



1 Quinton Walker: Hello, my name is Quinton Walker. Please state your name.

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3 Nolan Flavin: Nolan Flavin.

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5 Quinton Walker: The today's date is May 2nd, 2020. This interview is being conducted for my
6 end in New Braunfels, Texas. Please state your location.

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8 Nolan Flavin: I'm in St. Louis, Missouri.

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10 Quinton Walker: This interview is part of the Columbia College Chicago Archives and oral
11 history project Capturing Quarantine. What was it like growing up on a farm?

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13 Nolan Flavin: Uh, so from what I remember any, I was really young, so the memories are a
14 little bit blurry of it, but I remember just being very free. I mean, we had a few acres. So, I
15 could always just run around, and we had, like, a barn. So, my brothers and I would always go
16 into the barn and, like, jump around in the haystacks and stuff. Having chickens, like, we
17 always just had eggs and it was cool growing up around, like, animals and stuff, the sheep and
18 the goats. I think it just, it felt very free. We could kind of explore, especially at that age, you
19 know, and you're very excited and adventurous. It's nice to be able to just explore and play
20 around and feel totally free.

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22 Quinton Walker: Where did you live during high school?

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24 Nolan Flavin: So, in high school we moved to St. Louis, and we live in a suburb outside of St.
25 Louis called Manchester. We moved here, and that's where I am right now, we moved here
26 when I was six, turning seven, so I was here all the way from then until I left for college and
27 It was a lot different and it wasn't, it wasn't necessarily hard to get used to moving here because
28 at the time, you know when I was little, it was really exciting because all we had ever known
29 was the country, but we had a church. We had a church in the suburbs and so we would always
30 come in here and that's part of all you got here was just to be closer to our, to our friends from
31 there. And it was just very exciting because we always come in and seemed cool because, like,
32 everyone lived close to each other, you know, my brothers and I were all excited that we no
33 longer would have to drive for a long time to see our friends, you know, they would all just be
34 really close. And so, we could see them more often. So, it was really exciting to move to where
35 more people were. Uh it, and it's a cool area. I actually like St. Louis, I think. It's kind of
36 underrated. There's a lot to do here. A lot of museums, everything's free and then there's just a
37 lot of, even here, you know, closer to the city in the suburbs, there's a lot of wildlife. You know,
38 you drive for 10 minutes and you're out of the suburbs and you can, there's hiking trails and
39 ponds and streams. There's even, like, certain, like, cliffs and bluffs, you can go up on. That's
40 really, it's really nice. I mean, it's a nice balance of all the different worlds, you drive 15
41 minutes in one direction you're in an urban environment. And St. Louis has a lot of cool art and
42 it's got, you know, great museums for free. And then it's a fun place a lot of great restaurants
43 and a great coffee scene. And then you drive in another direction, you know, and you're in the
44 country. And then in the suburbs, it's the suburbs you know it's relaxed, people are out walking
45 their dogs pretty normal suburban experience. Uh, yeah, that about sums it up. A lot of, a huge
46 amount of --

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48 Quinton Walker: --Where'd you go to high school?
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50 Nolan Flavin: I was home schooled. Although it's kind of complicated for high school because,
51 so my whole life I was home schooled all the way up until college, but in high school it got
52 kind of complicated because I was really phobic about my credits not being reliable when I was
53 going to college because I was really worried people would be like, oh yeah, you know, you
54 just, you did all this at home, like, who was creating it. You know, how did, how can we trust
55 these As. So, I really wanted a more structured classroom, but at the same time, I didn't want to
56 give it up either, because I felt like I wasn't missing out on much. Like, I could still, the way I
57 saw it it's like I could wake up and do my homework whenever I wanted, and then go hang out
58 with my friends. And I just, I liked having that freedom of being able to do my homework,
59 wherever I want to new classes, you just get them done like that because a lot of it's just self-
60 education like reading from books and stuff. And that gave me freedom, like, with my friends
61 and stuff too. I can find some friends of mine with, like, a day off school and they want to hang
62 out, just, like, in the middle of the day, like, I would have the freedom to do that and that was
63 really nice. So, then, in high school, though, wanting some more structure and wanting to have
64 actually credits that seemed more official, I started doing online classes. So, I did, for freshman,
65 sophomore, and junior year, I did a lot of online classes. Freshman and sophomore year were all
66 online classes. Junior year was split half and half between online classes and then I was dual
67 enrolling at a local college. So, I was taking it's, like, basically, like, AP, but I'm doing it out of
68 college. So, I'm taking classes there and then they're counting towards college credits. So, I was
69 split half and half online and at a college and then senior year I did all my classes at the college.
70

