

Transcript – Lydia Curliss, Staff

Narrator: Lydia Curliss

Interviewer: Amanda Knox, Pembroke Center Assistant Archivist

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Amanda Knox: Good afternoon. My name is Amanda Knox. I am the Assistant Archivist at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University. Today is Thursday, July 16, 2020. It is two o'clock in the afternoon and I'm here with another interviewee who's interested in talking about COVID and all of the events that have happened since COVID kind of took over our lives. And I ask you to introduce yourself to our listeners now, please.

Lydia Curliss: Yeah, so my name is Lydia Curliss. I'm the Physical Sciences and Native American and Indigenous Studies Librarian at Brown. I've been in this position for about one, a little over a year. So I started in April of 2019. And I'm part of the Nipmuc Nation. So that is just kind of contextualize what I'm talking about and kind of my experiences around everything that's kind of been going on.

AK: Well, thank you so much for joining me here today. I did realize this week we kind of officially hit the, [1:00] I think it's the four month mark of working from home if you can believe it. And I, as far as I'm concerned when we left campus, it was kind of under the pretense of being away for like two weeks. And then it was under the pretense of when summer comes, this disease will go away. But here we are. So I'd like to kind of go back to the beginning. And if you can kind of think about the first time you heard about COVID-19, or Coronavirus, and what you were kind of thinking in that moment as this news was coming up.

LC: Yeah. So I think that, you know, it's one of those things were like, there's always a possibility that pandemic could happen, that an epidemic could happen, but we kind of never have experienced that on like, a wide scale, like, at least in my lifetime, which is not very long. I am, I just turned 29. So I had my first pandemic birthday, like three weeks ago.

AK: Happy birthday.

LC: Thank you. But yeah, so it just, I remember the first time it being like kind of triggering [2:00] for me. So like, just like kind of as an aside, like, I have a lot of anxiety and one of my, like, anxiety triggers is infectious diseases. So like, at the beginning, especially like, when we had no idea what was going on, it was just like, it was very traumatic. It was like a lot. And, you know, to kind of start by being like, okay, like, this is just going to be two weeks of my life and then everything will maybe be like a little bit normal, to then going to okay, like, now it's three months until everything's going to be normal, to just like, indefinite, has been really interesting because you have to learn how to pace yourself and kind of be like, okay, like, how much can I handle and like, how much do I want to think about it? But also just kind of, in general, just thinking about, like, the lasting impacts and I think that it's only been in these like, last couple months, probably like the last two months, where it's kind of like, okay, like, we're not getting this under control and like, what does that mean, going forward? So.

AK: Do you, what was the transition process like for you [3:00] going to working from home from having been, presumably in an office, but I guess maybe not.

LC: Yeah, so definitely, I think that for me, it was really difficult because I need a lot of human interaction. And like, you know, when I made the living choices I made it was because I was going to see people and interact with people and then to go from that to just like, full on Zoom meetings constantly. And I remember those first two weeks was a lot of Zoom meetings. And it was exhausting and I felt like I was getting nothing done. But it was like kind of reassuring to know that other people were struggling and to like, be able to talk to people and be like, hey, like, I just like, I mentally am not here. Like, I can't do this. And like I think just the uncertainty of everything was really overwhelming, especially in that like, that first month, just trying to like get the pacing, right, like, knowing that like I wasn't really like able to leave my house really because I think at the beginning it was a lot more like okay, like don't leave unless you really have to. So just kind of managing that and like trying to figure out how to organize [4:00] my space so that I have separate working and living space so it doesn't feel like I'm so on top of myself all the time. That was definitely a transition. And I think it's definitely gotten better over

time. But like those first couple weeks were really hard to kind of balance and to feel like I could separate myself in my space. Because really, you don't have any separation at all.

AK: Have you found ways at this point of kind of, if, you don't have to talk about this, if you're comfortable talking about it. Have you found ways of kind of managing the anxieties of the threat of this virus out there?

