

speaker1: Hey, you made it.

speaker2: I did.

speaker1: Thanks. Thanks a lot.

speaker2: Can you hear me?

speaker1: How is it going? Yap

speaker2: Good, great. So I just I, I have a separate sound studio setup so this program got a little finicky about what I'm trying to select which mic to use. Oh, but were good.

speaker1: Gotcha. Thanks a lot. So you said you do audio books, is that right? This is not part of the interview, I'm just curious

speaker2: I do, no you're good. Yeah uh, that's uh the what I do to keep afloat right now uh with everything being shut down. So yeah, record out of the house and it's um it's a living. I have a good time with it.

speaker1: Nice, nice one. Well uh, let's get into this. Thank you for considering to do it. Um,

speaker2: Absolutely.

speaker1: How would you like to be identified when I write this up?

speaker2: Uh, Lance R would be great.

speaker1: Okay and the state?

speaker2: Colorado

speaker1: Colorado and approximately, how old are you?

speaker2: Thirty two.

speaker1: Thirty two, alright. Very good, well let's get into it. So um, let's start with the early days of the pandemic. So when did you first hear about COVID?

speaker2: Uh, I first heard about COVID,

speaker1: Remember

speaker2: Pretty early, I'm I'm fairly active as far as my my, I tried to be active as far as my political and global awareness. So I heard about the original cases in Wuhan probably, November December last year.

speaker1: Gotcha. Um when did you realize it was a serious situation?

speaker2: Uh, as soon as people and like there was actual troubled uh from the World Health Organization and they started mentioning things. I, I probably started getting a fairly bad feeling about it late December early January, um specially

speaker1: Okay.

speaker2: When know things, so-some of the steps that China was publicly trying to say they were making to to slow it down.

speaker1: Fair, fair. When did you go into lockdown? Presumab -

speaker2: Um,

speaker1: Presumably?

speaker2: Uh, I went into lockdown. So I took uh, I'm I'm an actor so I do travelling jobs. Um,

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: And I took a job, uh I live in Colorado right now but I took a job next to my hometown in Utah. Um, went out there, I, the second week of March. Um and then production got shut down along with everything else that went at that point. Uh and upon returning home we went into pretty strict lockdown for about a month.

speaker1: Gotcha. So what was lockdown like for you? What was the day to day routine?

speaker2: Uh, day to day routine, fortunately enough for me uh was we had I audio book work can something that can be done. So I was still somewhat employed but I, I've got myself, my wife and my roommate who lived with us. And it was a lot of sitting around and finding things to keep your time occupied. Uh, a lot of reading, a lot of puzzles, a lot of games. And quite frankly, a lot of trying to consume news and make sure that we're keeping abreast of what's going on and figure out who's got it and who doesn't and that kind of things. So it was a, a pretty sharp turn away from what we were all use to.

speaker1: Gotcha. How many people did you interact with, do you think during that period?

speaker2: During lockdown, I we started out with just the three of us.

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: Um aside from when we are going to grocery stores or doing anything outside. I but we we made it concerted effort for us for it just to be um, specially when I returned from Utah we contacted no one but ourselves. Um after about a month um our room mate's partner I was we we figured it was okay for him to be able to come and make some interactions and since then it has been limited to a couple of friends that we tried to

do social distance things with. Uh and same thing with a couple of family members but our our radio uh contact at this point maybe twelve to fifteen people the most.

speaker1: Gotcha. And when did you first suspect that you might have become infected? What was that like?