71 Quinton Walker: And how did homeschooling affect your social life as a teenager?
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73 Nolan Flavin: So, in a lot of ways I don't think I'll ever know. Just because I never went to
74 school. I feel like in many ways, it um — well you just don't have, have the same variety. You
75 know, I think I meet probably about a third of the amount of people that someone in, like, a
76 public school would go — would meet. I mean maybe at a private school it'd be pretty limited
77 too but, you know, the people I do meet I usually meet because we share similar interests. You
78 know, like, I meet them at, like, a concert or because we're at, you know, I run into someone at,
79 like, a movie theater and we talked during the line and I meet them that way. You know, people
80 who kind of share things with me already. Or, like, you know, there were sports teams I played
81 and I met people on the sports teams or, I was a Boy Scout so met people through Boy Scouts,
82 so I you know you meet a lot of people who are pretty similar to you. So, I think in a lot of
83 ways I wasn't used to having even more people around you know a lot of, a lot of those people
84 just being, like, super, super different because I think my friends are always been kind of
85 narrowed down to, like, my interest and stuff and then plus in addition to that, like, it's really
86 important that you go out and do stuff when you're homeschooled or else it's going to make it
87 really hard to meet people. So, yeah, I would say that's one of the main ways it affected my
88 social life. And then in addition to that there's, there's kind of these social politics. I think that
89 form in a normal school system that I missed out on. Which in many ways I'm okay with, like,
90 I, there's a lot of games I see people playing that I think because I come from an outsider's point
91 of view I'm very aware of those games and you can kind of just see them as they are not really
92 participate. just because I was never caught up in them growing up. And a lot of my friends

93 were homeschooled and so we all kind of were similar in that regards where we kind of did our
94 own thing. You know, we were all kind of weird and quirky and, you know, just could do
95 whatever we want to not deal with people making fun of us for it or giving us shit or telling us
96 to be a certain way. So, you know, we all, it was, it's a very, like, welcoming community. So, I
97 think it made me very embracing of people just as they are. I think that being homeschooled
98 made me a lot more, like, okay with just kind of doing my own thing. But then, yeah, I
99 definitely I when I went to college, I definitely did have to learn some of the sort of, like,
100 competition and hierarchies and stuff like that. Just because it is important for competition. You
101 know, and competing for, like, jobs and stuff like that. And so, I guess that might be one of the
102 downsides of, like, the social life of homeschooling is you do just kind of feel like you can just
103 do whatever you want. When really there is, like, a little bit of competition you have to keep in
104 mind and hierarchies and stuff. Yeah, I think that's about the relationship it gave me with that.

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106 Quinton Walker: What were your expectations when you graduated from high school?

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108 Nolan Flavin: So, they were pretty unreasonable, actually. So, the first the first school I went to
109 was University of Colorado Boulder and I was doing literary studies there. And I went there
110 because there's a professor at University of Colorado, Kelly Hurley, who writes about the
111 vaudeville Gothic which is Victorian era gothic literature, and in high school I got really into
112 Literary Criticism and literary theory, especially Gothic studies. Yeah so, studying the horror
113 novel. And I loved her work so much and I wanted to go there and study under her so my
114 expectations for college were, well, one, I was very much looking forward to being out on my
115 own and living on my own, which you think anyone can relate to going to college. Like, it's
116 just so nice to just be independent. And so, I was just, I was looking forward to having a lot
117 more people around me. Because that's something, you know like I said, being homeschooled,
118 you have to make a lot of effort, like, go out and meet people, whereas in college, you're just
119 surrounded by people all the time. And so, I was, I was really looking forward to that. But then
120 most of my expectations were academic expectations, like, when I visited schools I didn't even,
121 my mom would go on the tours, but I didn't care. I just wanted to go sit in on classrooms and
122 interview professors and see what their views were on, like, literature and, you know, whether
123 they're more like, sociological criticism or formalism, new criticism and I wanted to see kind of
124 their ideologies to see who I want to take classes with. And so, most of my expectations had to
125 do with doing a lot of research and I'd said they were unreasonable because I'd kind of expected
126 that I would go there and just, you know, totally kill it in the research game get lots of
127 opportunities to work with, like, great professors and get stuff published and have a really easy
128 road to get into, like, a great grad school and become a research professor myself. And it was
129 much harder than that, you know, and the thing about going to, like, a huge university is you're
130 not the only person there who's good at research, you know, and so there's a lot more
131 competition and it was it was a lot more difficult than I expected. But it was cool too. I mean I
132 think I learned a lot from that.

133
134 Quinton Walker: Why did you choose to attend Columbia?