LC: Yeah, so for me, I think that there have been two things that have been really helpful. One is that I have an amazing therapist that I see regularly and like I cannot, like so for me personally, I think that therapy is one of those things, it's like a really good thing that works for me. And I found that that's been really reassuring, especially having that structured time that I know is there to kind of be able to just like be like, okay, like these are all the things that are going on. But then the other thing too [5:00] is like being able to, like, utilize science and knowledge. So like, I have a science background, my BA is in geology, like I'm very much about, like having facts and having information. And I think that, you know, like, I think at the beginning, it was hard because there wasn't a whole lot of things that we know. And now we know, you know, significantly more and like, there's obviously still a lot of unknowns, but being able to cling on to the things that like, we do know and like, knowing how to assess risk. So like knowing what things are, like maybe slightly more risky and like knowing like what the tradeoffs are, has been something that I think has been really, like helpful for me at least personally.

AK: Have you also, this work life balance that you mentioned, has been, at least for me, also very challenging. How have you found ways or if, have you found ways of managing that balance as well?

LC: Yeah, so I think that that, where it's taking the greatest impact, or like had the biggest impact on my life is like having these outside projects [6:00] and things that I haven't been able to like, get my head around, because like, I would normally work on them outside of work, but because I don't have that separation, it's much, much harder. So I think that that has been the one thing that I've continually struggled with. But I think that just like giving myself breaks, and just like, not being so hard on myself, so like, knowing that there are going to be days when I'm

super productive, and I get through a lot of stuff and knowing that there are days when there like, it's just not going to happen, and just like not punishing myself for it. Because I think that we're all kind of struggling to, like, be able to do that. So yes, that's been one thing. And then another is just like definitely making sure that my weekends are my weekends, so I'm not like thinking about work, checking emails, doing some of the same practices I was doing when I was like going into an office, just making sure that some of those regularities are there.

AK: I would imagine too, in your position at the library, you typically would have a lot of student, staff, and faculty interface. How has that kind of work changed for you in this working from home capacity?

LC: Yea. [7:00] So for my particular position, I do a lot of work like directly with faculty and students. So I think that at least it has slowed down significantly. Like I still hold Zoom calls to help students out or faculty out, but finding new ways to do it. So like if there are ways to like create, like tutorials, or just kind of like little information sheets, or things that are like maybe not necessarily Zooming if I don't have to has been something that I've been trying to think about, and like the ways in which we can kind of do that. But also, just like in general, like, it is very strange to only be interacting with students and faculty over Zoom, especially when we were relying so heavily on it. But like, I think in general, like, the thing that's so great is because we have so many different technology options, like it hasn't super changed a lot. But I do think that people's priorities have also shifted. So like, I definitely think in the spring like things slowed down significantly and it wasn't necessarily because we're not needed, it's just because people's priorities are shifting and like the things that were [8:00] maybe more important to the students and staff and faculty like are a little bit less important. So I'm starting to see some of the kind of meetings I had scheduled like back in March, now they're starting to pop up because people are like, starting to get into those like, okay, like this is, this is what's happening and now we have to kind of move forward. Yeah, so it's definitely been a weird and interesting time to be a librarian.

AK: That's for sure. I kind of, I got ahead of myself a little bit there with my questions. So if I could just go back to the beginning one more time. Did you start, I remember Brown's communications about the Coronavirus started coming almost daily by the end of February and

they were kind of basically warning us that we were going to end up in this moment. Did you take any precaution, or did you make any preparations going into working from home? Like did you start stocking up on things or did you have a mind towards I'm going to have to be at home for an indeterminate amount of time, I want X, Y and Z? [9:00]

LC: Yeah, so I think that it's really interesting to think about, like, what would you've done completely differently if you had felt more prepared because I think that, you know, even though we were hearing about it, like, I don't think I really started to take it seriously until that week before we ended up not having to come back, so like March 13. And March 13 was the last time I like went to a grocery store and I have not been since. But there are just like, basic things that like, I didn't even realize that I needed that I like probably should have stocked up on or like thought about getting because, you know, I think that we all like I really did at the time, I was like, okay, like, this might be two weeks, a month at the most. And then like as it kind of sort of started to progress I was like, oh no, this is going to be much longer. So like, figuring out the ways in which I could get the things I need has been really interesting because I like now mostly rely on deliveries because I don't have a car. So like, pre-COVID, like not having a car was not a hindrance to me at all. Like where I live is not a hindrance to me at all. But like not having a car now and not being that close to a grocery store, like it's been, [10:00] little things like that that you kind of take for granted that I think that had I kind of known what was coming or been more seriously prepared like I would have prepared differently I think.

