

Wilmer Diaz Banegas
Ryan Duffy
Dr. Donna Sinclair
May 26, 2022



Oral Stories, Ryan Duffy

Wilmer: My name is Wilmer Diaz Banegas, Today's date is May 19, 2022. I am conducting this interview at Hamersly Library.

Wilmer: Can you please tell me your name, your date of birth and place of birth.

Ryan: Yeah, My name is Ryan Duffy, I was born on september 21, 1999. I was born in Salem Oregon.

Wilmer: Thank you, ah, Tell me about your early experience with covid, What were you doing in your life before covid?

Ryan: Before covid started I was at Chemeketa Community College, I was initially i've gone there to get a computer science degree, but then realized, maybe I think I... the end of my first year; early of the second year I realized I don't understand at all what I'm doing, it wasn't making sense and wasn't enjoying what I was doing, so eventually I, I eventually dropped my major and didn't have any, and I was taking classes and right before covid started like, the winter beforehand I switched filled to a history major and I was finishing completing [...] none of the history requirements but also the rest of my general ED requirements at Chemeketa... and preparation to transfer here to Western(Western Oregon University).

Wilmer: okay.. What do you first recall hearing about covid?

Ryan: When I first heard about covid, was a lot of unsurety, like what it was really supposed to be, I wasn't really know if was supposed to be worried about it or is going to be a big deal or was going to be another like swine flu where everyone freaks out [...] don't really mattering so it was sort of left in the dark of like... what , how is going is this going to impact me or how is was this gonna change everything. Everyone was sort of like consciously waiting.. like what's going to happen, how do we approach this, what's the correct choice, so that how I felt a lot to was like, do I really need to worry about this or is this going to end up being a nothing virus that'll come and go and then we'll move on with our lives.

Wilmer: Yeah, same with me, when I first saw the news about a virus in China I.. never imagined that it would come to the US. Did you ever think that the virus would come to the US? And it would spread all around the world?

Ryan: I mean, [quick laugh] in the most obvious [...], the ability for people to make bad choices is incredibly high, I figured in some point it would show up, but I didn't know the level of like.. mm what is it called , how contagious it would be, how'll it would spread, I figured it would be

an isolated incident here and there or the american infrastructure would be to handle it [...] I didn't.. I figured it show up, but I didn't think it'd take over the country in the way it had.

Wilmer: yeah, Where were you or what were you doing when you found out that the world was shutting down?

Ryan: That was right before I started my spring term I am pretty sure, I had just finished... I know I [...] classes with covid in mind, but I don't remember when my classes ended covid started but I know because I remember signing up , I specifically signed up for three science classes at my last term at Chemeketa knowing because of covid that it wouldn't be person labs, but right before I was finishing my...[...] shut down we were just about starting my spring term at Chemeketa and getting able to finish my last term before I could transfer to Western.

Wilmer: What was the general atmosphere like as the covid shutdown ramped up?

Ryan: Mmm like [...] Chemeketa there was basically we were going to follow the guidelines, we are gonna do what we are supposed to do, people.. I guess, kind of been the story of covid people weren't sure what we needed to do, so we are going to listen to the [...] whoever and we are gonna do what it needs to be done, and this is how is gonna be we're gonna figured out as we go if we need to continue the shut down we'll keep the shut down. At Chemeketa that was basically the entirety of it, we are gonna do what they say, we'll figure it out as we go along, better safe than sorry.

Wilmer: Did you start taking online classes immediately or did.. Did you stop school for a certain time?

Ryan: I've been going to college school since I graduated from high school. I went straight to college. I was doing college the entire time. So that was just like another semester for me , wasn't like I [...] decided to come back during covid.

Wilmer: Thank you, How did you respond to the Covid situation?

Ryan: Well for me it wasn't that big of a deal, like, I was someone who is a home buddy and someone that likes to stay at home [...] I ended up not really having to change a whole lot about my life, I mean I stayed home and did online classes which I didn't have to go to campus... and really the biggest area where I notice I was able to hang out with my friends a whole lot [...] people who like to all get together in one big group so if one person gets sick or one of us had to quarantine then nobody hangs out. That was really the biggest change for me, at home it was just getting used doing online school when my brother was also doing online school and my mom

was working from home which it wasn't that big of a deal just getting used to, but otherwise it wasn't like.. a big change other than getting used to how zoom works, I suppose.

Wilmer: How were people around you responding?

Ryan: Like I said my brother was in high school started doing online classes and for him though it didn't seem like a big deal, we were able to balanced out and separate one off and my mom was working from home, so we were all in the house at the same time but there was never really a big challenges. My mom outside of work was always way more nervous and more worried than I was. I think she might of had some sort of outrisk condition but I don't know for sure , which she was always worried about my grandma who liked to go to church every other day and that take a while of time and was worried she is going to get it and she'll come back and give it to us, my dad is a nurse so he was all like on top of; here is what we need to do, here is how to deal with, here is the Covid guidelines here is how we follow them, so that was sort of... my family was supper, wasn't supper anticovid mandate, wasn't anti mask, or anti vaccines or anything like that, this is what we need to do , do it when we need to do it.

