



1 Capturing Quarantine Transcript

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3 Koda Calma: I'm going to that little label for this. This is the Capturing Quarantine project with  
4 Koda and Elaine. It is May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. All right, you are a student at Columbia College Chicago  
5 and yeah. So, for the first question, I want to go like all the way back into your childhood. So,  
6 what is your earliest memory?  
7

8 Elaine Greiner: My earliest memory would probably be back when before I moved, and I was  
9 still in Iowa but my parents are getting divorced. So it was like a big, I just remember like a lot  
10 of fighting and I guess not the best of memories. I don't really like have a specific, I feel like  
11 being outside, I would go outside a lot. We had like a really big yard and we had like two dogs  
12 and we would just be outside a lot. So, yeah.  
13

14 KC: Nice. So, when your parents got divorced, who did you live with most?  
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16 EG: I lived with my mom. My mom is like the primary whatever parent. And just because I feel  
17 like me and my mom are really close, so it just felt better that way. And I think my dad was just  
18 focused on other things like his other wife so. [Notification chimes] Sorry. Yeah.  
19

20 KC: Are you, sorry, I just like how you explained that you're pretty close to your mom. Are you  
21 still close with her right now?  
22

23 EG: Yeah, I'm still pretty close to her. I came back and started living with her during this. So,  
24 yeah, I just feel like she's kind of my best friend and I can basically just call her up whenever and  
25 talk to her. So, yeah, she is one of my top ten for sure.  
26

27 KC: That's awesome. Um, tell me about some of your childhood friendships.  
28

29 EG: Okay, um, my first best friend was Mia Rosener. I still know her to this day. She and I  
30 would like always hang out together and our parents are like really good friends. And I don't  
31 even know I feel like we just like grew apart, but yeah. We were very similar people, yeah. And I  
32 feel like yeah being young and having friends is great because you don't have to do much. You  
33 just kind of like play.  
34

35 KC: Right, as long as you have like one thing in common it's good to go.  
36

37 EG: Yeah, yeah.  
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39 KC: Who would you say was like your mentor when you were growing up?  
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41 EG: I would say my aunt was my mentor because I feel like because my parents were getting  
42 divorced, it was hard. Like I feel like she'd talk to me about a lot of things and was kind of like  
43 that neutral person in things, you know. So I'd kind of like vent to her and just like get like  
44 someone outside of the situation's advice. And so I feel like she helped me a lot. She's just been  
45 through a lot of things herself, so I feel like she just has been there.  
46

47 KC: Is this your aunt on your mom's side or your dad's side?  
48  
49 EG: On my mom's side, yeah.  
50  
51 KC: Cool. And when you were younger, what did you want to be when you grow up?  
52  
53 EG: I wanted to be this is, really weird, I wanted to be a patent lawyer because I always knew I  
54 wanted to go into fashion. But I for some reason really wanted to be a lawyer as well. Because I  
55 was like, oh I want to make money. So I tried to like mix the two and like found out what a  
56 patent lawyer was, and I was like I'm not being that. So yeah, that's trash now. But that's  
57 definitely what I wanted to be and I would tell people that.  
58  
59 KC: That is awesome. That is an awesome answer. So, um, kind of moving forward to like your  
60 high school years. So, where did you go to high school?  
61  
62 EG: I went to high school at Theodore Roosevelt High School in Des Moines, Iowa. And yeah, I  
63 liked it, I didn't hate it, surprisingly.  
64  
65 KC: Good! What was the size of your graduating class?  
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67 EG: My graduating class was I think around 400.  
68  
69 KC: So, decent size.  
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71 EG: Yeah.  
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73 KC: So, you said that you enjoyed high school. Kind of like, what are some of your favorite  
74 memories when you think back?  
75  
76 EG: Yeah my favorites, or in general, was I was a synchronized swimmer. So I had a club, The  
77 Sharks, and I feel like that just was like all of my good memories. Because it was like we are all  
78 super close. We'd practice every day after school. And it's like new and different like it's not just  
79 like swim practice. We would have potlucks every Monday. And we were basically in charge of  
80 putting together this huge show like production every year that was like a synchronized  
81 swimming pageant. So, it was like really freaking cool, yeah.  
82  
83 KC: That is really cool. Did you do that for all four years of high school? When did you get  
84 involved with that?  
85  
86 EG: Yeah, I started I never did the synchronized swimming, I usually did just like competitive.  
87 But then I tried out for the synchronized swimming and got it really fast. So it was like about ten  
88 girls per grade. So it was like, you just get really close to those people. There's just so many  
89 outside events that they had. So you're really just like best friends with everybody. It's kind of  
90 like a sorority, which I don't know if it's a good thing but yeah.  
91

KC: It's like practice for the future. Nice, so what were expectations senior year when you were leaving high school? What were your expectations during graduation?