AK: Could you speak a little bit more to if you were to go back and knowing what you know now, what kinds of changes would you make?

LC: I think that as risky as this sounds, I would have possibly tried to go spend this period of time with someone else. So like finding a friend or various, other person, maybe a family member or something that we could have like hunkered down together. Like I think that that would have been probably my number one just because I think it was like kind of a horrible shock for me. None of my friends were surprised, but to realize I was way more extroverted than I realized, like because I kind of had always felt inverted but like, on the extrovert side, but to kind of fully like be alone for that first like month or so was, was really tough. And I think that

like, [11:00] to go from having so much social interaction to absolutely none at all was extraordinarily difficult for me. So I think that that would be my number one and then probably stocking up on like, like supplies like toilet paper because there was a, there was a point where I was like, oh no, like, please somebody have toilet paper. But it ended up working out and one of my friends ended up dropping some off and it was okay. But yeah, I think it's just the mentality around other people and the way that they were kind of dealing with it and processing it and how it affected everyone else just like so intensely. I think that those kinds of things. And I think that I would have worked a little bit harder to manage my own expectations about like, what am I like able to do like, what am I comfortable doing? So that like, I wasn't getting so stressed out by all the incoming news constantly and like, figuring out ways to like not overwhelm myself as much at beginning, I think is another thing I would have worked harder at, had I known what I know now.

AK: [12:00] Oh, I just totally blanked on my next question. I was, I was just so fascinated. I was like, tell me more! Your grocery, grocery delivery. I was trying to do that in the beginning and it was so extraordinarily hard because everybody wanted grocery delivery. Would you mind talking about some of the services you've been using and, and how that's gone and whether you've noticed the change from grocery delivery in March to like grocery delivery in July?

LC: Yeah, so unfortunately, I have to use, I use Whole Foods delivery which is run by Amazon which I have a lot of mixed feelings about. But, however, it's like what's convenient for me. I remember the beginning it was kind of hard to get a slot there were like very few slots, and it was very competitive. But I kind of figured out the system I guess. I cracked it which is basically to say that like you, I figured out when they put up the new ones so that I could like kind of click and refresh. And I don't think I've ever been that competitive about something since like buying [13:00] concert tickets like so that was kind of like fun. But yeah, I definitely think that now it's a lot less stressful because people are going out more which again, I also have mixed feelings about but it has made it more easily available to a wider group of people. And I think the thing that is nice about some of these, like services and delivery services is that is a way to be able to get things. Like at some point, I had to get medication from my doctor, and I could get it delivered. So like, again, like I think that there's always a tradeoff to, right, like so I was being, I

had been super cautious because for the first couple months, my little sister was staying with me and she's an essential worker, she works on a farm she like is already like a little bit higher risk because she has asthma. And it was like I didn't want to put her at any unnecessary risk. But I understand that like putting service workers and things at risk is also like a consideration and, and so like thinking about kind of like what, what the tradeoffs were. So that's like something that I've like definitely been thinking about. But for me like that's what made sense [14:00] just because of my circumstances.

AK: What kinds of changes have you noticed in your community, either like the community that's literally around you, or in your own friend groups, any kind of people who, or groups you would normally interact with? Have you noticed any changes?