speaker2: So the uh suspicion for me is I, when I was working in Utah um I got flu like symptoms uh but it was, it wasn't any of the significant COVID symptoms that were, that they were telling people to look out for at that time. I had, I gastro-intestinal issues and body aches. Um but no fever, no respiratory issues nothing at the respiratory tract at all. Uh and I was miserable for a couple of days, so I called up the Physician at that point um and did a a video consult and they thought well you probably just have a standard flu and put me on a Z-pack. Um and that's when I came home uh because the physician said it's probably better for you to get there, you're not working anymore and we, we trust you're safe. Um, however at the same point my Dad started getting sick he was the one I was staying with at that time. And he got cough, respiratory issues, fever um, as I got home he started on a about a hundred and one degree fever for two weeks straight. Uh and we couldn't get tested, they wouldn't test anyone of us because we do not have a known vector point. Um and as soon as he was able to track down a known vector point he went on and get tested and came out positive, and I've been in the house with him for two and a half weeks previous to him getting sick. Um so I went, it's probably true that we both started developing symptoms simultaneously, Uh, and likely he's positive and my symptoms being in the same house um means that I likely had it too.

speaker1: Got it. Um so what was his vector point? What does he figure out?

speaker2: Uh, he had three different things that pop-up, basically simultaneously. There was a, a family friend who he had a, a conversation with um, this was pre-people saying that we should be re-regimentally wearing masks in public. Um, so they had a conversation in our house um and she ended up testing positive. Um and then he had uh someone at work visiting people desks and going around and talking. Um who uh had symptoms at that time he was doing it no one knew, until he called in later and said "hey I was at work with symptoms and now I've tested positive so you should probably get looked at. Um and then there was uh someone that he had uh, there was a business he had gone to um that one of the receptionist apparently had or uh was able to say later that she had tested positive but was a asymptomatic at the time she was in the office. So all of them were, I mean he, he he can't give you a, there is no way to know specifically which one of those three -. Well technically, I guess I could have brought it from somewhere else, so there's really no way to know the vector point. We just know that we had it and uh I was I think one of the first 10 or 15 diagnosed cases in Northern Utah.

speaker1: So uh, once, once you figured that out that you got it from him, probably, did you get a test at that point? That was authorized the test?

speaker2: Um, so I, I couldn't get an authorized test because I no longer symptomatic about it. Um what I was able to do at that point was grab an antibody test um which obviously are less reliable.

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: Um but because he was donating blood to a company that was doing antibody testing to try to being able to help them in their methods, um they got me in. Uh they actually tested the whole household uh, and me and my wife included. Um and everyone in the household who have been present at that time was did test positive for antibodies but my wife tested negative so it looked like I did not bring it home with me.

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: Um, so I I have a positive antibody test and I know that not the most uh reliable or accurate source at this point but that that was what I'm going of of. So,

speaker1: Has your wife remained symptom free?

speaker2: Yap, everyone who was been here has remained symptom free since I have returned.

speaker1: Oh, that's good.

speaker2: Yeah.

speaker1: So, um you said the symptoms lasted only a couple of days for you?

speaker2: Uh the major flu symptoms did. Uh so like the aches, the pain um and all of that, I'm still having quite a few other lingering side effect. Um I've got some pretty severe fatigue issues, um I those very day by day sometimes I'll get winded walking upstairs and other days it's not an issue. Um the uh I find my heart raising and beating very hard every once in a while for no reason. Um and then the really big one is uh I have uh my sense of taste has been affected pretty dramatically. I know a lot of people have lost theirs, um mine has actually has ended being that a lot of things taste like sulfur. Um which I didn't realize until it's near uh a hot spring, and I smell that, Oh my god, everything I've tasted for the past two months is had this rotten egg flavor around it.

speaker1: (laughing)

speaker2: Um, it's not every food and it's not every time but the the easiest thing I can say is most things with a good amount of salt and savor, like an umami flavor to them, all are tinged with this pretty nasty sulfur over tone to it now.

speaker1: Interesting. Do you have any other signs or is it just the taste?

speaker2: Uh, as far as lingering things from that, no. Uh, it's really just the taste thing. Uh like I said I've got, I mean there's some. That that has tied together with some pretty severe GI tract issues because I think my body is in rebellion about me eating roast things all the time. Um,

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: So there's a lot of upset stomach and other GI things that have popped-up with it. And I don't know if those are together with the taste or because of it or anything like that.

speaker1: Did that thing going on, for what four or five months now?

speaker2: Yeah, Uh it got particularly that the the taste thing really started rustling up about a month and a half or two months afterwards. Um and has been fairly consistent for the past about two two and half months.

