

Oral History
Capturing Quarantine
Spring 2020
Final Reflection

NAME: Ryan Pollock

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1. How did you feel when you read the email notifying students the oral history project would change from *Interfaith Chicago* to *Capturing Quarantine* due to the transition to remote learning?

I felt that it was a good call. While I think that the *Interfaith Chicago* project would have offered great oral history, we are currently living through something that only happens once a century. And something that has never happened in the modern era. There are not many oral history projects that take place *during* the event. Overall, I thought this project would be a great way to document our lives during quarantine while it is both fresh in our minds and life as we know it.

2. What were your initial thoughts about participating in an oral history project documenting your classes' experience during the first months of the global pandemic?

I thought this would be a great way to document for the future what it was like to live through the 2020 pandemic. There aren't many catastrophes that can be recorded while they are being played out. However, the quarantine came with extra time that we can use to really think and reflect about how our lives have been altered. It is so easy to forget the way something was before an event once you are so immersed in that event. These interviews offered a moment for us to step back and remember what life was like before 2020.

3. How do you feel about the project now?

Now that it has been completed, I feel very accomplished. I feel as though I have helped to document history. I take pride in the work I completed and look forward to future

generations 20, 30, 40 years down the line who watch my interviews and learn about life during the coronavirus pandemic of 2020.

4. As an interviewer:

a. How did you prepare for the interview?

I tried to remove myself from the quarantine as much as possible. I thought, 'Okay, think about life before the pandemic. How was it different? What are the biggest changes that we've had to make?' Then, once I knew the answers to those questions, I constructed my questions as if I was asking from the future. I acted as if I was naïve to the situation and had no part in it whatsoever. I wanted to ask the questions and get to the stories that the future generations will be interested in.

b. What was it like to interview a classmate?

It was interesting and enriching. It was nice to hear the story of someone who goes to the same school as me, takes the same classes, and lives in the same area. I enjoyed hearing a different perspective on the topic and what life is like for another person who is relatively in the same boat as me.

c. How did you feel after the interview?

I felt I did not cover all of the topics that I wanted to. I wanted to really get into the finer details of my narrator's life (i.e. how do you shop for food, where do you shop for food, what's your means of transportation). I wanted to get into the details that will be the most relevant for the future generations. Things people will look back on one day and say 'I wonder how they did _____ in the 2020 pandemic.'

d. What is the most important thing you learned as an interviewer?

It is tough to give oral history interviews! I am much more accustomed to the interviews I give on my radio show that are more of a conversation. More of a push and a pull between two people where you can insert opinions, thoughts, etc. It was a great experience though and I am glad it was tougher because I gained more from the class for sure.

e. What advice would you give to future interviewers?

Prepare more questions than the number you will actually use and be sure to know them like the back of your hand. Also, try to remove yourself from the interview and ask who your audience is and what they will be interested in knowing. Last, do not be afraid to go off script or change the direction of the interview once you get into it.

5. As a narrator:

a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I did not prepare at all. I just sat down and answered the questions as naturally as possible. I did not want to over think the questions I was going to be asked or prepare my answers. I wanted to give a genuine interview as if I had never thought about the answers.

b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

It was interesting being on the other side of the interview. Usually I am the one asking the questions, so it was a fun experience. I liked it! I thought my interviewer had good questions and I even felt tired after the interview. It took a lot of focus and concentration that I am not use to for interviews!

c. How did you feel after the interview ended?

As I said before, tired. I remember thinking that it is tougher being on that side of the interview, much easier to ask the questions! I thought I did a good job of answering the questions honestly, natural, and not dwelling too long on them.

d. What would you tell someone who is hesitant to be interviewed?

Remember you do have something to say and you should say it. The interview should not be intimidating, and you should think of it as a conversation. The interviewer won't be out to get you, they are your friend. Just answer the questions honestly and relax!

6. Is there anything else you would like to include?

This class was a lot of fun and I learned a lot through this whole experience. I was really excited about the *Interfaith Chicago* interviews but also equally as satisfied with the path we were forced to take. I am looking forward to using the techniques and knowledge that I learned from this course in the future.