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136 Nolan Flavin: So, I didn't want to do the research anymore. Uh, I kind of got the impression of
137 what it was going to be like. I mean, I didn't know a thing. So much in my time there I just, I
138 was just reading and writing and reading and writing. And it was cool, but I really thought it'd

be nice to work in a field where I get to work with other people. Because here I was going to college so excited about, you know, being surrounded and people and you know having more opportunities to just do fun stuff. And I was looking forward to the parties. I thought about maybe going rushing for a frat. I never did because I was too busy researching. But, you know, there was so much I wanted to do, and I just didn't have time for any of it because I was pushing myself so hard to go above and beyond with the research I was doing. And I just didn't want that life anymore. It's still interests me. I still read a lot. I still research a lot but when I have time for it, you know, that's just my reading I do at night. I wanted to work with something that was more collaborative and I, so I came here for film. And I wanted to something that was more collaborative where I was working with other people, where it's a little more light and creative and playful because the other thing I realized about a lot of academia, is it's just that big competition for who can be the smartest. And it's a lot of pressure and there's a lot of great work being done and people tackling really important issues, but it's vicious, dude, like, yeah, it's vicious. And I wanted to be an art, the art world is obviously vicious too but I just wanted to be something more emotional and expressive, you know, and around people who are more , like, into experience and expression than, like, just, like, analyzing things endlessly and plus, I found that most of my love for researching because, you know, even in high school I was doing a lot of creative writing most of my love researching came from my love for writing and wanting to understand how stories work because then everything I would research and learn about other writers, I would end up using in my own work. And, you know, I would study a lot about, like, linguistics and stuff to know how language works. And, you know, I would love to come up with my own theories for papers, but mostly it was to improve my own writing. And I realized that really just my love for art and I would much rather be working. I would much rather be making art, you know, than just and just analyzing it. Because when I read these ideas, I get so inspired. You know what I mean. And, like, I think there's a lot of emotion in theory, there's a lot of passion in it. I would read and I get so inspired and I want to express it in some way. I think, I thought being on the creative side would allow me to do that. So, I came here because I know it's got a great film department and, you know, lots of great access to cameras and projects and there's always stuff going on, there's always sets going on.

Quinton Walker: What kind of extra curriculums did you participate in at Columbia?

Nolan Flavin: So, at Columbia I was part of the literary buffs. It was it was a literature club. And we basically just got together every week and talked about the writing we were doing and then the books we were reading and then a little later on in literary buffs we decided to start a journal. It never took off because it got ended up getting really disorganized and people weren't showing up to meetings. So, we ended up having to cancel, but we were just trying to start a literary journal. And then I got a little bit involved with the radio station there. I never got my own show on it. But, you know, just as kind of, like, a community. I got pretty involved with kind of their world. And a lot of, like, the shows that they were playing and stuff. Yeah, that was about it for extracurricular.

Quinton Walker: Did you have a job before our transition to remote learning?

Nolan Flavin: No, I uh--

Quinton Walker: -- and what was it?

Nolan Flavin: What? Oh, what was it? So, I didn't have a job. I kind of, I was, I had a volunteer thing I was doing. I was doing voter registration genius at Columbia. Where we're helping people register to vote and that was going to be a job because they're going to start, because only a few people were able to get hired for pay and the rest of us were volunteers, but then you're going to start getting paid for it in the fall. And we actually had, I hadn't worked a single shift yet, it all got cut off when the quarantine started.

Quinton Walker: How did you first hear about the coronavirus?

Nolan Flavin: It was on my apple news app. Uh, I honestly don't follow the news much I guess I'm kind of a transcendentalists in that sense. Like, I don't know, I figure the important events I'm going to hear about word of mouth. Uh, and then the rest of it is just like following soap operas, you know? I like to do stuff that's more relevant to me. So, like, if the news I follow and stuff, that's related to my industry or stuff that's going on in my city, but then again you know mostly just if I hear about it. I try to focus more on just the people around me who are actually in my life. But there was, around the start of the coronavirus I was doubting everything that I was doing in terms of, like, I don't know if I wanted to do film anymore. I didn't know if it was useful. You know, the kind of doubts that artists always have my, like, am I really accomplishing anything? And so, I just made this, like, random decision that I was going to be a politician. [Laughing] I've definitely gone down. I'm down back to fault, but it was kind of a mid-college crisis where I was like, screw it all, I'm going to be a politician. And I don't know a thing about politics so that wouldn't have worked, but I was, like, the first step is following the news. So, I started reading my news app. And I read about, I read about the coronavirus. That was towards the beginning when it was still in China. And plus, my girlfriends from China and her parents were freaking out about it and were sending her a lot information of what's going on with, like, her relatives and stuff.

Quinton Walker: What do you feel are the benefits of the pass/fail option that all students were given?

