

Oral History Questions for: Kevin Brown
Interviewer: Monique Hines

Monique: (Takes breath) My name is Monique Hines, today is March 8th, 2021. (Takes Breath)
Today we will discuss the experiences of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, I am in
San Antonio, Texas and I am interviewing (brief pause).

Kevin: Kevin (computer lagging) Brown Sr. Uuuh, I live in Schenectady, New York.

Monique: Thank you for being with me today Kevin. (Brief pause) (Takes breath)

(Background noise)

Monique: When were you born?

Kevin: (Background noise) I was born in New York City in uhh 1953, Harlem, New York.

(Brief pause)

Monique: (Takes breath) Ok wonderful. (Takes breath) What is your current occupation?

(Brief pause)

Kevin: Uhh, I am retired now but I'm a jack of all trades (Video lags) I'm a retired umm New
York state Correction Officer and Sergeant. (Brief pause) (signs heavily) I was a tv news uuh
person before that annd once I retired I went back to school and became a paralegal. At present
I'm retired.

(Brief pause)

Monique: Right (Takes breath) When and how did you first hear about the Coronavirus?

(Brief pause)

Kevin: Aaahh (signs) I heard about the Coronavirus sometime last year February (pause) uuh
2020 I was uuh (slight pause) working as a campus police for Union College annd I heard that a
lot of people had caught the virus. That's when I heard about it, probably uuh February (pause)
fifth or sixth around that time.

Monique: (Takes breath) When you first heard about it did you know exactly what it was or did
you just think it was something like the flu did you know at the time did you know exactly what
the coronavirus was?

Kevin: What then how they explained it to us is they said it was has flu like symptoms but it was
a lot more severe aaannd they said that the flu vir vaccination does nothing for it so. Being an
essential worker with uuh (slight pause) Union College uuh (slight pause) I didn't you know we
we pretty much they explained pretty much explained what it was all about and what it was so
but I Googled it uhh more once they told me about it because I don't believe too much of what

people say you know when they say believe none of what you hear and half of what you see so (laughs) I had to check it out on my own.

Monique: Great. Can you explain what your experience has been through this whole coronavirus pandemic?

Kevin: (Pause) My experience (pause) is uhh mostly what ah my friends and family has experienced. I've just lost uuh brother-in-law (sigh) to the virus he was in a nursing home and uumm (pause) some family members I mean most most of the people I've met that that that that I've lost have been recent uhh with the last three to four months. Family friends friends from childhood. I just lost uhh my goddaughters umm mother she was one year older than me. A beautiful woman and she just passed away. I I talked to her six weeks before she passed and she wasn't even sick. So umm (pause) but like I said umm it's affected me emotionally mostly because of the people that I've lost (grunting) that would still be there be here if not for the umm catching the virus. Uhh what I've been doing is I stopped working Union College uum and I've been sitting home but normally I'm not a homebody (hiccup) scuse me but I've been sitting home mostly and eating sleeping (unintelligible) and I gained like 15 (hiccup) 15 pounds or more just from sitting home eating and sleeping it got so bad that I've decided to go to do the silver sneaker or silver slipper thing at one of the places where I can start exercising again but (pause) wearing this mask all the time (pause) it's kind of hard working out to breathe you know what I'm saying it's something else but it's gotten so that now I don't even mind wearing the mask because in the winter time it keeps your face warm (laughing). So, I mean you down there in San Anto (stuttering) in in Texas it doesn't affect you the weather doesn't affect you that much but when I walk outside right now and uuh I have the mask on (pause) it keep you know it keeps your your face warm so uhh that's about it but umm I

Monique: So

Kevin: Shopping shopping (stuttering) it's affected me shopping to because everything closes early a'right so good thing I'm a senior citizen umm (pause) I can go to the stores at 6 o'clock in the morning when they allow senior citizens to going in and shop first you know alot of the stuff that you would normally want to get like sanitizer umm (sighs heavily) toilet paper and everything else I don't know what this thing with the toilet paper is but anything that you want to get senior citizens get first dibs on it so you can go uhh early in the morning between 6 or 7 and then after that ever (stuttering) it's open house for everybody else. That's about it. (computer lagging)

Monique: Great. So, I know you told me about uum your experience as far as working and umm not being able to work and shopping how has it affected you as far as being able to spend time well not being able to spend time with your family?

Kevin: (Pause) (computer lagging) Oh well, for one my daughter (laughing) who lives (laughing) in San Antonio, Texas wants to kill me because I was supposed to come down there for christmas and uhh with the traveling you have to be quarantined so uuh at the time I was working so if I would have gone down there for Christmas and what have you then (sighing) (pause) I would have to come back when I got back I have to be quarantined for 14 days and as you guys know jobs don't allow you to be away from there specially if you're an essential

personnel so (pause) uum (pause) going to funerals of people that have passed I didn't go to I only went to one funeral of my friend who passed away (pause) (umm) (sighing) (pause) because uum everything is everything is you gotta be careful all it takes is one slip up you catch it now the person like like I said my friend my God daughters mother she was a strong (stuttering) female she was a bouncer beautiful female and the last thing I expected her is for her to succumb to some kind of virus you know and it let me know that's my eye opener (spits) everybody else was older that passed away but she was 68 years old and she was a bouncer this place called Gibbys and she died and I'm sitting there going wait a minute Linda nooo and I could not believe that that strong person strong as she was that (stuttering) she succumb to that virus and that's what made me more (pause) conscious (pause) of myself you know what I'm saying. I look at what they say where always wear the mask the mask is not to keep you from catching the mask is to keep you from giving it to somebody else if you (stuttering) are asymptomatic but (pause) what keeps you from getting is the sanitizer the hand sanitizer sanitize everything you want but you know and they stress the mask whereas I'm smart enough to know that you don't just stress the mask you stress the sanitizer and (stuttering) you know if you touch something wash them hands sanitized because that's how you catch it you know so uum I don't know I done strayed off the (pause) path here, I'm rambling but umm you go on.