speaker1: Got it. So you said the initial symptoms were flu like, how would you compare it to flu if you had one in the past? Was it worse?

speaker2: I I, it was definitely worst, uh I the first night I got sick on a Monday night um and then I had the doctor call that night. Um but trying to sleep that night was potentially the worst night of sleep I have ever had. Uh I was waking up every two or three minutes just in intense discomfort and pain and aches. Um so having had the flu uh I have been able to make through the flu treating symptoms and feeling under the weather uh this was a completely different ball-parked none of the drugs or anything I was taking to help was having any effect on it at all.

speaker1: Hmm. Gotcha. So when you're asymptomatic, you were living with your Dad, did you interact with anyone else? Do you think you possibly passed it on to anyone?

speaker2: Um I, I once I stopped working. So they pulled my contract uh on Friday night um because that's that was right, I mean I was living in Salt lake City which is the was really go bare uh the Jazz player was the one who kind of spared the entire NBA shutdown which knocked all the dominoes over there. Prompted a lot of the restaurant lockdown around the nation.

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: Um I hadn't felt any issues, any symptoms up to that point, I once I stopped going into that job I stayed specifically only with my family. Um, there are, I was with my Dad my Mom and then there's I have uh three other siblings were living at the house. Um, interacted only with them for the next week and then came home and interacted only with my wife and roommate. Um and as I said my wife has tested negative for antibodies for whatever that's worth at this point. So I I there is a very real possibility that I did, um when I drove home I didn't make any stops, I didn't stop anywhere to talk to any one um I took uh I I filled up gas, isolated and away from anyone has one stop along the way but I did not stop for food or anything. Um and tried to make a concerted effort just in case I did have it to not spread it. Uh, like I said, there's a very real chance that I might have I supposed uh and but I did my utmost to try to make sure that didn't happen.

speaker1: Got it. Um so aside from your Dad has anyone else got it in your family?

speaker2: Um we yes, uh as I said everyone else is tested positive for antibodies and then two weeks ago I I have a sister and brother-in-law and they have two kids um who tested positive. Uh that I don't, obviously I don't think that can be traced back to our initial cases back in March.

speaker1: Sure.

speaker2: Um but she has a an infant and a toddler, the toddler tested positive two weeks ago and then the husband positive uh two days after that.

speaker1: Oh, wow.

speaker2: Yeah, so it's, it is we are kind of run the gun my my father is sixty, um we have examples of people catching it at thirty eight and thirty five and thirty two and twenty six and twenty four and now with uh a-at two two years old. So it hit just about everyone in some way.

speaker1: That's crazy. Um so what's life like for you now? You're gonna be in lockdown for the presumable future?

speaker2: Yeah, we are, we are doing everything we can to absolute, I mean first of all my industry is completely destroyed and shut down so there's no way for me to be able to return to work in that. Um I work live theatre most of the time, so large crowds and enclosed to our spaces is not happening. Um, so uh we have transitioned over and I'm doing a lot of the audio work and voice work from the house. We spend almost our entire lives in the

home um we do try to do some contact list uh food delivery and support local business as we can. Uh we do a once a week grocery shop, wearing masks and trying to make it as fast as we can. Um as I said we've got a couple of people who we feel comfortable who are also living in isolated lives that will do some associated activities with. But generally we're in the house uh and working and hanging out here as we can.

speaker1: Got it. Was there anyone in your life, who didn't think COVID was a big deal? Before it's coming at any point?

speaker2: (Laughing) I am I am currently arguing uh with uh I will not uh out his direct relationship to me but it is a family member,

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: in some sort uh who is touting to me that you can't know how many people have it and so the real way to calculate uh survival rate is amount of deaths by general population as opposed to amount of deaths by the amount of active and active cases.

speaker1: Hmm.