Nolan Flavin: Uh, well, I think for a lot of students it's just unreasonable to expect them to keep putting in the same amount of work. I mean, when you're at college, you know you're there at the school, you can submerge yourself in it and, for a lot of people, that's important because their home lives are not conducted to work. You know, they will need it to go to the school, you know, to kind of get away from that to really, you know, have this place where the environment is learning. And, you know, now that people are back at their homes. I mean, you know, I have I have friends who I know are having a tough time right now with, like, abusive family members. That it's making it so hard for them to work. I mean, one of, some of my childhood friends, like, their mom, his mom just went to the uh, to the mental asylum because, because you know they're all back home now with their father is very abusive and she went nuts and you know he still has to do his online classes and that's so, I mean I don't know how he's going to put the same amount of work in when he surrounded by that kind of stuff. I mean, I'm very fortunate, I think, in the sense that I really, I like my home. I came home and I'm with my mom

and my little brother and my girlfriend came with me. And, you know, it's a really nice environment and it's really allowed me to work and if anything it's quieter, because, you know, the city I always feel like I have to be doing stuff, you know, and participating in stuff going on around me. Whereas here I'm just, like, very focused on my school but I think the pass/fail is pretty necessary for a lot of people and especially for classes that have, that just don't work in at from home. I mean, in the film department, we have the MPC the media production center where, you know, it's, it's a soundstage. We build sets and you film with their equipment, people don't have those video equipment. They don't have the sets. I mean, how on earth are they supposed to be doing A level work when they're filming at home with their phones. Um, which of course professors are taking into consideration. Just lots of people's lives are just thrown into the air, because of the situation and I think that the students who are having a hard time because of this should have the option to just pass or fail or I think pass or no credit for a lot of people who, who know that this is going to affect their grades and that they're not going to pass. I mean, the option should just be there. It's affecting everyone's lives in different ways.

Quinton Walker: How do you think a universal pass would affect your academics?

Nolan Flavin: Me, personally?

Quinton Walker: Yes.

Nolan Flavin: Uh, I mean I wouldn't try that hard honestly. I think that, I have a few classes that I'm taking them because I really want to learn what we're doing, like, you know, this class Oral History. I really want to know these, like, interviewing skills. Just, I think that'd be important as a director to be able to do investigative work. And kind of capture times and people, you know, but, like, my business classes. Fuck it. Like, I don't, I'm not going to try if it's a universal pass. I took those basically to get a minor in business, in case things don't work out with film, you know, and if you have the minor, then that's, it's the degree that people want, you know, I don't, I don't care too much about the business world so I think that not having the universal pass is really good because it keeps, it keeps holding people to the standards, you know, it's going to be really easy. Even if people don't want to admit it. Like, even some of the best students out there, like, you know, if there was a universal pass. I think it would make it really hard for people to continue putting in the same amount of work. And I think the option should be there for people who cannot put in the same amount of work, but for those of us who can, like, I can put in the work. I'm completely comfortable at home to keep working, you know, I think a universal pass would do me a disservice because I wouldn't feel the same pressure to get everything out of my classes, you know, like, the ones I don't care about as much that, you know, not having that universal pass, you know, keeps me a little more motivated to learn this stuff and then I'm able to benefit from it more.

Quinton Walker: Are there any resources that you need or needed that you wish the school would provide but didn't?

Nolan Flavin: Well moving out was a hassle. I don't know how they would have done that differently, like I know U Haul was doing discounts or, or, like, a certain amount of time of free storage for students who have been evicted and I was in the dorms so I had to leave the dorms.

But, like, even the U Haul thing I think it was like a month, like, you know, I'm going to need storage for much longer than a month and I definitely don't have the money to be paying for storage. So, it worked out. It worked out. I rented a U Haul truck and brought all my stuff over to my girlfriend's house, but her landlord was upset about that. I mean, we got it out and it's here with me in St. Louis now, but, you know, her landlord was not happy with that just because I don't live there and, you know, there's all my furniture in the living room, but I don't know what else I'm going to do with it, you know, I'm in Chicago, my houses in St. Louis. What am I going to do, leave it on the street, you know, so yeah, I mean I guess just something to do with my stuff. Because it was a week before my mom was able to take time off of her work and come get me. So, yeah, that would have been, if there was something to do, you know, with my stuff. But I know Columbia did leave an option for –

Quinton Walker: — Where —

Nolan Flavin: — students who can't move out to keep their stuff in for longer and come pick it up later. But I don't know the time I'm going to be in Chicago again, so I can just leave my stuff in the dorms. I mean, I might not be able to come back until 2021 with this, with this stuff going on. And my stuff just going to sit in the Arc [Columbia College Chicago Student Housing Building] until 2021, you know, they're not going to let that happen.

Quinton Walker: Where were you when you first heard about the, about Colombia's decision to transition to online classes?

Nolan Flavin: Ah, where was I? I was at my girlfriend's apartment because I was staying there while my mom still getting ready to come pick me up. Because there was a lot of, like, maybes and maybes and maybes. And it was when I was there, I'd already moved out, that Columbia announced that we would be going to online classes. We were in the living room. I think we'd just eaten breakfast I forget if it was in the morning or not. And she's the one who was checking her email and she read it and told me about it.