EG: Yeah, I didn't want to stay in Iowa. That was an expectation for sure. I definitely wanted to go to college. I knew that I wanted to go for fashion. But it was difficult because my entire family, I don't know, they were not on board for me leaving. They really wanted me to go to Iowa State, so that was like a long process of figuring out how it would work for me to even move and getting like the support from my family. But I was just like, I want to do what makes me happy and I'm not going to be stuck here. So and also like how can I really exceed and succeed in fashion if I'm like in the middle of Iowa? So I was definitely trying to get out of here.

KC: So what made you decide on Chicago?

EG: Chicago still felt like home when like I visited because it was only five hours away from Des Moines. So it felt like it was still in the Midwest and the people were still very like kind and like warm. And it was nice to know that like five hours away, I could, you know, get home if like an emergency happened. Which came in handy. But yeah I was thinking of maybe trying like LA or New York, but I just felt like because my family wasn't on board like already, there is no way they were going to be like paying for like all these flights and stuff, so.

KC: How did you convince them that, you know, you were ready to go to another state?

EG: I got lucky because I applied to the Art Institute of Chicago. And it's really expensive so I had to submit a portfolio and everything. And I got like the letter back, and it said I got in and they gave me like a really really really good scholarship. So basically that was like, if I hadn't gotten the scholarship, there's no way I would have been able to go. No way, it was too expensive. So, I think they realized like, oh maybe we should let her pursue something. Like if she's getting a scholarship then it's worth something, you know? So I just kept having like private conversations with each family member to like get it in their head.

KC: Whatever it takes. So, tell me a little bit about your first year in college.

EG: My first year in college was at the Art Institute of Chicago. And I mostly remember that year because I hardly did anything regarding fashion. And I did a majority of like painting and stuff, which I can't do. I was unhappy because I just felt like I wanted to be making things that I wanted to make. And I felt like the professors were really stuck in like their own headspace about what art is. So, I mean, I'm obviously not like the most creative-looking person that I feel like I am. But I feel like because I wasn't, I didn't fit like their art student mold, they were like super, I don't know. But I also remember my roommate, Jen. She and I were really good friends, but our roommate situation like hurt our friendship for sure. Because we were not the right people for each other, so yeah. That was a big problem.

KC: Did you know her prior to the college? Did you like choose to go live with her? Or did you meet her at school?

137 EG: No they like matched with us. I think we had some of the same things on the questionnaire.  
138 I'm an only child, so I guess I'm like picky about how things are. And I feel like she was very  
139 like open, free-spirit. Which I loved about her as a person, but as a roommate, you know, it was a  
140 little bit. I guess it was probably my first year too, so I was a little bit more on edge. Like now I  
141 don't really care as much with my current roommate so, yeah.

142  
143 KC: Yeah, it's tricky transitioning.

144  
145 EG: Yeah, it's difficult.

146  
147 KC: Yeah. So, at what point did you decide that you wanted to transfer schools?

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149 EG: It was my sophomore year, end of my sophomore year, and I was in this class, this fashion  
150 class. I'd made it into the fashion program at SAIC, and I don't know, it just didn't fit what I was  
151 looking for my fashion education. I was like hoping maybe to do something more commercial or  
152 like add some marketing into there and like make things people want to buy. And I don't know.  
153 SAIC was like a very very out of the box, which I appreciate getting that experience and like  
154 pushing myself for like something weird, but it was it was a lot of out of the box stuff. So that's  
155 when I realized oh, Columbia's right down the street and has very similar program, except it's  
156 actually like teaching you about how to sell and like the entire process instead of just like the  
157 creative part.

158  
159 KC: Makes sense. So, describe to me your first semester at Columbia. And how was that like for  
160 you?

161  
162 EG: My first semester I really liked it. Like educationally, I really liked it. I liked the classes I  
163 was in. I liked what I was learning. It was hard because I didn't start there freshman year, so like  
164 it was hard to make friends and I feel like everyone was kind of in like their own like, not really  
165 clique because I feel like people are nice, but you know, they all had their group. So it wasn't like  
166 terrible because I mean I had all my friends from SAIC and I lived with them and whatever. But  
167 it was definitely hard to kind of like associate because I would just be like the new girl. But I  
168 think the second semester, I met a lot of great people and started to mingle with people and stuff.  
169 So it's been positive. I think it was just hard like not living in the dorms and having that, but I  
170 had that at SAIC, so it's not really a big difference or anything.

171  
172 KC: So, what was your living situation like when you were transferring schools? Were you  
173 living off-campus? Were you living through like the dorms at SAIC?

174  
175 EG: Yeah, so I lived in the dorms at SAIC for my freshman year when I was there. And then my  
176 sophomore year I moved out into Lakeview with my one of my friends from SAIC. So we were  
177 there for a year. And then when I moved to Columbia, we still stayed in Lakeview, but we like  
178 transferred again to another off-campus apartment. But it was way better, so.

179  
180 KC: Cool. So, I guess, kind of like moving a little bit more into like towards around the time like  
181 the pandemic starts to happen. So I guess when did you first hear about like this pandemic that  
182 was happening?



