

Oral History Transcript

Fainus: Ok so I just started the recording, umm, ok so to start off my name is Fainus Abdi, today's date is March 9th, 2021, umm, and today we'll be discussing the experiences of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am in San Antonio, Texas and I'm interviewing, if you want to go ahead and introduce yourself, let us know where you are.

Ahmed: Yes, my name is Ahmed Abdi and I'm from Minnesota.

Fainus: Great, and where were you born?

Ahmed: I was born in Somalia.

Fainus: Okay, and where are you from?

Ahmed: I'm from, from Somalia and well I lived in Texas for 12 years, um I moved down to Minnesota last summer, uh so yeah, so I just came from Texas, um last, last summer.

Fainus: Okay, and why did you move, uh from Texas to Minnesota?

Ahmed: For education, uh for school and work.

Fainus: Okay, and what is your occupation?

Ahmed: Right now, I'm a reservationist. Uh, I work for uh, Metro Transit uh its where uh people are gonna need rides and stuff. So, I basically schedule rides so that's what I do.

Fainus: Okay, and when did you first hear about the coronavirus, and if you could explain uh what your experience was with that?

Ahmed: Honestly, I can't recall when I heard about the virus, um I just had so much going on, and I didn't care that much about it because I didn't think that it was that serious. Um on top of that, you know, they said the virus only affected the elderly, older people, or you know anyone

with weak immune system, um but obviously that was wrong. Um I'm not someone who keeps up with the news as well, you know I must admit that at that time I was going through uh some tough personal things.

Fainus: Okay, and can you explain how the coronavirus affected you personally and your family or friends, uh like if anything changed?

Ahmed: Um, well one of our family members had the corona, um and you know things weren't the same, uh you know with a big family and one of the family members having the corona, that makes things difficult, but uh the rest of us didn't catch the corona it didn't really affect us, but we tried to keep, kept distance, so uh yeah.

Fainus: Okay, and then can you explain how uh the coronavirus affected your daily or weekly routine, um if it affected your daily or weekly routine, um things like shopping or like for groceries, or spending time with family and friends, um were any of those things affected?

Ahmed: Not so much uh because um honestly it was just really work and that time I lived in Texas and I used to work at Walmart, and Walmart was open at that time, they never closed it or shut down, so it was just really work and after I get off work I was just usually, I was playing video games a lot and just played games uh basketball. But the only thing that was really affected was, my weekly routine, was going to the gym, you know they shut down the gym so workouts, I used to workout, play basketball, so other than that it really didn't affect me much.

Fainus: Okay, and did that um, not being able to go to the gym, um did that like affect your health or anything like that or your mental health or anything?

Ahmed: Yes because um ever since they shut down the gym, I didn't want to go back, and you know I was just more inside playing video games, you know not going outside, not spending time, I mean it was, at that time corona was going on there wasn't much, you can't do much

outside, but um yeah it was, I mean, it was actually more fun spending time with friends and going to the gym and doing all that. Now things are a little bit better that things are opening back up.

Fainus: Right, um and so due to the pandemic, uh are you able to work from home right now um and if so can you tell us why and then if not can you tell us why you think that is?

Ahmed: Uh, no I'm not able to work from home because um we all have our own office so we at work, so our job doesn't allow us to work from home um so we at work. But like I said we do have our own office, there's no like crowding so we have to be at work.

Fainus: Okay, and you said that you did know someone that was infected with the coronavirus, right?

Ahmed: Yes, one of a family member yes.

Fainus: Okay, um did that um did that like affect you in any way, were you scare or anything like that?

Ahmed: No, no I wasn't really even scared I mean we had like, we kept things distant, we had two bathrooms, there was an upstairs on-there was two floors you know, he lived on the top floor so we kept the top bathroom for him and we all, the rest of us just used the bottom one, and I wasn't really even scared or anything like that, that I would catch the virus, we didn't know whenever a family member had the virus, um things were still just normal to me yeah so.

Fainus: Okay, um and so how has adapting to the virus affected your work or if you're going to school, um responsibilities like that, how were those affected by the coronavirus?

Ahmed: Well, when the virus first started, school, uh it was spring that year, it was 2020-or was it 2019, I can't remember-but spring, when corona first started, I ended up dropping all of my

classes because I was more uh face to face learner. You know I was not; it was kind of hard for me uh learning online classes especially with math classes I was taking trig and all that, and you know I'm better with face-to-face classes, so it was a little bit difficult at that time and, but now I'm getting used to it. And on top of that it was morning classes, so I used to take morning classes and I used to stay up late, so when I wake up for class then you know I wasn't paying attention in class, zoom class. It was just better going to class.

Fainus: Okay, and at the time did you just have school to worry about or were you also working a job?

Ahmed: Um, I was working a job, but it was part-time, so I was more focused on school.

Fainus: Okay, and was your occupation, did you have to, did coronavirus have any kind of effect on your responsibilities with work?

Ahmed: No, no uh I used to work at Walmart, and it was still open, so it didn't affect me, uh corona didn't affect my occupation.

Fainus: Okay, uh and so if you could talk to future generations about the pandemic what would you like to say to them?

Ahmed: Well, I would tell them that education has been disrupted you know, uh how things were moved from in-class to online, how everything was just uh online. Not everybody like online classes, not everybody knows technology and um the only thing I would talk about is how some people lost their jobs you know, um a lot of people lost their jobs. It's been really difficult for me to start, now things are, I wouldn't say normal but just things are just getting back to uh how-jobs are opening back up, and so yeah.

Fainus: Great, thank you-

Ahmed: And one more thing I'd say is being separated from friends and family was one of the things to you know uh...everybody just uh...yeah so like everybody...can't hang out with friends much..it was just more of talking over the phone but...yeah being separated from friends.

Fainus: Okay, thank you.