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Pandemic Life Oral History Interview with Amanda Allen 03 March 2022

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Recommended Citation

Adcock, Amelia R.. "Pandemic Life Oral History Interview with Amanda Allen 03 March 2022." (2022).
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Interview with: Amanda Rose Allen

Interview by: Amelia Adcock

Transcribed by: Amelia Adcock

Albuquerque, NM

Recorded: 03 March 2022

Keywords: Pandemic, masks, work life, Air Force

Amelia: Hi, my name is Amelia Adcock and I am here today on March 03rd, 2022 with Amanda Allen here in Albuquerque. I'm gonna be asking you some questions about the pandemic and your life during the pandemic. So, number one, how old were you when it started and what did your daily life look like before the first quarantine?

Amanda: How old am I now? (laughs)

Amelia: I know, right?

Amanda: I'd say I would have been 24 when it started.

Amelia: Okay.

Amanda: I was currently in the Air Force and I was working as security forces, so like military police. With the quarantine it was less so (short pause) I was less impacted initially because we

are considered essential so I was not working from home. It was more of just staying away from people (1:00) and I had an office that I worked at and primarily I did dispatch so I kind of just stayed away from people as best as I could.

Amelia: Yeah. So, how did you (short pause) were there any specific moments where you first realized how much things were changing? Anything that sticks out to you?

Amanda: Anything that stood out (short pause) If I can remember it was very much, initially, it was kind of like oh, wow, like we've done smaller pandemics and epidemics before so I thought it was gonna be kind of similar, stay away from people, stay healthy, but as it went on it was very (short pause) it was kind of a very distinct difference of who's actually wanting to care for other people and other people that just wanted, like, oh, two weeks are up, I'm gonna continue (2:00), or I have a good enough immune system, it's fine. It was like, especially watching the news, it was kind of like very scary and in your face. It'd be like wow, this is really happening, and then it was very different going to work every day and being like "It's fine!"

Amelia: Yeah. So, initially at your job you were able to work in person?

Amanda: Yeah.

Amelia: (It) remained in person, how long did you guys wait 'til you started wearing masks? And then what was that transition like?

Amanda: I think (short pause) If I can remember

Amelia: Take your time

Amanda: I think there was a very slow transition to it. I believe it was like, hey, just everybody's going home so we're not going to be around anybody at first so it really didn't matter, and then it was like alright, well we have masks if you want to use them or something and they gave us like the neck gaiters. (3:00)

Amelia: Yeah.

Amanda: The most ineffective form of protection there is. They were like 'now you gotta wear these! It's mandatory to wear these.' And it was very, very weird because you'd get a commander coming in being like, hey you need to wear your mask, and then next thing you know your commander is walking down the hall without a mask.

Amelia: Yeah.

Amanda: It was like wait a minute, it was just like because it was like: a higher order! We must follow! But yeah, people do what people do.

Yeah. And then, I was gonna ask, we kind of already talked about your job... So how did the pandemic affect your relationships? Your friendships and things like that? Were you able to maintain your social life the way it was, did you pull back a little bit?

Amanda: So (short pause) for the most part when it hit, like, the people I was around (4:00), I had like 3 friends in the local area that I hang out with most of the time. At first, I only really hung out with one of them because we worked together so we were already around each other. The other two we kind of distanced because she was a nurse so it was very like (short pause) kind of the threat of transmitting. We still, after awhile, after the first few months, as long as we weren't symptomatic we would just come over and play games or video games were the big thing.

Amelia: Yeah. So do you feel like there's a point where things kind of went back to normal for you, do you feel like you've just found a new normal, little bit of both?

Amanda: I would say it's more of like a new normal (5:00). Unfortunately I have OCD so the whole germ stuff made it a lot harder

Amelia: Dang, yeah, I'm sure.

Amanda: Because it'd be easy to just go and do my life, the germ thing was never that big of a deal until it was like COVID, wash your hands all the time! (laughs) And I was like this isn't helping!

Amelia: Yeah, like hand sanitizer at every door.

Amelia: Yeah, so it was very hard to be like (short pause) it was kind of weird because I didn't realize it at first, and then I just recently started doing therapy and I was like, 'Oh! I wash my hands a lot.' (laughs) and I actually have this really bad, like (short pause) the COVID fear is real for me, because it's one of those things, it's like in normal, like, prior to COVID, I wasn't getting sick. Or getting sick, yes, doorknobs are gross, but people weren't getting as sick as they were (6:00). Now it's like it justifies my fear of getting sick.

Amelia: Yeah, you know and you're getting that from so many different sources, like your job.

Amanda: Yeah.

Interviewer: Dang, Dang. (Short pause) Well I think that's approaching the five minute mark. That's about there. Is there anything else that you'd like to add about your pandemic experience? Any overarching thoughts, things that stick out?

Amanda: It is really (short pause) I think the pandemic has made me realize who, like, especially, people I've been close with, who actually cares about people versus who wants to move on and get this over with because there's been some family members who are just like: It's a hoax! Even though we caught it! (laughs) But other than that, also realizing how much my cat does actually like me (both laugh) (7:00).

Amelia: Nice!

Amanda: Now that I'm having to go out all the time, she's so upset every time I have to leave (laughs). But, yeah, it's just (short pause) those are my big realizations I could say.

Amelia: Yeah, just like an overarching change in world perspective.

Amanda: In so many different ways.

Amelia: Alright, well thank you so much for talking to me!