183  
184 EG: I first heard about it; I don't remember. I remember like making jokes about it with my  
185 friends, which is sad but that's kind of like the first time I remember really like talking about it.  
186 We were at dinner and at a place that was like usually really busy, and like no one was there.  
187 And we were like, what's going on? And we were like laughing about it, saying like it's a flu, it's  
188 fine. And then I got a call from my grandparents that night. They were like saying, oh my gosh  
189 like I was going crazy. And I was like are you serious? Like I thought this was a joke, like I  
190 thought it was just something like the Ebola guy that like, you know, nothing happened. So yeah  
191 I was like kind of skeptical I guess and didn't really take it very seriously when I first heard. And  
192 I didn't expect this to happen, obviously, so.  
193  
194 KC: For sure. So like it started so kind of really hit like United States and especially Chicago like  
195 right before our spring break. Before all of this what were your plans for spring break?  
196  
197 EG: Yeah, my spring break plans were to go to Las Vegas. So that was a really hard decision  
198 because all of my friends and I just turned 21, so we were really looking forward to just like an  
199 exciting break. You know, being able to like go out alone and like not be afraid. So I was really  
200 excited for the trip and now I don't have \$300, but I get the credit. But that sucks. It'd be nice to  
201 have that right now. So yeah, I was going to go there. Those were my plans.  
202  
203 KC: How did you decide to not do that? Like what was your –  
204  
205 EG: Well we were going to celebrate my best friend's birthday. So her entire Italian family was  
206 going to go, and they all like decided not to go. And I think like the day that we decided was  
207 when I think they shut down like everything in Vegas pretty much, like everything. So we were  
208 like if we go like we don't even have anything to do. Like it's a waste of a trip, you know? So  
209 also not going because we don't want to get sick/infect anyone. But yeah.  
210  
211 KC: Right, right. It's a hard decision to make.  
212  
213 EG: Yeah.  
214  
215 KC: So where were you when you learned that Columbia was like transitioning to the remote  
216 learning?  
217  
218 EG: Yeah I was helping my friend at SAIC with one of her fashion projects. And so we were at  
219 the Art Institute, and I remember, I think we got the email because we were kind of like waiting.  
220 We had heard around like I think Illinois University or like something like that is already shut  
221 down. So we were like well I bet everything else is going to shut down too. So we were like,  
222 should we even be like still working on this project? It sounds pointless because, you know.  
223 Then we get the email, and we're like, okay let's just go get something to eat and then like hope  
224 that it's closed for good. It was really weird. It felt like a movie. Like finding out and reading the  
225 email. And I felt like I had so many questions still about like so is there homework during these  
226 three weeks? Like you know, should I? I don't know, it was weird.  
227  
228 KC: What did you do during that three-week period of being unsure?

229  
230 EG: Well, I went back Iowa like pretty quick because I feel like my entire family was like  
231 freaking out about it. And then when school closed, they were like, we don't want you there. I  
232 remember like the first day after finding out that the school closed, like going to Jewel and like  
233 everything was sold out. Like there was hardly any even noodles. I was like, are you serious? I  
234 was just scared to be there and not have like the money or like food or the protection, I guess. I  
235 was just kind of scared. And my roommate, she's from Taiwan, so she flew back right away after  
236 finding out that the school was closed. So, I was like, I don't want to be here alone. I just for my  
237 own safety or whatever. People were just acting weird and it just kind of scared me. And my dad  
238 is very conspiracy, so I guess I just sort of got that from him and was like, oh gosh the world  
239 ending or something. So but I got really lucky because my cousin was in town that weekend for  
240 Saint Patrick's Day, so I just got a ride home with her. So it was like perfect going back to Iowa.  
241 I didn't have to spend money for travel really. But yeah, that first weekend was still just like is it  
242 worth going home? I was still just like thinking school was going to start up again. Like I only  
243 brought a suitcase home with me so I still have like an entire like everything in Chicago. I'm just  
244 like when do I go back like to get it? I don't know it's just really weird.  
245  
246 KC: Right, I mean, I was going to ask what's the status of that apartment?  
247  
248 EG: Yeah it's currently vacant. I had one of my friends from SAIC that was like had to move out  
249 of her I think it was an apartment or dorm or something like I sent her the key and then she like  
250 went and brought all of her stuff into my apartment. So there's just like a bunch of stuff in my  
251 apartment. No one's there because my roommate's in Taiwan. I'm here. I mean I think I hope it's  
252 safe I don't know, but yeah. It sucks to like be paying for that still and not be there. But I'm glad  
253 I'm here. I would be scared to be like alone there and not have anyone. And all my friends are  
254 home too.  
255  
256 KC: Right, right. Did your roommate take all their stuff before they left?  
257  
258 EG: She took like two suitcases home, so all of her stuff is there too. Yeah, I think I could sub-  
259 lease it, but I don't know how to do that. I don't know.  
260  
261 KC: Right.  
262  
263 EG: Make the money back or something.  
264  
265 KC: Yeah, I'm surprised that they are still having you pay rent if you're not there but it's weird.  
266 So kind of going towards the remote learning aspect. Like how has that transition to online  
267 classes been like for you?  
268  
269 EG: I think it's stupid. I don't like this at all it's ridiculous. I guess, I mean I'm supposed to be  
270 like, oh well they're doing the best they can. But I feel like it's been not good at all. Half of my  
271 classes are just like creating assignments to like create them. And they're not even like important  
272 or like teaching me anything. They're just like time-consuming and really stupid. And I think like  
273 they think we have the time, but also like there's so many things going on in like everyone's  
274 lives. They just like are trying to make us stay busy, but like it's actually throwing us for a loop.