Monique: (Laughing) That's ok, so I know you explained to me how it affected your uum work responsibilities has it affected anything else as far as your everyday lifestyle responsibilities?

Kevin: (Pause) Oh respon yeah you know a lot of people don't realize it but you can get too much sleep (pause) I sleep so much that I'm tired when I wake up (laughing)(stuttering) I'm laughing now but it's true. Uuh right now if I were to take you to my kitchen I got two days worth of dishes in there and it's a psychological thing because (pause) uhh normally if I have to go to work or what have you I'll get up shower (unintelligible) and make sure everything was done before I left the house now that I'm not leaving the house (pause) I don't know see I got hold on let me show you (grunting) (getting up) just to you an idea in my living room hold on see if you can see this (swings camera to vacuum cleaner) right there that vacuum cleaner has been sitting in my living room for a day and a half cause I was supposed to vacuum my rug and (laugh) (pause) it's been sitting there (pause) so as far as (sighing heavily) the will and the responsibility and the (sighing heavily) what's the word I'm looking for well I'll put it this way I've been procrastinating quite a bit alright when it comes to everything as far as uum doing the dishes washing the uhh vacuuming the floor far as making up the bed because I said well why should I make it up if I'm gonna jump right back in it (laughing) you know what I'm saying? It's just (pause) it's just (sigh) just that way you know uum (pause) If I had (stuttering) if it wasn't for the pandemic I'd be outside walking I'll be going out before I left the house I would always (pause) clean up the house so umm I don't know what to tell you alright next question (chuckles).

Monique: Is there anything you would like to tell future generations about this pandemic?

Kevin: (snorts) umm (sighs heavily) check your history all right. This isn't the first pandemic this isn't the first virvir (stuttering) virus. Uhh the Coronavirus Corona (unintelligible) what is it Corona-19 there's been 18 prior to that this one has happens to be different (unintelligible) I say don't, I want to add this to to (stuttering) your your thing one of the things that got me puzzled I'm 67 (pause) have not gotten the vaccine yet (pause) I know I don't have it I've been tested

weekly for quite a while until I left the campus but I googled everything up and they talking about how it normally takes seven to ten years for them to perfect a virus (pause) or vaccine (pause) alright and one of the reasons that it takes that long is because they're testing and they want to know the long-term (pause) uhh effects and I look at the television and I see all these commercials that say uuh beware of using this drug or that drug because it may cause this this this that this that and possible death (laughing) you know what I'm saying so if you die from it uuh sue them you know it 's just you know. So, I look at it like this, they came up with this vaccine because they had to and they came up with this vaccine in 8 to 10 months (sniffs) we don't know what the long term effects are and I don't want to start growing hair on my back and fangs and (laughing) what have you but it's a necessity to take it, so I'm old enough to whereas if it's not going to affect me for twenty years but twenty years uuh I'll be 87 I'll be close to time to just go (chuckle) you know what I'm saying but hopefully not (pause) so I (slight pause) am skeptical about taking it I'm waiting six months to (stuttering) into the vaccine to see how it affects other people before (pause) umm (sigh) I get the vaccine. In any event, it's not available over here in Schenectady, New York yet. Even tho, I can go to Albany and get it I just prefer (computer lagging) to stay on my own and stay locked here in the house and keep away from people until six months (pause) and then I'll go get the vaccine. And they haven't even they (stuttering) can't even tell you whether or not you're going to have to take a vaccine or not (pause) every year. You know whether (stuttering) every year (stuttering) (unintelligible) flu virus vaccination, you know what I'm saying. This might be something you have to do every year so they don't know what it takes so what do they really know about these vaccines other than it helps you from not catching it (sniffs) so umm for the present, (pause) but what I would tell the future generation (pause) is (pause) basically that and I'll tell them to be careful who you be around. Social distancing should be something that should always be practiced cause you don't know what (pause) person next to you has and it's the same thing as being safe when you umm have friends or intimate friends you know just got to be careful who you be around and what you say and I think that social distancing is a good thing uuh maybe not the mask all the time you know uum never did I think that I'd be able to walk into a bank with a (stuttering) with a mask on and ask for money (laughing) know what I'm saying but times change. So, uhh I'm really not answering the question. I don't know what I would tell the future generation except for uhh check history. Check the past and follow your cut.

Monique: Well, I do thank you so much for taking this time to speak with me and umm (pause) again thank you uum hopefully this pandemic will be over soon and (takes breath) hopefully even by what we're giving the future generations they'll be able to learn from this and umm if it happens again with another virus or we come into another pandemic they'll be able to learn something from the past pandemics as well as this one that we had but thank you so much for taking the time out to speak with me Mr. Kevin Brown.

Kevin: (Pause) Thank you Mo (stuttering) Ms. Monique. And umm you (computer lagging)

Monique: Thank you.

Kevin: Be safe (computer lagging) Darling alright?

Monique: Alright.

Kevin: How do you hang (stuttering) how do you hang his thing up?

Monique: I'm hanging you up now.

Kevin: Oh, ok dear

Monique: Bye-Bye