Quinton Walker: What has been your biggest struggle in converting to online courses?

Nolan Flavin: I guess just working Zoom and there is a lot of good resources on how to use Zoom. I just, I don't know, for whatever reason, it confused me and so now I've got the whole Zoom thing down but, like, making meetings and stuff. I didn't know, like, because, like, I had my own Zoom and I know there were some Zoom with Canvas too. I didn't know if they were the same, or if they were linked and then also just getting used to the process of, you know, looking on the computer for what I need to do because it was kind of scattered, especially in a couple my classes, it was really scattered and we still had all the assignments still on there from before the quarantine and now new stuff and they're broken up with modules, but things have some more dates on them. And I just, I was so confused what I needed to be doing. But thankfully I, my professors have all been very responsive and I emailed them with questions, and they all guide me in that regard. But, when you don't have someone, like, in a classroom who's, like, you know, because there's this mass of information on canvas that you can scroll through, you know, but then having them to be like, you know, here are, like, three important things for you to do, you know, that just kind of synergy with that, you know, it makes

323 navigating all the other information, a little more, well you contextualize it. Whereas, like, this
324 is kind of, like, piecing stuff together, but it's really not been that hard. It really was just a day
325 really, a day or and a half, maybe of getting used to it. My classes have translated to online very
326 well because they have none of them really required me being present. I took a semester off of
327 film classes since I was going to be a politician.

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329 Quinton Walker: Why do you think it's important to stay in class currently, rather than just
330 canceling all courses?

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332 Nolan Flavin: A lot of people have already put in a lot of hard work and emotional effort. I
333 mean, I know in a class of mine, like, you know, early in the semester, I had been having a
334 really hard time with certain things in my life and, like, I was having a hard time with that class
335 stay motivated and so my grade, grade was dropping a little bit because of it and like, you
336 know, I got kind of a panic and really put in so much work. The next couple weeks with getting
337 my grade up and then the quarantine starts and it's like I felt like it the class had gotten
338 canceled, I would have put in all that effort and emotional turmoil and for nothing, you know,
339 and, like, we've already put so much work into these classes and for a lot of people they've
340 already really gotten attached to their final projects they want to do, you know, maybe it's
341 something that they really care about, you know, we should finish the work we've put in. So,
342 that's not just for nothing.

343

344 Quinton Walker: How has the transition to online classes impacted your living situation, the
345 most?

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347 Nolan Flavin: You mean, like, how has being in quarantine or, like, how is the online classes
348 themselves affected by living situation?

349

350 Quinton Walker: Being in quarantine.

351

352 Nolan Flavin: Okay. Uhm –it can get kind of boring. I mean, nobody's pulled a Jack Torrance
353 [The Shining] yet so I'm thankful for that. I mean, we're all staying somewhat sane, but, you
354 know, you're there is no outlet, like, you are with the same people every day all day and no
355 matter how much you love those people that is just going to lead to some, some feelings being
356 rubbed the wrong way. So, that's there's that. And then just, like, it's always it is a test of how
357 positive you can stay, you know, I have a little positivity journal I'm doing right now just to,
358 like, help me through the quarantine of, like, you know, just reminding myself it's going to be
359 over. You know, you start to when your lifestyles sitting around the house and, like, doing
360 homework and then just, like, watching movies and sitting around and talking to people and
361 playing games and stuff, you know, it's really easy to start being, like, oh god, I've become a
362 hermit, you know, I've become a recluse. It's, like, nope. We're in quarantine. This is what
363 we're supposed to be doing. We're supposed to just be sitting around watching movies, you
364 know. But it's not what I want to be doing, you know, I like to be out and about doing stuff. It
365 really is in normal life outside of quarantine, it's really hard for me to be in the house too much,
366 just because I'm somebody who needs adventure and so it's been a test of positivity and
367 acceptance and just endurance to really make peace with the fact that I'm in the house all the
368 time. But ultimately, I mean, I think that's a positive, like, or at least, it can be made into a

positive. Like, the fact that maybe tensions with the people I care about have come to the surface from being around each other too much and we can work through them, you know, that's a great thing and just learning to be content not doing that much and not living that extravagant of a life is a great practice as well. I mean, I think it's really going to push people to accept it and then, you know, all of us, learning how to push through these tensions we have with each other and live with each other and make it work and be content. I mean, because that's something you need to learn how to do in this time and you need to learn how to manage boredom and you need to learn how to be accepting of just living a very sedentary life, you know, and then be happy that, you know, you can go outside and go for a walk and that might seem boring because of the standards we have before quarantine, but like, that, you know, just learn that that is great, like, that's a blessing that we could go and take a walk outside, you know, and get some sunshine and thankfully it's summer, you know, if it was winter I, god I don't even want to know, you know what I mean. It's great that we have the sunshine to go out in and, you know, like, my brother and I have gotten really into yoga during this time, and finding ways to stretch and exercise and, you know, we're sitting around a lot. So, it's a good way to, like, get rid of some tension in our bodies. So, it's affected me in a lot of ways where, like, it makes you come face to face with a lot of the things that you don't normally have to think about or deal with. But then it's also a great thing because I think it really teaches you to make the most of any situation.