275 Yeah and the email, like some of my classes. What really bothers me, as much as I hate meeting  
276 on Zoom, like that's kind of necessary for a class. Like I'd rather meet on Zoom then have like  
277 twenty extra assignments. Like so one of my classes that I really can't stand just took away like  
278 the meeting even though I feel like it's important for that class to have that talk and discussion  
279 and stuff. And she just like does like these stupid like email assignments now that like partner  
280 assignments. Partner assignments at this point especially for this class are really ridiculous. Like  
281 you can't depend and rely on someone right now. We're all going through something. Some  
282 people aren't going to be available. They're not going to have the time. Some people don't give a  
283 crap because they are doing pass-fail. So they're not going to like care about your grade. It's just  
284 I don't think they get it. And like you know, the late work, like oh we're still not accepting that.  
285 Like that's ridiculous. I mean I get it done, but for some people, I feel bad. I wonder what they're  
286 doing. There should be like some flexibility right now for sure. Sorry, venting.

287  
288 KC: No, I definitely agree, yeah. So, you mentioned the pass-fail system that they brought into  
289 effect. What are your thoughts on that? Did you want to do that for any of your classes?

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291 EG: I think that it was like a good idea. But I guess I'm more so just like I think that they should  
292 have, I guess. Like it's not fair for them to just like pass us but also there are so many people  
293 going through so many different things. Some people don't even have Wi-Fi. Like we can't  
294 control our surroundings or where we are. I felt like that was necessary to do the pass-fail, but  
295 also it's just kind of like sad that we had to do that. I didn't do it for any of my classes. I was just  
296 kind of waiting out to see where my grades were. At this point I'm just like, I don't care. I'll just  
297 get the grade. I don't want to be lazy and do pass-fail. I think some kids like actually need that,  
298 so.

299  
300 KC: Yeah, that makes sense. So, how do you think, you know, this kind of like I guess how do  
301 you see next semester going for Columbia? What are your predictions?

302  
303 EG: Right. Um, my predictions. I feel like Columbia needs to like make sure that they're  
304 supporting their students more. Especially right now. I think, I hope the school is like back in  
305 session, but if it's not I'm going to be taking a gap semester. I don't think there's anything not  
306 want to do more than continue online. So hopefully everything's like back to normal, but I feel  
307 like it won't be. And I think a lot of people are really upset about like how does President Kim  
308 acted. I think he, yeah he kind of messed up, so.

309  
310 KC: I feel you. How would you say, you know, your career plans have changed in the midst of  
311 this pandemic?

312  
313 EG: Yeah, I feel like they've changed quite a bit. Like at this point I'm feeling like really not  
314 motivated. And I'm in Iowa, so there's not a lot of opportunity. So yeah, I don't know. I was  
315 going to have an internship this summer in New York and that was canceled. So I'm kind of just  
316 like bummed and upset. So it sucks. And I don't even know what I'm going to be doing this  
317 summer, but at this point I even don't care. I'm just like whatever. I'm just not happy about life.

318  
319 KC: No, no I feel you. It's weird being in like this limbo. How, I mean, if you if you do choose  
320 to take a gap year, what do you see yourself doing in your free time?



321 EG: I would say I would probably just be working really hard to like brand myself and like push  
322 my work a little bit more, you know. Obviously be like creating and making things. And like  
323 really set myself up with like my resume and everything. Once I'm done, I'll just get it out there.  
324 And maybe have a one-up on some people like at school. I don't know, yeah. I feel like maybe  
325 get a job, a side job too because I need money. So yeah.

326  
327 KC: I was going to ask like how has your financial situation been impacted by this pandemic?

328  
329 EG: It's been not good. I had a job in Chicago as a server, so I was making like \$700 a week.  
330 And that closed the week that everyone like started freaking out, so then I haven't had a job  
331 since. And I tried to get on unemployment, but I don't know why but my employer must have  
332 like put in the wrong amounts that I was making, and they were like you're not eligible or  
333 something. I don't really understand. So now I'm like appealing what their decision was and  
334 sending all this information in. It's just like five weeks of just like you can't call them. Like  
335 every time I call, it is just like, oh there's too many calls so call again later. It's like, okay, so  
336 what? Like good thing I'm not like struggling, like I mean I kind of am. But I have the money  
337 there for my apartment planned out but that still was going into that. And especially like for the  
338 summer and stuff. So I'm just like, it's been frustrating. And yeah, I need a job like desperately  
339 bad.

