or like the state or whoever, I would just ask for more awareness and I would ask for like  
574 better precautions, as in like opening things slowly, or at least letting your people know what's going on  
575 because I feel like even with our state, it's been like, "What's happening?" and no one really knows.

576  
577 Christen Weeden: So how do you right now feel about the future or feel about your future?  
578

579 Amelia Wilson: Actually, I feel kind of good about my future, despite not knowing if I'm actually going to  
580 college next semester. I feel pretty confident about how I'm handling my time. So, I feel pretty  
581 productive during this quarantine. I know that. Excuse me. I know that not everybody um, you know  
582 everybody's able to do what I can do during quarantine, as in like they're not able to go out every day  
583 and get that break. They're not able to feel really productive at home. Like they're kind of bored at this  
584 point. They're just doing the same thing. Each day I get a little bit of variety, so I do feel really lucky. I'm  
585 about as far as the future goes like, even though there's so much uncertainty, I am confident that things  
586 will kind of work out as they should, or that it won't be the end of the world. I think, again, like with my  
587 car accident with my first semester of school, I've kind of learned that bad things happen, but it doesn't  
588 mean that it's the end. Um, it's just a steppingstone. It's just a little blip on your radar or whatever.  
589 There was this one TV show where they're like, like one of their biggest mottos was like there's a  
590 solution for every problem, like every problem has its solution. There's always, you know, a way to get  
591 over and around these issues. So, I think coronavirus um, you know, this isn't the end. It's not the end of  
592 the world. You know, there's, we're going to come back stronger and be better for it. So yeah.

593  
594 Christen Weeden: So, what aspects have you noticed that you took for granted before the shutdown or  
595 the coronavirus?

596 Amelia Wilson: Going to restaurants, I love, I just want to eat all the time. I'm like, my stomach is  
597 growling now, um. Yeah, I definitely miss going to restaurants and sitting down and having a nice meal. I  
598 miss all of the events. There were so many events in Chicago, and you know when the summer comes  
599 like that's prime time for events like. You know, going to the beach, going to concerts or going to like,  
600 you know, special art exhibits and stuff like, I really missed those. Whiting has their Pierogi Fest, which  
601 I've never been to, and I was super excited to go and they canceled it until 2021. I mean, obviously,  
602 that's probably a good thing, but I just, I miss the events. I miss the food, like if I don't know it sucks.  
603 That sucks so much.  
604

605 Christen Weeden: So, what has been the most significant change in your life due to this virus?  
606

607 Amelia Wilson: Work, work has been crazy. It's absolutely insane. Like I don't normally dread going to  
608 work. I mean, sometimes it depends on the day, but like, now it's awful. Like, I don't want to go. I, I  
609 know that I'm just going to be either cleaning carts which is mindless and boring for my little shift or I  
610 will be like overwhelmed my whole shift and like nothing, neither of those are like are appealing. Um, I  
611 don't really like, like it's nice having the masks now because we didn't have them before. Um, I like not  
612 having to breathe disinfectant spray like continuously like just breathing in it all, and it would like make  
613 me feel sick and I don't know. Now it's nice to have the masks, but like, it's also weird having them on  
614 your face and the gloves, it feels really weird. Um, yeah. The biggest change has just been all of the, the  
615 things that they make us do at work. I really, really wish that they would give us more hours, or at least  
616 like give us more people so that way, we're not overwhelmed or underwhelmed in our workspace.  
617

618 Christen Weeden: So, what advice do you have for high schoolers that are now living through this, but  
619 this crisis, pandemic?  
620

621 Amelia Wilson: Um, my sister is in high school, but I feel like she's okay, she's a sophomore. I think it's  
622 the juniors and seniors that are struggling the most especially the seniors. They don't get a  
623 commencement. They didn't get a prom. And those are big things that it's awful. Like, I know that some  
624 kids aren't really fazed the fact that there's no commencement. Um, I know that I probably would have  
625 been upset, especially with the prom. I loved prom, like it was so fun. I'm so kind of sucks that they don't  
626 really get to experience those things. Um, I guess advice to them would be, you know, like, we're going  
627 to have to move on. Like, that's all we can do and that maybe after everything opens up again after a  
628 little while, they can have their own kind of parties they'll be 21 hopefully by the time everything is open  
629 again and they can go so many cooler ins and so many cooler things that aren't, like aren't  
630 commencement. Um for college students who, you know, missed their commencement that that's also  
631 kind of sad. It's a big, big stepping stone. But, again, the degree is what's most important. For there's this  
632 target and there was this one kid who's mom was freaking out because it's his junior year and he was,  
633 he attended school in Chicago. So, they like for a big part of the year, the teachers were on strike. So, he