Wilmer: You mentioned that covid had an effect on going to church, how did your church handle the covid situation.

Ryan: I don't personally go to church , my grandma I know [...] there was specific spacing, but I never went to church during covid I didn't go to church for either.

Wilmer: What was your experience with quarantine?

Ryan: It was fairly, like positive I think I mean as I said I really didn't have much of a reason to go out it wasn't like I was desperate to go out eat and desperate to go out and go to some park or anything like that. So quarantine was basically more what I've been doing already, so I stayed at home a lot. I played video games, you know I watched internet videos, you know I did all my school online so I guess I just became more computercentric [...] I had some gabs like I was fairly heavily computer focused but otherwise I don't think much of my life changed with the quarantine.

Wilmer: What was most challenging for you? What hardships did you face?

Ryan: Really the most challenging thing was not being able to hang out my friends as I said we hang out in big groups so if one person had to go and deal with a... a quarantine no one hang out specifically because [...] houses and the person house whose were at is having issues like nothing happens. So for me [...] stressful and more frustrating like I wanted to hang out with people, I

wanted to do stuff at people's houses but we weren't able to because of the nature of covid. So I was left, just stick around getting bored, there are things I can do at home, but there are things I can't really do, especially group activities we were just getting into like sort of nerdy Dungeons and Dragons and Magic the Gatherings sort of things. [...] the go to get together and do those things was sort of frustrating, but that was like, for me the personal social aspect of it was the biggest challenge. School wasn't that big of a change, I wasn't working at the time so there wasn't a lot of most of my life where I had a big noticeable shift that was frustrating like hard to deal with.

Wilmer: How long did it past(I meant how long did it take) for you to see your friends again?

Ryan: It wasn't that we didn't , it was , we went from meeting every weekend which like maybe once or twice a month maybe and then if there was ever an outbreak it would go down to one [...] even or last so. We weren't just able to meet daily at the near frequency we wanted to, it wasn't that we couldn't [...]

Wilmer: How did you deal with shopping?

Ryan: I was as I said before I [...] with my mom and my brother so I never really had to go out and shop much. My mom was who made it all, I never had to deal with the crazy covid anti mask shoppers or anything like that.

Wilmer: Did you or your family have any direct experience (getting covid or knowing someone) with covid? Can you tell me about it?

Ryan: Well none of my family that I live with but my.. I have two brothers my other brother had gone to OSU and he had gone covid so my mom was super worried about it, she was packining as he had it and then worried he had come by and then, it would give it to us which ended up not but it was a concern of what it mean for him, would he be okay and I think at the time he had got in trip with friends so he was like, not only like where he was living he was actually further away so she was all kind of worried but otherwise , I don't know if I ever had any personal exposure to covid. I had friends covid scares but I don't think any of them actually got covid, specifically.

Wilmer: Were you scared of getting covid?

Ryan: No, not really I was just like.. honestly they would always talked about 99 percent chance people would survive so it was never really like.... I didn't wanted to get it because it would be a pain to deal with having to quarantine but otherwise I wasn't scared of like I would need to the hospital or suffer some serious medical conditions. I didn't have any pre-existing conditions that

put me up at greater risk, if you really, it sounds bad to say[...] if it convenient to get covid right now less than oh I am in actual real danger.

Wilmer: How did you/your family handle respond to covid policies? (travel? Resist? Personal gatherings?)

Ryan: I mean we still got together occasionally but our meetings were lot smaller and it was always a lot more concern you know, my grandma always liked to do the holidays at her house. Because she is older, do we go, do we invite a bunch of people or just really small just us, have a gathering so it was practically Christmas time you know, we have my mom's sister and other people who we could invite, maybe we shouldn't invited them, maybe we should try to keep it as small as low key we can and still be able to get together and do this kind of things. Or another event where my grandma wasn't there, just keeping things small, not going out of town like going eating for birthdays or anything like that, staying at home and doing things from home because it's just safer and there is no real need to go out to those places.

Wilmer: How did you feel about things opening back up as the vaccinations came online?

Ryan: I mean as it came out, really the only place , the only two places where I saw a change was at school and with friends, so my friends it just meant we were able to get together maybe more kindly, because some of my friends were delayed in getting the covid vaccines but we ended up not really worrying about it , we figured we all fine with it, but weren't worried about the consequences of it, but with school it meant we cannot longer do Western Oregon from home and I had to come off from Salem here multiple, every day, and be here for long periods of time which because little more difficult. It was a little frustrating. Maybe if covid lasted one more year and I could just done the whole school year or the whole college thing from home. It would be lot more convenient and a lot more, less stressful to deal with but it was also I understand people everywhere else were getting kind of crazy about it and were really desperate to get out and [...] been good things to come [...] I talked to people I wouldn't talk to otherwise, I've gone to like, I think the classes are probably little better , I didn't have an issue with the online classes I think they have gone better in term of quality and how much I actually learn in those classes [...] to me I wouldn't find out a way if we got another year.