340  
341 KC: I definitely I feel you on that. So I guess since you've moved back home, how has you know  
342 this pandemic affected you know that relationship between you and your parents?

343  
344 EG: My mom and I are really close but we're too close. So we do have a lot of differing opinions  
345 on things. Especially after like living alone without her. It's just been interesting to say the least.  
346 I actually like I think it was like two or three weeks in, I went stayed with my aunt for like a  
347 week and a half. And she's still in Iowa, but I like just had to get like a break. Like calm down,  
348 you know. Get some time away, which helped a lot. And so now I'm back with my mom and her  
349 boyfriend. Yeah I mean, it's kind of impacted me, but I mean I definitely think I might rather be  
350 in Chicago. I mean it's nice with like food and everything and not having to worry. And yeah,  
351 it's just been a lot of control, you know, how parents are. So it's just taking a deep breath and not  
352 letting it bother me.

353  
354 KC: It's definitely a change. It's hard to go back.

355  
356 EG: Yeah

357  
358 KC: Yeah, I guess like have you reached out to like I mean, you mentioned like talking to like  
359 your grandparents. How is like your extended family been? Have you been like talking to them?

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361 EG: Yeah I've been seeing, like I saw my aunt and it was really good to see her. My dad I saw  
362 him once I think and he's in Iowa too. But I feel like I've been for the most part like my  
363 grandparents when I first came back, I was like no I don't want to see them because I didn't want  
364 to possibly spread something. But I think it was like last week I finally saw them and we sat  
365 outside and ate take out or something. So they're doing good. They're just kind of in their box  
366 right now. I think like everyone you know I think it's put a damper on like a lot of people. And

367 especially you know grandparents like they're just like just as worried. And you know you can't  
368 do much for them because you know they're old. They're kind of just more scared about like  
369 getting it, which I understand like I don't want them to. So yeah we're all kind of like just on  
370 edge about it, you know.

371  
372 KC: Right. You know, what are Iowa's kind of like social distancing recommendations? I know  
373 here in Chicago and everything is like shelter-in-place. How does it compare?

374  
375 EG: Yeah so in Iowa we have a really, really interesting governor, Kim Reynolds. She is wow.  
376 So we didn't even have a shelter-in-place or anything. Businesses don't have to wear masks or do  
377 any kind of CDC guidelines. She recommends six feet apart and wearing a mask if possible, but  
378 she doesn't really put that into place anywhere. And she actually as of yesterday opened up  
379 restaurants, bars, and I don't know I think like certain salons again. Which is really a bad idea  
380 because we are like, Iowa's like number one in the nation right now for the like spreading rate or  
381 something. So we just had like eight hundred cases today and seven hundred yesterday. I'm like,  
382 why are we opening up the state? Like that is just the wrong decision. And she's just like, well  
383 the hospitals are empty so it's fine. Like, okay? I don't know. Why does everyone freak out then?  
384 It's like we shouldn't be taking the precautions. Yeah, she needs help.

385  
386 KC: What are your thoughts on the way the federal government has been handling this  
387 pandemic?

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389 EG: I feel like they're not I just I can't read like how anyone's taking this. I don't, I honestly don't  
390 know. Like I've been kind of trying to stay away from that because I just can't even stand it. But I  
391 feel like I guess like I get that they're letting each state like kind of decide, but also I think then  
392 that's like creating a lot of problems itself. Because it's not like one state's like open and the other  
393 one isn't and I don't know. I guess I just I'm confused and I don't understand like why some states  
394 are taking such big precautions and then some aren't. So I think, yeah, I just I don't really  
395 understand. I think yeah there hasn't been like a lot of information even about like this virus  
396 which was it which is a little bit like weird to me too. Like I feel like I don't really even know a  
397 lot about it yet, and yet they're doing studies and stuff like I don't know what it is.

398  
399 KC: Yeah, no, I get it. What would what are like your news sources? Where do you get like your  
400 information regarding this? Even if it's like –

401  
402 EG: Yeah, I usually like on Facebook like I follow like KCCI Iowa and stuff. So mostly I'm  
403 seeing like the more like local news and stuff. Sometimes a lot of my family members like call  
404 me and update me just because I feel like I'm not like watching the news. So that's kind of where  
405 I get my news. Which I don't know if that's necessarily a good thing because I'm an Iowa. A lot  
406 of my family members are very like right-sided, so they like call and give updates about that.  
407 And I'm like okay yeah, I don't really want to know. So I'd say like family members and just like  
408 local news and stuff like that, yeah.

409  
410 KC: Nice. So kind of going back to like how this is affecting you personally, how would you  
411 describe a typical day in like your quarantine?

