

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Larry Johnson

Date 2022 April 28

Primary Maker Larry Johnson

Medium born digital audio file

Description (a) Interview with Larry Johnson. He was interviewed by Samariya Smith on April 28, 2022 at Semilla Cafe, 1283 Main Street, Hartford. Community History Project intern Peter Moran was present at the interview, but asked no questions. (b) Photograph of Larry Johnson taken at his interview. He was interviewed as part of the Connecticut Historical Society's Community History Project discussing his experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Larry Johnson works at Hartford Communities That Care and is also an entrepreneur. He started a new business during the pandemic making organic teas, soaps, and lotions. Larry lost a space of fear during the COVID-19 Pandemic and found a strength in himself. He describes the pandemic as confusing. He learned that he only has one life, and should be grateful for each day, and appreciate each step he takes. His advice is to go natural. He hopes that people help each other in the future. He hopes that people will channel their emotions instead of being consumed by them and remember that things will get better. He first learned of the COVID-19 virus through the news and conducted research online. He stopped consuming dairy and drank more teas to improve his stomach in accordance with his findings on the history of viruses and pandemics. He has a daughter in Atlanta, Georgia who he was unable to visit due to the lockdown. He

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recalls an initial pause in violence and crime during the lockdown and hoped that people were becoming more reflective. He believes in the importance of the political process, though he is skeptical of national politics. Separation leads to hate, and he was discouraged by the language that eventually led to the January 6, 2021 insurrection. He reluctantly voted for Joe Biden and believes that he does a better job of appointing qualified people to important work. Larry was vaccine reluctant, in part because the mRNA structure of the COVID-19 vaccine is unfamiliar based on his research. He has a strong belief in the power of a healthy diet to support the immune system. In December/January of 2020/2021 Larry and his son caught COVID-19. Lots of water and healthy food enabled a full recovery. In April/May of 2020 Larry's mental health suffered from the news of worsening pandemic and increasingly dire statistics. He worried that he might lose his job and might have to resort to selling illegal drugs on the black market. But Larry channeled that fear into his new business making and selling teas and organic skincare products. His work as a crisis responder was also still necessary, and continued throughout the pandemic, often risking exposure to perform this work. COVID-19 increased the stress of personal problems for him and others, pushing everything to the max. Larry worked with his son to help keep him productive during remote learning. He has always added additional lessons/education at home and thinks this was a crucial supplement during the pandemic. He was the last person keeping a mask on at his local gym, and only recently stopped wearing a mask there. He is concerned about the dangers of excessive masking. He states that the pandemic will end with COVID-19

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becoming a more familiar, common disease like the flu.

Dimensions Duration: 38 Minutes, 13 Seconds