LC: Yeah, so it's really interesting. So I have a lot of friends from grad school and a lot of, a lot of my best friends and closest friends actually live elsewhere, just because of the nature of me moving around kind of a lot in my 20s. And one of the things that's been really nice is I feel like because we're kind of all forced to slow down, I've been talking to them a lot more. So like, I feel like we have more group chats and like, I have a group of friends and we Zoom, well, we try to Zoom every week, but sometimes it's not. But you know, like, I think that there is more regularity in some of the conversations and communications I have with my friends which has been really nice, especially because a lot of them are grad students and I know that this is like also a very stressful time for them. So that's [15:00] been really nice.

And I think that another really interesting thing is I never really explored my neighborhood like, it's just not something that I ever had done. But now that like, I walk around and like need to get out of my house, I feel like I've discovered like these like little hidden pockets of like nature and things that I super love, which I never would have discovered had like the pandemic not happened, I feel like. So I am thankful for kind of like those things. And just like, in general, I think it's weird because I am not, I'm not really friends with any of my neighbors or anything like that. But it's like interesting to see how like my neighbors interact with each other, for sure. And just kind of watching that happen from like, inside my home.

AK: So we've also recently just gotten the word from President Cristina Paxson that Brown will be opening up in some form in the fall on this kind of three semester system. How do you foresee that impacting the work that you do as a librarian going [16:00] forward?

LC: Yeah. So I think that there's kind of a misconception that it slows down for us in the summer. And it really, I mean, in my one year that I've been here, like the summer has not been slow just because we do do some summer instruction and we work with summer programs and stuff. So I think it will just be a more consistent like kind of workflow throughout the whole year in terms of helping students and faculty, which on the one hand is good, but on the other hand, means there's less time for like personal projects or other things that we might want to take on. So figuring out ways to kind of carve out that time for ourselves. And like, for me, especially is something that I like want to be able to do. So just figuring out ways to balance that so that I can like still work on the things that I'm passionate about and I want to be working on while still like doing all the day to day tasks.

AK: So I'm kind of losing the specifics of the, our general life timeline here, but at some point along the way, not that long ago, it became [17:00] national and kind of essentially global news about the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minnesota police officers that was a moment that spurred these amazing movements across the country and across the world. You can speak to this as much or as little as you'd like, but do you remember kind of first hearing about that news? And have you participated in any of the movements or, or anything going since then?

LC: Yeah, so, for me, like, I'm on social media, probably too much and I remember when, like, the video was circulating and all that stuff. And I watched that video, like, more times than I wanted to, which is really that I never wanted to watch it. And so like, it made me like, reconsider, like, okay, like, maybe I need to set my Twitter so that videos don't automatically play and like, I remember that was like, one of the first things I did. But I think that it's not, the thing is it's not new. Like what's happening is not new. [18:00] I just think that the pandemic because it's so extreme has kind of emphasized like, these are real things that are really happening and have been happening for so long. And like it kind of reached its boiling point where like, literally people were feeling so helpless that there was like literally nothing else they



could do. So like, I think that like, honestly, like that is one positive in a way about the pandemic is it's forcing people to actually like, think about it and do this work. Yeah, no, it was, it's been really like emotionally taxing and like to kind of reconsider and rethink and re-, and challenge everything that you believe and you think. And like, I know that like speaking from like the Indigenous community side, like there's a huge problem with race and like Black natives and kind of making sure that their voices are elevated and heard. And that is a huge thing I think across a lot of different communities, like the Latinx community, they're coming to terms with that. And so I don't think any of us are like immune to like having to deal with this like, right like, we all have to deal with it [19:00] in our own context.

