

**Oral History
Capturing Quarantine
Spring 2020
Final Reflection**

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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 was both disappointed and relieved. I was very interested in interviewing Dr. Levinson, and it was something I was really looking forward to. However, once things started getting bad in terms of the virus, I was nervous about having to meet up with her.

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 honestly didn't want to be interviewed. I was fine with interviewing someone, and I think that these stories are important, but I don't like to be on video. It makes me a little uncomfortable to be filmed – especially if I don't have a script. A year ago, I was interviewed by a student at Columbia who was filming, and he ended up harassing me about my gender and it was posted on social media, so I don't like to be filmed and I don't like to be filmed talking about gender. That, of course, was talked about in my interview – Ryan didn't ask what I was uncomfortable talking about, and I am too much of a pushover to say no or speak up – and it kind of sucked. If it had just been audio, I probably would have been a lot more comfortable. I also feel like I hold so much privilege that my story doesn't need to be told. The impactful stories – the meaningful stories – are from the students who have actually experienced hardships and struggles during this time. I also was unsure about how we were going to make such a short time into a full-length interview.

3. How do you feel about the project now?

I'm really happy with how my interview with La-Sheba (where I was the narrator) turned out, but I don't like the way my interview went. I'm dissatisfied with my answers. I think that I made good points, but I also feel like I didn't sound as smart as I would have liked to. I still think the project is super important, and it was really interesting to both hear and read the impactful things that La-Sheba was saying.

4. As an interviewer:

- a. How did you prepare for the interview?

I did all of the paperwork (script, bio-data form, etc.) I made a note of questions that I especially wanted to ask. Before we started recording, I had a short conversation with La-Sheba to break the ice a little.

- b. What was it like to interview a classmate?

It was a lot more informal than I think it would have been if I had been interviewing Dr. Levinson. I had fun interviewing La-Sheba. We didn't agree on everything, but it was nice to hear her point of view.

- c. How did you feel after the interview?

I feel like I've learned a lot more about my friend! I also feel like I really appreciate and value the things that La-Sheba has to say (though I felt that way before the interview as well).

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

Talk slowly and focus on your words. I used filler words and compliments excessively, and that really came out when I typed up the transcript.

- e. What advice would you give to future interviewers?

Practice first! And have your bio-data form in front of you while you're interviewing them – or at least write down important dates or names on your script.

5. As a narrator:

- a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I looked through my own script for my other interview and thought a lot about how I would answer my own questions. There wasn't much to do in terms of preparation to be completely honest.

- b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

I didn't enjoy it very much. Ryan is a great interviewer and his questions were awesome, but I was hyper-aware of being filmed and I didn't think too hard about my answers.

- c. How did you feel after the interview ended?

I felt a little silly like I didn't know what I was saying. But I felt relieved that it was over.

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

I don't know if I'm the one to ask about this. I suppose the good answer to this would be to say that their story is important and deserves to be heard, but

personally – if I wasn't worried about my grade and being seen as being difficult – I would have opted not to be interviewed.

6. (OPTIONAL) Questions about narrators' private lives and personal relationships were not included in the formal interview, how do you feel about this?

I would feel uncomfortable being asked a question about a private part of my life. As a nonbinary person, parts of my life that wouldn't be a public matter for cis people are a public matter for me, and I don't need any more of my business to be out there for people to see.

- a. How has your gender, sexuality, race, and/or ethnicity affected your experience during the global pandemic?

I don't think that a global pandemic has the power to affect my (or anyone's) gender or sexuality. That's something that you are, not something that a pandemic forces on you.

- b. Exploring and developing new relationships is an important part of the undergraduate experience, how has this aspect of your life been affected?

I wasn't dating anyone before quarantine and I really only hung out with my friends before quarantine as well, so nothing has really changed. I still facetime my friends a lot, so I guess we are affected by the loss of contact, but we are definitely finding ways around it. I will say that I do miss being able to go buy a coffee from the coffee shop in my building. Though I wouldn't say I'm friends with the barista's we had a cool dynamic that I took for granted and it feels a little weird not experiencing that anymore.

- c. How are you dealing with the absence of physical contact?

I hate it!! I have a cat who hates touch and I don't live with any people so I am just waiting for the day I can hug my friends.

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

Not really! I had a fun time with this class and I really enjoyed learning about meaningful and effective ways to listen! I learned a lot of valuable life skills in addition to interviewing skills!