Quinton Walker: What do you miss most about being on campus?

Nolan Flavin: My friends. I miss my, I miss all my Chicago friends so much, like, I love having just a variety of people I can see and, you know, go around to people's other people's houses, not just mine, leaving the house, you know, going to the, you know, the art museum and some of the blues clubs and stuff, like, all just this fun Chicago life I was having and campus itself, like, I miss having the gym, you know, it's much harder just doing bodyweight yoga stuff in the house. I miss having the gym and I miss being in class with people, you know, there's just a lot. On Zoom it's, it works, you know, we can get the information, but it's missing the social aspect of it where we're all in a room together and, like, picking up on each other's energies that we're putting out and, like, it feels more human that way. Yeah, I miss, I just miss people, I think. I miss people.

Quinton Walker: How has quarantine affected your daily mood?

Nolan Flavin: Uh. Daily mood –It's kind of what I was talking earlier with the whole positivity thing, like, it's so easy to just get stuck in this, this hopeless depression. I mean, this is going to be a worldwide depression. I mean, I just imagine everyone's bored right now. And so, just, like, I mean, you look at how we all act. Everyone's, I feel like we're all just distracting ourselves and trying to live these exciting lives because I think we're all afraid of doing exactly what we're doing right now, which is living a life that just not that eventful and so, you know, I think we all, and like I have these stereotypes in my head of, like, this life that's not eventful, you know, that's not that exciting, you know, I have a negative association with that I do. It's like, it feels like a waste to me feels like a waste of life, you know, I'm not traveling. I'm not seeing the world. I'm not meeting all types of new people. I'm not submerging myself in my culture, you know, it's the exact thing that I would kind of stereotype as passing the days away.

You know, just sitting in my home, seeing the same people over and over again but, like, so yeah, it kind of leads to this depression. But then the other affect it has on my mood is because you get to face that you get to ask, like, is that something that has to depress you. You know, is that I've read, I've been reading *Walden* by [Henry David] Thoreau over quarantine because, you know, he just goes out and lives in a cabin by himself for a while, which has been kind of inspirational for quarantine because, like, you know, he's talking about how a very simple life can be really fulfilling if you don't take it for granted.

Quinton Walker: Before the spread of COVID-19, where did you think you would be today?

Nolan Flavin: Well, I had, I had a bunch of job interviews lined up. I was trying to become a server. I had, I think, four job interviews lined up for literally the week that we all, that Chicago shut down. And so, I figured I was, I would be well on my way there, and probably already have quite a bit of money from tips and what not. I was working on a film I had been I filmed, I've already filmed about 75% of it and I was really getting to where I was ready to do that last little portion and was trying to find the right location for it and I think I would have been finishing that up. I had been I wanted to start getting involved in an organization outside of Columbia. Like, I had signed up to be part of Equality Chicago, which is, like, a center for, like, LGBTQ for Chicago, like, activism and stuff. I was starting to get, wanting to get involved in, like, environmental, this is all stuff I'd signed up for. I'd signed up for, like, meetings. There's all this stuff I was, like, right as this was about to hit was, like, about to do that I'd signed up for to become more involved in the city. That just kind of fell through the roof, which is fine. I'll, you know, I'm still signed up for all these organizations. I'm sure I can just get interviews in different restaurants. But, yeah, I mean that's kind of a bummer.

Quinton Walker: How do you deal with feelings of depression and what are some of the coping skills that you use to deal with the anxiety from the virus?

Nolan Flavin: Being positive. Every horrible thing I think about because of the virus, you know, I don't I try not to let it go. I try to sit with it and write about it and write about how it's not that bad because it's not that bad. I mean it is terrible. This virus is terrible. I mean, people are dying, but, you know, I tried to just keep things in perspective for myself and I'm alive. All my loved ones are alive. Nobody I know has gotten it and even as horrible things happen, life goes on and there's no use in being negative about it, you know, all that's going to do is just make me miserable. Why am I going to choose to be miserable, you know, I look for opportunities. I use this as a time to work on a short story that I've been putting off, using this as a time to spend, spend extra time talking to my family. Calling them. Catch up on movies I want to watch. You know, it's going to be whatever I make it. I think I feel like I'm expected to be depressed because of it and I mean it is depressing. It just is, like, we're just sitting around, but my way of coping with it is just looking for opportunity and looking for ways to put the depression in perspective. I mean, really, the hardest truth would just be that I'm not living the life right now that I want to be living and everyone I know is at risk. But, both of those things can be put in perspective, you know, we are all still safe and we're all doing the best we can and I can make this I can make a life out of this, even if I'm here until next year. Until 2021. You know, this is how the start of the decade is going to be, like, I can make the most of that, like, I can do stuff that's, you know, I can make art inspired by it. I can try to make I've been doing a