Wilmer: How were institutions you were connected with affected?

Ryan: I am not a big online or outside organization part or a set of church or sort of clubs or organizations, really the big one was Western, as I said before just not being able, now be having

being able to come here more often was just like a weird experience just because I had.. I mean during covid I came to Western maybe a total of three times and those were all just to pick up books and now coming to the campus and figure where the hell every class is and where everything is, and where I can go and started taking the bus, getting use to taking the bus, specially during construction the bus stop is way off by the baseball field, so getting use to all of that as like a change was sort of frustrating.

Wilmer: Also there were mass protests around the country, were you involved in any protest during this period?

Ryan: No, not really. Around that time even sort out I never been in it big in the active protest active participation [...] I am pretty interested in the field [...] specially with covid I didn't really feel like "I need to go out and protest" whether or how I feel about each individual protest [...] so I wasn't but I never felt like called to go out and do specific protest.

Wilmer: Did any of your family or friends were involved in the protests?

Ryan: I don't... I think I had some friends and family but I never really talked to them about it too much, I know I saw them post about it like or do little videos but I don't like... a big question why would you do this or why didn't you do this.

Wilmer: Did you have any positive experiences during covid? (benefits/drawbacks)

Ryan: Like I said before being able to do school from home which is way more like more easier for me, specifically not having to coming to western like school at Chemeketa was nice, and I had do my science labs was nice but really at Western, not having to come to Western all the time was really really helpful.

Wilmer: What were some major changes for you during covid?

Ryan: Major changes... I mean there haven't been, my life hasn't changed too much because of covid, you mean during ? or because of ? **Wilmer:** because of. **Ryan:** because of, I don't know I had a ton of changes , I learned how to use zoom[laughs] I guess but otherwise like, I got more used to.. I think before covid I didn't really was used to looking online for going online for school stuff, [...] become the norm but otherwise personally I don't think my life has changed a whole lot because of covid more like I just.. Experienced and I am sure I will remember experiencing it but i dont know if it had any lasting impact on me.

Wilmer: What kinds of events or crazy things do you recall from the covid time period?

Ryan: Well I mean there was all kind of things happening nationally internationally, I do remember one story about... so when I.. I don't drive , it's just something I've done. Having to come back to Western I had started taking the bus and I had never taken the bus before [laughs] so the first day I go to take the bus.. I, I have no idea how to do it so I go and I buy a bus ticket and it turns out I've bought the wrong bus ticket[laughs] then I took the bus and I missed my stop and if you don't know this Western is the last stop at independence before the bus goes to Dallas. **Wilmer:**[laughs]. **Ryan:** So I ended up at a Dallas Walmart waiting for the bus to go back the other way and then after doing all of that I finally made it to Western; did my class and I was waiting at the wrong bus stop so then in a course of a single day I probably made just about every mistake you could make taking the bus that a human being could make. That was the biggest thing for me, it was just like... Covid ending I had to get used to a bunch of things I hadn't had before, getting use to take public transportation and talking the bus but like, outside my personal experience... I am someone who is like very intune with the internet like, read it in those certified online site where people post things so I saw a lot of like people who would label crazy or do all kind of... like the people do the shopping of the toilet paper, when people are bored and they are doing all kind of dumb, stupid like.. Because I remember school started; kids were stealing things like toilets and zins and stuff. Just thinking like is this really how people are doing now that we are out of covid , is this really what you feel like you need to accomplish, personally those are the big things.. things happening in the internet; people like posting things that don't make any sense , people are [...] crazy posting whatever they wanna do on the internet with no real concern.

Wilmer: Did you learn something from covid, for example, you could say that you learn how to care about others, what would say that you learned?

Ryan: I don't know, like for me covid was less than a major growth experience and more just like this is how life is this is how life is for this time I mean the things I got used to wearing a mask, the first [...] covid I didn't like them wearing at all and [...] my mask was really too big or too small so they did fit in my face [...] I don't know necessarily a major growth , I don't know personally like emotionally [...] growing during covid other than.. It's frustrating to see people having to do all the suffering I feel like we should of be able to handle all the covid problems [...] frustrating to me and maybe that part of what I learned from covid was like I was more intune

with our situation, why did everything, why our society fall apart so poorly and struggle so much, finding frustration when that, this is why I think this is dumb and why this was a mistake.

Wilmer: What has this covid experience meant for you? Is there anything you would like to add or anything I didn't ask that I should have?

Ryan: Covid for me was just like an excuse for me to do what I normally did it was an excuse to stay home. I understood why people were frustrated, but to me I never really had to deal with the stress of covid, my life got easier because of covid I never had to , I didnt work before covid so not working during covid wasn't really a big deal, but otherwise it just.. Getting used to the experience of people around me being able, people around me rather than me having to get used to anything in particular.

Wilmer: thank you very much, we are ending this interview, thank you for the time Ryan.

Ryan: thank you

[interview ends]