412 EG: So a typical day in quarantine would be waking up probably around like ten or eleven.  
413 Getting food and coffee. Working on like homework or whatever I have until like around three.  
414 Having a beer and then doing something I like, like reading or something or like going outside. I  
415 don't know, I usually just like try to find like new things to do. I go biking, you know something  
416 to get outside. Me and my friends have been doing a lot of virtual FaceTime stuff and like Zoom.  
417 I just try to like stay out of my parents hair because I feel like I get annoying or something. Yeah  
418 nothing special, I feel like I could be doing more with my time. I've just been doing school and  
419 laying around.

420  
421 KC: How often do you think you get to go outside?  
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423 EG: I actually got quite a bit just because we never had like the shelter-in-place or like that  
424 whatever. So I've been going outside just about every day. Like you know there's a lot of people  
425 outside too but like the houses are spaced.

426  
427 KC: Nice. Yeah, I was going to ask are there any precautions you take before going out? Like  
428 how is that? What does that look like?  
429

430 EG: If I'm just like going for a walk or something like I don't really do much. I just go outside  
431 and keep distance. But if I'm like going to the store like I've been doing that quite a bit to get  
432 groceries and stuff. I've been the one to do it just because I'm able to. So I've been wearing like a  
433 mask when I go in and then when it first started I was like wearing gloves too and stuff. But I felt  
434 like it was just kind of pointless. So now I'm just doing the mask. But I feel like it's important.  
435 Like the probability of getting it is like 75% like more unlikely if both of you are wearing a  
436 mask. So I feel like you should just wear the mask. Like you might look stupid but you're  
437 preventing, I don't know. I just think it's worth it.

438  
439 KC: Yeah, it's an easy precaution to take.  
440

441 EG: Yeah, exactly. I agree. I think like Costco did like now if you go in there, you have to wear a  
442 mask or something. And I mean I kind of like that they did that, I guess. I mean it's kind of like  
443 controlling but it's also like I feel like it's necessary in a certain sense. Because some people just  
444 don't know how to like keep distance and like don't even care. So you know those people really  
445 do need to be wearing a mask. Yeah.

446  
447 KC: For sure, for sure. How, you know, would you say all of this has been affecting your mental  
448 health?  
449

450 EG: It's been hard. I feel like because you know living with family again is one thing and then  
451 being online is another thing. And then not having a job or like the financial thing thrown in  
452 there. And then you're paying for a semester that is not even worth you know your time,  
453 basically. It's just a lot and then you know future plans are canceled, like trips are canceled. I just  
454 feel like all of that at one time is like really hard. And I think the hardest part for me is that I'm  
455 usually like someone that like looks for things in the future that like you know push through to  
456 get to that or whatever. So I think that's been like the hardest thing because we don't know when  
457 this is going to end. And I don't know like I can't just like plan something or be excited about

458 seeing friends or doing a trip. That's all just out the window because I just don't know when it's  
459 ending. So it's just frustrating. That's been like the hardest thing, I guess.

460  
461 KC: Right. Are there any coping skills you've developed over this time to deal with this anxiety  
462 and like loneliness that comes from this?

463  
464 EG: Yeah, um, I don't know. Is saying I drink wine bad? We're all thinking it. Um, yeah, I've  
465 been eating food and drinking wine. Kind of just like trying to just take a deep breath. I feel like  
466 my anxiety was really bad at first because I would just like kind of hyperventilate. Because I'd  
467 just be like what's going on? Like the news would be on consistently and I'd just be like I can't.  
468 Like I told my mom, I was like please just do not watch the news in front of me anymore. I was  
469 freaking out about like hyperventilating and then I was like COVID because of like shortness of  
470 breath. And then I was like, oh my gosh, I'm dying. I feel like I just have to actually take a deep  
471 breath and say like I'm not dying like I don't have coronavirus. It's just your anxiety. So I just  
472 have to stay centered.

473  
474 KC: Right. Is there anyone you know you talk to about these concerns?

475  
476 EG: No, I feel like I mean I kind of bring it up to my mom but like again I don't know. I feel like  
477 I talked to my aunt when I was with her quite a bit. Like she's a pretty calming person. So you  
478 know I've always talked to her about everything. Yeah so I feel like she was really helpful  
479 bringing me my stability back. Yeah, I feel like I should talk to someone. For sure. Once this is  
480 over, I'm going there to a therapist.

481  
482 KC: Nice, nice. Yeah, I mean it's actually helpful to get things off your chest at least, you know?  
483 I guess, like what kind of things was your aunt saying to you?

484  
485 EG: Um, I feel like just reminding me that this is only like temporary. And things have happened  
486 before that people were worried about, but it's just kind of like it'll pass. And it's a temporary  
487 thing. I feel like that was what helped me because I just need to know that this isn't like my life  
488 for the rest of my life. You know it'll work out. It's just going to take longer than like everyone  
489 wants it to, you know. She kind of just reminded me like what I had. And tried to have me kind  
490 of focus on things that I'm thankful for. And like I guess I don't know, just focus my energy on  
491 those things and just taking it like one day at a time. Yeah.