lot of photography of my empty neighborhood or taking pictures of the way people are passing the time, you know, the short story I was working on, I tried to give it a coronavirus virus twist, you know, because I noticed it was already a very lonely story and then I just added into it that, you know, the reason that these two characters are somehow apart all the time is because of the coronavirus. I think that added an extra dimension to it and using it as a way to bring everybody together, you know, we're all being affected by it, so we can all talk about it. I'm so interested to see how my friends are going to use it for their arts, how, you know, what people are going to have to say about it. Everybody's take on it. I mean, it's really a time for opportunity.

Quinton Walker: Who do you talk to about your concerns?

Nolan Flavin: My girlfriend. She and I, she and I are very open with each other. I mean, that's one of the best things about our relationship is there's nothing we don't say to each other and we're very transparent about our feelings and things that have been on our mind and as things have come up as, you know, our nerves have been rubbed the wrong way with each other or with our family or family members that, you know, can do certain things, like, or just even the general depression and being open about, like, what we need, like, you know, if, um well, it's hard to have dates, really, if you're quarantined. I mean, there's not that whole process of want to go on a date tonight and you wonder, like, oh, what's the other person going to look like and, you know, you meet up and there they are and we've gotten ready for it. It's just like want to go on a date and then poof, we're on a date. But, you know, [laughing] we were already together, you know, like, we have, we've been doing things, like, oh, let's have a date tonight. Then we'll, like, separate, like, get ready and, you know, I'll come, like, [imitating quotation marks] pick her up from the bedroom. I'm getting off topic, though. Yeah, I talked, I've been talking we talk to each other and, you know, I talk to my family too. It's great to have family around who you're close to. We've all been pretty transparent with how it's making us feel and trying to help each other out and make sure everyone has what they need and has a house someone to support them.

Quinton Walker: How is your family dynamic changed during this time?

Nolan Flavin: Well I think it's brought us all closer. I think that things that were being kind of brushed under the rug have come to the surface and we've not had any, like, big blow moments or anything, like, come out in, like, a fire storm. But, you know, but things that would kind of irritate us about each other, have irritated us all the more but there's nothing we can do about it, you know, we can't run away. So, I really think that it's been a time where we've been able to get become closer and become more accepting of each other and tolerant of each other.

Quinton Walker: When did you start to see the virus as a serious threat to your life?

Nolan Flavin: Well, I've never seen it as a serious threat to my life, but I mean I was always aware of how dangerous it is for people older me. I don't have any of the things that would make me vulnerable to it. But I will say, like, at first, you know, me and my friends kind of thought, you know, as a lot of college students thought that we could kind of outsmart it and that as long as we were very, like, sneaky and, you know, just, like, kept to our apartments and didn't come in contact with old people that we could just kind of, like, if we gave it to each

other, whatever were young, you know, we're going to get through it. And so, we would kind of have parties at each other's apartments and keep it on the down low, not have too many people there. But when I started realizing that it's super serious that we stay quarantined was when I went to the grocery store because that was, like, a week we were doing that, and then I went to the grocery store. I was like, oh shit. I still have to, like, go to the grocery store, walk to the grocery store. I've come in contact with so many old people, you know, so many people who are extremely vulnerable to this, you know, like, and had since I had been with my friends the whole week I was, here I am at the grocery store, you know, getting vegetables and stuff and I see an old person next to me and I, you know, I step away because I'm like, oh shit, like, this is where it gets serious is now here we are doing our own things. But I still am going to be in contact with these people because there are necessities that we need, you know, walking around outside, going to the grocery store, you know, and I would be walking past old people, and, like, hold my breath for a super long time before I pass them because, like, I'm freaking out because I'm, like, because that, that's when it hit is when I had to go out and, like, go to the grocery store. That's when I hit that I could still very easily give this to someone else, even if in my day to day life I'm just with my friends.

Quinton Walker: What are your new sources?

Nolan Flavin: Uhm, well like, I said, I really, I don't follow the news much and I should maybe, I don't know. I don't know how I feel about that, like, there are a lot of good arguments on both sides, but I do, my new sources really are just what people tell me I mean I have a lot of friends who are very into the news and they usually, they usually let me know the important things that are going on. But I do occasionally look on, look things up. So, just Google, like, you know, I knew the coronavirus really serious thing and I wanted to know about how to stay safe during the time, you know, what kind of what the laws were where I was staying, you know, the stuff that's relevant to me. So, I just looked it up but, you know, most of my news I get word of mouth or sometimes. Sometimes I'll look at the Chicago Tribune, since we have a free subscription, you know, if I'm feeling newsy that day I'll go on and see what people are talking about.

