

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

NAME: Snore Doumbia

DATE:

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?

Personally, I was somewhat relieved because I was very unsure how I was going to proceed with the Interfaith Chicago project. Since the person I was originally interviewing dropped out of the project and I had to start over a week before we ended up going on break then into the remote transition. The transition for me gave me a chance to start again on the same ground level as the other students in my class. In addition, I was equally as interested in how the Capturing Quarantine interview would be conducted as I was for the Interfaith Chicago project.

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 was excited about the change in project but honestly the initial prospect of it being about our experience with quarantine I thought, this may not be as interesting as the Interfaith would have been because the subject was limited to one event that we were currently experiencing. After I put some thought into it I changed my perspective since I was going to be able to see how the experience was treating multiple different people and from their personal perspectives.

3. How do you feel about the project now?

I feel very happy about the project, I am glad to be able to be a part of the archives collection as both a narrator and an interviewer, which would not have been the case otherwise. I feel that I gained a lot from this project and the quickened process that I would not have been able to gain had we not gone remote or stayed with Interfaith Chicago.

4. As an interviewer:

- a. How did you prepare for the interview?

As an interviewer I started preparing for the interview about 30-40min before it actually started. I worked out with the narrator how to get the interview to cloud record for both us before we got on, and I spent time reviewing my

questions so that they were in my head and I knew generally what talking points I would transition to depending on how each question was answered. Even earlier than that I believe the mock or mini interview that was conducted had helped me and my narrator work out how to maintain a proper interview, by reviewing it and adjusting the way that I addressed questions and showed that I was actively listening without being conversational. Also, I tested some questions on my friends outside of class to see how the questions were answered depending on the phrasing.

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

Interviewing a classmate felt interesting because there is a sense of familiarity that makes it easier to communicate with one another. In the setting of our class, since in my case I had not actually interacted with my narrator very extensively prior to the lockdown, so it was not too difficult to establish the relationship of interviewee and interviewer. I think that it actually helped by us knowing the interviewee/narrator "hats" as we studied them in class and were able to put both sides of the what we learned into practice.

- c. How did you feel after the interview?

After the interview I felt that I need to decompress and focus on something not school related because I had just spent a little over an hour delving into a fellow student's life during a stressful time. I also felt really accomplished because I successfully completed the most nerve-racking part of the process. After finishing it and setting up the transcript to start working on it, I felt I did a fairly good job with the work I spent the last few weeks working toward.

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

I feel that the class taught me how to be a truly work on asking questions to get to know people's perspectives. It sounds like something that I should've already know to do but I think that before this project put an emphasis on the narrator's perspective as a key reason for why oral history interviews are so important, I wasn't thinking about conversations as a way to gain perspective. I would say that I used conversation to gain information, which is less personal as it is not intentionally trying to gather insight into people's emotions. I'm not sure if I made it entirely clear how that changed perspective affected me, but I will say that I ask questions that are intentionally focused on the individual's perspective.

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

I would say to listen very closely and actively engage in the process as much as you would (hopefully) engage in the actual interview because that way you get the most out of the experience. Oral History is about gaining individual perspective, which in order to do so requires that you treat every step as a

important research gathering process to be able to engage that perspective effectively and concisely.

5. As a narrator:

a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I honestly did not know how to prepare for the interview other than make myself moderately zoom presentable. I thought about the questions I asked when I was narrator and thought about how I would answer them.

b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

Getting interviewed for me was tough as I do not typically enjoy talking very much, but tried to express my thoughts to the fullest extent that I could in that moment, which made the process feel a bit long and a bit grueling (which my narrator apparently felt as well). It also felt uncomfortable talking about how I felt or my perspective on the quarantine as I lacked privacy in the location that I was conducting the interview so felt I needed to be careful about what I said.

c. How did you feel after the interview ended?

To described in one word would be, "Ugh jeez." I felt like I had forgotten everything I had learned about what a good narrator looks like. The interview felt like I had just talked for 3 hours instead of the hour that it turned out to be. I honestly mainly wished I could have a do over, which goes against my silent nature, but I wanted to concisely describe my perspective in a actually well-articulated manner.

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

I would say that it is a good experience to talk about your experience with whatever the subject is. Everyone has a unique perspective on their experience just because of the fact that they were the ones who experienced it. I think that the accumulation of all your prior experiences leading to the topic are experiences that nobody else could also have so all of that plus your individuality makes whatever you have to say interesting even if you do not think so. I would also so that there is no reason to be nervous about perfectly articulating your experience well either since there isn't a perfect recollection of the events, there's just your recollection however that may come about.

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

I think that these were important things to ask as well, however that honestly could have been a separate interview on its own because of the emotional weight of the subject. I would be interested to know peoples experiences with it and how they have felt that their personal relationships have affected their quarantine.

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

My race has affected me in that my race group is the one leading in the death toll, and my ethnicity has affected me because I have had to go back to African/ Muslim traditions and routines that I had not been practicing since entering college. Other than that I cant really think of how it has affected me.

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

This aspect of my life has been very much so cut down and negatively affected by the pandemic. As I had spent the year becoming increasingly more outgoing to then being forced into my old introverted ways was a large mental and physical shock as I have less opportunity or motivation to be physically active.

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

I am no really missing physical contact all that much because I am not a physical person by nature, but I have found myself more entangled into seeking shows on Netflix/Amazon Video that have story lines where the main characters are outgoing and constantly meeting people.

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

I had a great time doing the Oral History Project despite all of the outside world events and analyzing my experience as I was going through it helped keep me sane.