492  
493 KC: I think that's a great outlook. What are your plans you know after social distancing  
494 guidelines are lifted and it seems safer to go out?

495  
496 EG: Um, plans. Probably planning a trip to Napa Valley so I can drink wine with my friends and  
497 celebrate that I'm out of the house. I definitely want to work on getting an internship that I love  
498 and something that makes up for the one I lost. And I feel like I just want to like spend time with  
499 people. Because I feel like this is just been making me realize like how important like time is  
500 with people. In like recognizing how important that is in like it basically makes up who you are.  
501 Like what you do with your life. So I feel like I just like want to go and just experience like  
502 anything I can and just be thankful for it. Because I, you know, you take it for granted every day  
503 that you have it. Like living in Chicago by yourself with your favorite roommate ever, you know.

504 Like getting to work and like have a job and go to school. So those are like the things I want. I  
 505 want to enjoy everything.  
 506

507 KC: For sure. So kind of moving on the reflection portion, I definitely wanted to ask you know  
 508 you kind of mention like some of the things you used to take for granted before all of this. I  
 509 guess, what's like one of the biggest things that you miss?  
 510

511 EG: Right. I'd say the biggest thing I miss. Um, I would say like really just like being able to do  
 512 what I want. That sounds so selfish, but just like not being controlled and constrained to like one  
 513 household. I took that for granted and I'm realizing like why I left Iowa. Because I'm like, wow  
 514 this is not the best situation here so yeah. I feel like I took for granted like freedom and being  
 515 able to like be out and have a life. So yeah that's a big one, but yeah freedom, for sure would be  
 516 what I took for granted.  
 517

518 KC: Yeah I definitely think there's a lot of people that feel the exact same way. I guess what  
 519 would you say you know you've learned from all of this?  
 520

521 EG: I've learned, hm what have I learned? I guess I learned like kind of who's there for me as far  
 522 as like friends. Like are we checking up on each other? Who cares about me? Family, realizing  
 523 the importance family and how important family is. Like how thankful I am that they were there  
 524 despite how frustrating it is sometimes living with them. I feel like I learned how important  
 525 people are in my life and not taking those people for granted either. You know, there's definitely  
 526 those people who don't care or don't check up. So it's been nice to just realize like who's there  
 527 and thinking about you. Or like, you know.  
 528

529 KC: Yeah, for sure. It's nice to have a good support system around you. So if you could go back  
 530 to January of 2020, what would you say to yourself?  
 531

532 EG: I would say make the most of everything you experience because it will be gone in three  
 533 months. So just enjoy everything, but also be conscious of like the virus. And I think I could  
 534 have like maybe done more like more of things to like prevent it. I mean I guess I don't know  
 535 what I would have done because I didn't get it, or I don't know anyone that has it. But just being  
 536 conscious of what was going to happen. And you know, I kind of thought it was a joke at first, so  
 537 being like this is serious. I'd say that to myself.  
 538

539 KC: Right. I think a lot of us weren't really thinking about it before. So what do you, I guess  
 540 what do you think Columbia should have done differently about all of this?  
 541

542 EG: Yeah I think for sure like keeping in touch with all of the professors and you know  
 543 identifying how they're teaching the classes. Like I feel like there's a lot of classes that failed, at  
 544 least the ones I'm taking. They've failed at the online learning. And where some are succeeding,  
 545 the others are failing. I just don't understand. So it just seems like there's a lack of connection  
 546 there with the faculty. I think, I heard, I mean I heard about the dorms closing and how I think  
 547 they had like I think less than like a week to like figure out moving plans. And yeah I don't  
 548 understand how that worked, but that was handled very poorly. So I think and I can't even  
 549 imagine being in that situation. Like if you can't afford to go home or you have all of your stuff,

550 where do you move it? Like I don't even know. So yeah I think that was very badly. And I don't  
551 know I just think they need to support us more and like understand where we're coming from. I  
552 mean I feel like we could just get a refund or something. I just think this is stupid. Like people  
553 that don't want to continue online shouldn't have to. Like I think it's kind of stupid. So I guess  
554 maybe that's like a very forward like answer, but I didn't sign up for online. I get that there's  
555 nothing else we can do about it, but like I shouldn't have to keep online. Like this isn't how I  
556 work. I don't work online. I'm a hands-on person. And then the frustration with professors that  
557 just are not flexible or just are doing the worst things to teach the class. Like it's just not  
558 connected learning at all. And yeah, I mean I really do actually appreciate it. Like yeah, I feel  
559 like Dr. McCarthy has done a pretty good job, but some of my other ones not at all. So I'd say  
560 Columbia could have done a lot better.

561  
562 KC: Right. If you were given the chance to tell Dr. Kim or President Kim how you felt, what  
563 would you say to him?