Quinton Walker: How do the infection preventions or recommendations in your, your location differ from the stay at home order that's in Chicago and Illinois?

Nolan Flavin: It's not too different. I mean we have to stay at home. Don't leave. Don't go hang out with people. Most restaurants are open for delivery. That's the same in Chicago. We do have a lot of parks that are though because St. Louis has a lot of nature. And so, the sculpture park, the Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis, that's open and a lot of, like, our like, hiking trails and stuff are still open, which is great. That is a great resource, they have for us.

Quinton Walker: How do you feel about the possibility of online classes returning in the fall?

Nolan Flavin: Oh, man. Not a fan. At all. I mean, if it happens, I will make the most of it. I will take classes where I don't need to be on set, but, you know, I have, I have my courses laid out how I want to do them. You know, in this next fall I was going to do Directing I and then in the spring I was going to do Directing II, and then the next fall is going to do Directing III and then

graduate. And if it's going to be online I cannot do the directing class and then I'm going to have to do pay money extra money to do things because I want to go all the way through Directing III but I only have three semesters left, you have to take them consecutively and I want to do my experimental production class. I wanted to do an editing class. I mean, all of these things I need to be on campus. If it's online, I might just take the semester off. I just, I don't think it's worth it. I'll take a semester off and I'll work on my own stuff and that's a shame because I transferred schools and that set me behind, you know, I'm, I am 22, turning 23 in a few months and, like, I'm a junior so, like, you know, already because of transferring schools I'm a year behind. I don't want to be set back even further because of this, because then I'm going to be graduating school when I'm 25. That's so old.

Quinton Walker: What kind of lessons do you think are going to come from this outbreak?

Nolan Flavin: Well, there's a lot of arrogance that's been tested from people our age about thinking we can kind of out smart everything and, you know, know more than the system and all that kind of thing. I mean, I think nobody's doubting it too much anymore. I think everyone realizes the consequences of their actions. So, that's, I mean, that's that takes a lot of maturity. I think people have really had to grow up in this, just in terms of taking things more seriously and we live in very ironic times. I mean, yeah, we're a very Postmodern Age and we don't take really anything seriously. Especially our age, you know, what, it's all constructs and ironic and all systematic and whatever. And so, you that's kind of the mentality of our age. And so, whenever anything strikes like this, that's really real, you know, you can't deconstruct it. You can't blame it on semantics or something, you know, it's really, really real. I think that's a big strike to our attitude, you know, to our ironic attitude which has major impacts to a generation that very much prides itself on being carefree and, you know, whatever and individualistic and, you know, just kind of brushes everything off, like, that's a big blow to us that there's something that actually is very serious, you know, something that is very inherent you can't argue against it, you can't destruct it. So, there's that. And then just on a, on a more sincere, you know, less than an actual just, like, person to person basis. I mean it's sadly going to have different effects for everyone. They're going to be those who come out of this stronger, could come out of this more positive, who uses the chance to focus on their relationships, to focus on, you know, seeing the bright side of any situation and then there are going to be people who are going to come out of this more depressed, you know, and more injured. Who didn't have the resources they needed, you know, they're going to come out of this broke and really struggling and, you know, this is really affecting their lives. So, it's for a lot of people, they're going to come out stronger, for a lot of people they're going to come out much worse. And that's a really a shame.

Quinton Walker: What aspects of your life did you take for granted before the virus?

Nolan Flavin: —Well just, just the opportunity of going outside the house. —Yeah, I mean I talk all this talk about always feeling pressure to live as adventurous lifestyle. But, I mean, obviously, there's so many times in Chicago I just, like, go to class come home, you know, watch some movie on criterion channel and, you know, sit around in my pajamas, you know, get high or something like, it's, you know, something like this happens and you realize like, that is the base living. When all things have been taken away, that's what you're left with, and it's fine. It's great. We need like that. We should be content like that, but, like, I mean, this is, like I

599 said, a great test for, like, can you be content with that. But, like, that is the bare minimum. I
600 mean, there's so much we can be doing, you know. When this is over, I just want to travel, you
601 know, I want to travel. I want to, like, just go do everything, you know, I want to go do
602 everything. Because, you know, you take that thing for granted and then just like being with
603 people like, you know, we all get caught up in these petty little things with people and our
604 friend groups and stuff like that and, like, I mean, god, like, how I would just kill, to be able to
605 be in the same room as my friends right now. Yeah, you realize you just take, you take the
606 resources of the city for granted. You take your friends for granted. You take, you know, the
607 little social events that go on in the school for granted. The resources at the school for granted.
608 All of it.

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610 Quinton Walker: Awesome. That is everything. Thank you so much.