was out of school and then now he's at school and because of the pandemic. So, he hasn't really gotten a good education this year and mom was freaking out about the SAT and like how to take it and how does before it and how he wasn't really getting the materials and resources he needed. So I suggested they go on college board. I think a lot of places, especially like college board, um, they're trying to find ways to go. Virtual and be as helpful as possible. So, I know that college board has practice SATs. They have practice like, you know. The actual SAT test, I think you can take it on college board. I'm not entirely certain. I think that a lot of places are really trying to put things online so that way you're not on educational value. So, I'm hoping that for high schoolers that they take advantage of that and that they continue caring about their education because it will matter later.

Christen Weeden: And then, what advice do you have for people who are struggling with all of the changes that are happening right now?

Amelia Wilson: I would probably tell them not to think about it, as strange as that sounds. Like I would try to sit down and like try like a type of grounding meditation. It's something that I did when I was really freaked out and I still do it. Like if I get overstressed, I'm like you know what, we sit down, and we did ground ourselves. I would say to like try to focus on your mental health first and you know do things that you love. Keep looking for those things that you love and don't try to dwell on things that you can't do or can't control because that's just going to make you sad and stressed. So, I think for people who are struggling, like if they're alone, for example, and they're lonely in their apartment and there's like know what they don't have that human contact like they need. I would say to really try to reach out with your friends, like FaceTime and stuff and you know like to play music that you really like or do an activity that you really enjoy. Um, you know, to try to pass your time, but also to try to bring some happiness into your home.

Christen Weeden: And then what do you want future generations to know about life during this pandemic?

Amelia Wilson: That's a good question. Um, I want them to know that through this pandemic, I think the world is changing beyond just being stuck at home or, you know, not being able to like, do what they want to do. The earth is healing. Like there's less pollution. You can see the mountains in LA. You can see the stars in like other places like New York where the light pollution has been cut down a lot. Um, it's, I want I want future generations, if they look back on this to see it as the marker for the, like, you know, for a big transition that is yet to come for us. Like, not yet but I'm really hoping changes the minds of a lot of people. I hope that it influences them to care about the earth and realize that, you know, things can be good. Good can come out of, you know just not out every day not you know participating in this consumerism mindset that we do in America. I'm wondering if it'll change jobs. If some people will realize that they that some employees aren't necessarily like a necessity and that maybe people will

672 value necessity jobs a lot more like places like grocery stores or Amazon or you know, like the people  
673 that take our trash and the people who deliver our mail. I'm wondering if those will start being more,  
674 people will start respecting them more than, you know, big corporate jobs where the people could have  
675 worked online this whole time. I do wonder how the online landscape is going to change. I think for  
676 future generations, it'll be interesting to see how that is, but this is definitely like an unprecedented time  
677 where it's like a new chapter for humanity. And I hope for future generations to look back at this chapter  
678 and realize all of the things that can't, like all the good that came out of it.

679  
680 Christen Weeden: Is there anything else that you'd like to add or any topic that we haven't covered that  
681 you think is important?

682  
683 Amelia Wilson: Um, I think, I think the government could have done better when it comes to protecting  
684 the citizens and, like, preventing all of this. The American Government specifically we're just, I don't  
685 know why we're doing so bad, but we are like, I look at other countries like Japan, who is right there  
686 right next to Wuhan and yet we have way more cases than they do. And they've kind of fought this  
687 illness, a lot better than we have. I kind of wish the government would have either like took, taken it  
688 seriously and so that way I might have taken it seriously, like other people. I kind of wish they would  
689 have, you know, kept us really well informed, or at least, you know, tried to be honest. Like, you know,  
690 maybe this isn't, maybe we shouldn't make fun of the "Chinese Flu" like it was, it's a virus that is really  
691 deadly and I kind of wish they would have, you know, taken it seriously and been more open about it  
692 and I wish that they would have set up precautions far sooner than they did. I wish the shutdown would  
693 have happened a little bit sooner than it did, or that places like Target would have handed out masks  
694 and gloves long before the end of April. So, yeah.

695  
696 Christen Weeden: Is there anything else?  
697

698 Amelia Wilson: I don't think so.  
699

700 Christen Weeden: Okay, thank you so much.

701

702 Amelia Wilson: You're welcome.