

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Elle Lascola

Date 2022 July 8

Primary Maker Peter Moran

Medium born digital audio file

Description (a) Interview with Elle Lascola. Interviewed by Peter Moran on July 8, 2022 at New Haven Free Public Library, Ives Branch, 133 Elm Street, New Haven.

(b) Photograph of Elle Lascola taken at their interview. They were interviewed as part of the Connecticut Historical Society's Community History Project

discussing their experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. At the time of the interview Elle worked at a library and bookstore. Throughout the interview they shared stories about working in a supermarket during the pandemic. They also discussed taking college classes and dropping out of college. Elle talked about romantic relationships and friendships during COVID, as well as family relationships. They began transitioning during COVID and moved in with their partner and friends. Elle focused on their mental health during COVID, which included deleting social media apps and engaging less with the news. Elle's advice for people experiencing a future pandemic is to trust the authorities because they have earned their credentials. Below are supplemental notes provided by Elle Lascola after the interview was completed. 0:04:24 - I was a commuter student, living at home with my mother and her family while driving 20-30 minutes each weekday to get to Sacred Heart's main campus, where I would spend most of my time. 0:06:53 - Since March 20, 2020, federal student

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loan payments have been deferred and their interest rates have been cut to 0%.

Originally, this was to last until September 30, 2020, but the pause was

repeatedly extended over the past couple years. These relief measures are

currently set to expire at the end of this coming August. 0:17:17 - My partner Mel

and I spent the first few months of our relationship FaceTiming each other on

most nights. We also texted constantly and sent a number of pictures and voice

messages. All this (especially the video calls) helped compensate for not seeing

each other in person at first, and then later for not seeing each other more than

once every week or two, after we started dating. 0:19:01 - My mother and her

household had gone to a Halloween party that day, which is where they

contracted the virus. 0:21:50 - I think I am the only person in my entire family—at

least among my direct relatives—who hasn't contracted COVID-19 yet. 0:26:00 -

I forgot to mention: one set of information sources about COVID to which I and

Mel frequently turned were the websites of local and state governments. We

checked up the New Haven website a lot, and also the sites of Connecticut and

adjacent states, if we were crossing state lines for any reason. Last year, while

our landlord was having some work done to our apartment, we took a road trip

around the northeast, and we had to do a lot of this type of research to find out

what the guidelines were in different places that we stopped. Google had

accessible statistics on infection and death rates. We also checked Canada's

government websites, because we had a crazy, spur-of-the-moment idea to

spend a day of our journey in Montreal. Canada required a negative PCR test

result for us to cross the border, so we stopped at a Walgreens in Troy, New York,

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to get tested. Unfortunately, when we arrived at the border a few days later, our results still hadn't come in, and so we were turned away. This was common at the time: the demand for tests was outstripping the supply, and lots of people were experiencing delays in getting their results. Instead of Montreal, we circled Lake Champlain and spent the afternoon in Burlington, Vermont. 0:36:40 - This story about stopping therapy is mostly accurate, but it has a huge chunk missing. There was a far bigger reason for calling it off, which had slipped my mind during the interview. Because of COVID, we weren't able to keep having in-person appointments—instead, the clinic did what every other health provider started doing, which was offer a virtual “telehealth” option. This went big in the same way that Zoom did. While businesses and colleges were all jumping onto the Zoom bandwagon, doctors and counselors started using similar programs specifically designed for their fields. This was hugely unfortunate for me. I was living in a small house with a really poor internet connection and effectively no privacy. Conversations could be easily overheard no matter where they took place, and the people I lived with, in whom I would never confide a thing about me, were liable to barge into any room at any given time. Not to mention the raucous barks of dogs, which would sound at the sight of any squirrel, cat, or other creature who passed by the back door. On March 20, 2020, Governor Lamont signed an executive order directing all non-essential businesses to suspend in-person operations, which included my therapist's office. I declined telehealth, not having a safe space to do it. Then, in early April, I decided to give it a try, with one of my other doctors. I got in my car and drove to

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a random parking lot, intending to use my phone, hoping its battery would last.

We used an app called Doxy. It didn't work. The connection was so bad, I couldn't understand a thing they were saying. We finished our appointment over a phone call instead, which was barely workable. I tried calling my therapist one time over the phone. It was really choppy, and we each had to keep repeating things—highly unideal. After that, I decided that this wasn't going to work for me. A couple times over the next year and a half, I attempted to reinstate therapy, but even after I moved in with Mel in New Haven, I didn't have a reliable enough internet connection for telehealth to be feasible. It wasn't until the office reopened in late 2021 that I was able to restart in-person therapy. End of recording - “Transformative” —that's the best word to describe the pandemic, I believe. Picking up where the audio cuts out (for the microphone battery died): I went on to say, I hope that people have been able to use this terrible event as an opportunity to transform—themselves, their relationships, their communities. COVID revealed and exacerbated a lot of issues in our society, and while many have suffered as a result, at least now we know what the problems are. Everything's out in the open, and now we have a chance to act on this knowledge, to change old systems and habits for the better. I hope people are taking advantage of this chance to renew ourselves, to learn and grow and be better people, to achieve our goals. With so much in flux, now is the time to make real, good, lasting changes. I feel blessed by the pandemic. Through all the chaos and the shutdowns, the sickness and the quarantines and the social strife, my life turned around in the best possible

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ways. I feel like a new person, and I'm so grateful for all the good I've come

by. I'm happier and more myself than I've ever been, and I hope there are

others out there who have been similarly transformed.

Dimensions Duration: 2 Hours, 13 Minutes, 29 Seconds