564  
565 EG: I would say learn how to support your students. Yeah. I feel like it kind of goes with the last  
566 question, but yeah learn how to support you students and continue to do that once we are back in  
567 session. Like I don't think a lot of people are very happy with him right now. So I think he like  
568 his emails like oh I care so much about you, whatever. But like I don't really feel like I'm getting  
569 that from him. And I don't think he had any compassion for any of the students that were rushed  
570 out in five days from the dorms with nowhere to live. So I think he needs to be more supportive  
571 and like understanding. And so does every other professor as well.

572  
573 KC: How does, what does that support look like for you, specifically? Like how, what would you  
574 need in order to feel supported?

575  
576 EG: I feel like maybe if it went as far as like having someone or being able to talk to someone.  
577 Like making more like a service or like I don't know something more available. A resource  
578 available for like talking about things or like students that are having financial problems or even  
579 like their mental health. Like I think I think there's just like a lot of different like subsections of  
580 the support that needs to like umbrella out. And you know, deal with the kids who have financial  
581 issues. The that people that are having a hard time with their mental state. Just all of that like I  
582 think he just needs to figure out a system. And because we're all going to be come out very  
583 different people, I think. So yeah, it's going to be really weird.

584  
585 KC: Yeah, so kind of going off of that, like how do you feel about the future and how we will  
586 emerge from all of this?

587  
588 EG: I feel hopeful about the future. Yeah I think I feel hopeful. I think at least we're all learning a  
589 lot about ourselves, especially as college students. We're all kind of like finding ourselves as  
590 much as we might not be. I think we're kind of realizing what makes us who we are while we're  
591 here, just thinking in our house every day. So I'm hopeful that like people will be like thankful  
592 and like appreciative and like enjoy every moment. And I think I'm hopeful just because I know  
593 it's temporary, so I'm just trying to like remember that and realize that this will be all over. And I  
594 think we'll have learned like a lot of lessons and found, hopefully, cool hobbies. I learned how to  
595 crochet, I didn't say that. So, yeah.



596 KC: That's cool. So you mentioned how like college students are kind of figuring out what  
597 makes them them. What makes you you? What have you learned about yourself?  
598

599 EG: I think being independent. Like I think that is a really big one that I like learned is part of  
600 me. You know it like started when I was a kid. So like I feel like I was just an independent only  
601 child having like divorced parents and then just growing up alone and like going through that  
602 alone was hard. So I feel like I kind of like just learned how to be a very independent person. So  
603 yeah I feel that encompassing all the things I like in my life like working, socializing with my  
604 friends, going to school and being creative. Like I feel like I'm realizing how independent I am  
605 and doing those things and I'm happy with that. So yeah, I think I've learned how I'm  
606 independent. And I've also learned I think that's like the main one.  
607

608 KC: Nice. What I guess like do you see you know this ending and us going back to like society  
609 as it was fall 2019? I guess like what changes do you do hope to see or do you think you're going  
610 to see come from this?  
611

612 EG: Yeah, that's a good one. Honestly, I don't know how people are going to like how we're  
613 supposed to respond to this if we don't have like a vaccine or a cure or something to prevent it.  
614 So I feel like that's like the first step and once we have that, I think things can go back to normal.  
615 But until that happens like I think it's either just like get the virus and have like the immunity to  
616 it or like stay inside. I just don't know how things are opening up again without that. We need to  
617 have like some kind of prevention or else this is just going to continue. But I think that people  
618 will be more mindful. Like I think everyone is mostly wearing masks at the store when I go  
619 there. So I think like I don't know people will have better hygiene or something. Maybe we'll  
620 realize how important it is when you're sick to wear a mask or how to wash your hands more.  
621 Like I think it'll hopefully help like this spread of like every other flu too. You know like  
622 hopefully people will just take it more seriously. I think it will change people's habits like  
623 cleanliness and stuff, I don't know.  
624

625 KC: Right, I mean, yeah. My last question was what precautions do you think society needs to  
626 take to ensure that this does not happen again?  
627

628 EG: I'd say now if we find out about something like this, like we need to target it as soon as  
629 possible and be preventative. Have like you know I feel like a central, I don't know. I don't  
630 know what the answer is. But whatever they did wasn't the right thing. So yeah just figuring out  
631 like our process for this because like even Taiwan, my roommate is from there, so she's been like  
632 keeping me updated. And like they're like number one for like their preventive steps they took.  
633 And I think that they have like one person there with it right now. Yeah I feel like whatever they  
634 did worked and that involved her wearing a mask literally everywhere. So I think if we had all  
635 taken it more seriously when it started there would have been less spread and yeah.  
636

637 KC: For sure. I mean that's all the questions that I have, but is there anything that you wanted to  
638 add? Anything you thought I was going to ask that I didn't?  
639

640 EG: For my future self, good job, Elaine. You're making it through and this will all be over soon.  
641 KC: Awesome, for sure. Alright, I'm going to stop recording.