speaker2: Um and is also telling me that this is just another regular pandemic uh that we shouldn't be doing anything he uh was let go from a job recently because he refused to wear a mask. Um and is pretty conspiratorial about the fact that he claims that federal funding has been sent to States in order to be able to support it so there are fake death certificates because the more COVID deaths you have the more federal funding you get. Uh and as I continue to ply him for evidence and actual sources on any of this information he continues to not be able to provide any. So it's pretty crazy uh because these are people who know that I have contracted it and know that my family has contracted it and still want to tell us that's not a big deal.

speaker1: Hmm, that's that's challenging.

speaker2: It's very challenging.

speaker1: Um so, aside from him, in general what would you tell people who aren't taking COVID seriously?

speaker2: I mean the the big thing is it, the number one thing that I want to stress at this point at least from my experience is the fact that you cannot just show death numbers as the only a fact that this is happening. Um, to say that oh, the amount of death we have are in any way a.) acceptable or b.) aren't dangerous is one thing but to then say that death is the only consequence this disease has is insane. Um I am eating probably a third, I mean a third to half as much as I normally do uh because I literally can't keep food in me and my mouth doesn't want to eat things, um that's affected my sleep, that's affected my stress. Um I'm also notice a lot of increase amounts of um depression and anxiety symptoms that I didn't have prior um I know that the disease can affect brain chemistry in some cases, I don't know if that's the case or it's just the fact that I am so much more stressed out. Uh but my quality of life is insanely diminished. And I am on, well I can consider to be the fairly light end of symptoms. Um so it it, you have to take a large a more more holistic view of what this disease really does, it's not just about death numbers, not to say like the death numbers are horrifying as it is but it is drastically affecting people in other ways. Uh and if all it takes like if it is simply just a small layer of fabric across your mouth to alleviate that from someone or like breed someone else of the risk and like help prevent someone else from having to go through that. That seems such a small and even if you don't even believe like it seems like such a small and simple gesture to kind of demonstrate your good will toward mankind and the fact that people are resistant toward that for whatever reason really hurts and confuses me.

speaker1: Well,

speaker2: (Laughing) Yeah, I think that's the, that would be kind of my message.

speaker1: Nice. Is there anything else you'd like to tell people about your story that we haven't talked about?

speaker2: No, I think, I think that covers it. I mean it's, it's the answer the answer is it's real and it's so much more uh like there there is, there's going to be so little gained in trying to place blame on where it came from and how I got it coz I could rock my mind in trying to find out who was the one I specifically got it from but I'm not gonna be able to know. The challenge is then how do I behave to try to help other people not have to go through what I have gone through. Um and I would hope that that is a fairly universal sentiment of I want to alleviate suffering as much as I can. So I will take personal responsibility to try to make that happen.

speaker1: Got it. Well, thanks very much for your time. I appreciate it.

speaker2: Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for reaching out. Bye.

speaker1: Sure, I'm gonna get this transcribed and I'll send you a drive and then,

speaker2: Great!

speaker1: If you want to make any edit you can do that with that one.

speaker2: Great! I appreciate it. Um what is out of curiosity, what is the big term, what's the long term for this project of yours? Like what is, what are you attempting to put into it and where, where is it going to lead?

speaker1: It might be some of poke if I get enough material.

speaker2: Hmm.

speaker1: Um, I'm gonna start it as a blog and then we'll see how far I go.

speaker2: Okay.

speaker1: I've I've, your my second interview, I've got another lined up, Tuesday. Um I'm getting about, I would say one in five people I've reached out to replying to me, so, you know it's not inconceivable I could get a hundred and so interviews every six months.

speaker2: Um is reddit the best place to contact you? Coz I definitely have other people I know who I have made contact with who have had it who I'm sure would be happy to do, I mean could I just your your reddit contact info and send them there to contact you about it?

speaker1: Yeah, absolutely. I'd welcome them.

speaker2: Okay, yup. Uh let me, uh I will send a couple of messages out to see if anyone else will be interested have them reach out and contact you.

speaker1: Awesome! Thanks a lot.

speaker2: Yap.

speaker1: Have a great day.

speaker2: You too.

speaker1: And uh hope your health is good.

speaker2: Yeah, I, I hope so too, I appreciate it.