In terms of like, protesting and things I have not participated in those. And that, again was a choice, like a safety choice. Like I just didn't feel comfortable, just given the pandemic. But I have been donating money and making myself aware, reading, learning, promoting other content and users, and doing those kinds of things. But it never feels like I'm doing enough. And like, it's so hard because I feel like there's so much more to do and that there are more things that I can personally be doing and to feel like it's never enough I think it's just, you know, a struggle that I have as an Indigenous person, like in the academy, like, you kind of just like you want to be constantly doing, doing, doing and like, you're kind of pressured to keep doing all these things. So like, thinking about the ways in which we take time for ourselves and rest because the anger and the like, the upset and all that will just like eat you up inside if you don't step away from it sometimes and I'm like I'm seeing that with some of my friends who've become very passionate [20:00] about this, and they're burning out because they don't know how to have that stamina. And like, I think that the other thing that like has become abundantly clear is that all of these movements can't exist without all the other movements. And I think that that was especially brought to light during June, especially because it was Pride Month. And I think it really forced people to be like, okay, like, pride would not exist without Black trans people and that's just the nature of what it is. And I think that, you know, we kind of whitewash things and we have these different conceptions and beliefs, but I don't think without what was happening with the Black Lives Matter movement, and with everything going on with all that protesting a lot of the other things that have happened since would be happening. Now, obviously, to like, it kind of feels like for every, you know, like one or two steps, we move forward, like we also move five or six steps back and that's exhausting. So just kind of trying to

manage that and like understanding that this is a much longer term thing, I think is something that a lot of people are finally coming to terms with. [21:00] Like, this is not going to just like go away or be fixed overnight. Like this is something that we actually like, have to think about how do we change as a society and like, are the current structures that are in place useful or serving us? And I think that they do serve white supremacy and capitalism and that's not necessarily like how I think people want to move forward because it's disenfranchising a lot of people. So I think in general, too, like when people say that they want to go back to normal, that's like really hard for me. And it's like, hard for me to conceptualize because normal was not good. And it was not good for a lot of people. So thinking about, you know, how do we continue to move forward and persevere when like, everything just seems really hard all the time?

AK: This is kind of a weird and personal question that again, you don't have to answer, but like if we could wave a magic wand and make a new normal, what, what do you imagine for a better new [22:00] normal?

LC: Yeah, so I guess like so this is something I thought about a lot, right? And I think for me, like, you know, I, I consider myself anti-capitalist but like, you know, we all are in this capitalistic society and we have, like, we're kind of forced to participate regardless of whether we want to or not. But one of the things that I kind of, like think about a lot is, you know, like, in traditionally in Indigenous communities and other communities like, right, it's community focus, it's community centered, like you're not just thinking about your own individualistic needs, which I think capitalism does a really good job of, like pitting us against each other, and like, you know, like, oh, like, and I think that that's a huge, like, contention between Black Lives Matter and All Lives Matter because I think that people, just the way that they're trained to think like if one person has rights, it takes away rights from someone else and there's literally, there's so much, there's so many rights for all the people like taking, like elevating and making sure that we all have the same. [23:00] Like, yes, there's going to be an unevenness at the beginning, but it's to get us to the same point. So I think that just, you know, more community focused and more like, invested in each other. Like, I think that that's really for me where it starts and like what I would want to see for the future and like, really thinking about the ways in which we can help lift each other without it feeling like if I lift you up, then I'm like lowering myself. And

more understanding is if I lift you up, then I'm also lifting myself up. So just I think that that's like kind of really abstract and like, not really like concrete in terms of like how I imagine this future, but I think that that is a good foundational way to think about how I'd want to see a different future.

AK: We've also, in addition to all of these movements, we've also been seeing a lot of [24:00] kind of movement from the Supreme Court at this point with a lot of really interesting, and in most cases, good decisions coming down. And I'd like to ask you specifically, kind of a weird question. I know, it just came out that a huge swath of Native American land in Oklahoma was just basically granted back to where it should be. And you're probably not Zooming in from Oklahoma, but does that kind of decision have a wider impact on the Indigenous community as a whole?

LC: Yes. Well, so yeah, so right. So it's obviously like this complicated thing, right? Where like, we, like native, this tribe, like the tribe had to literally go to the Supreme Court to be like, please respect the laws and treaties that you literally legally are obligated to uphold. So like, that's like an interesting thing and like while on the one [25:00] hand it's a really good thing and like I'm not from those tribes, so I can't really speak to it a lot. What I will say is that it is, it's hard to like watch something like that happen and then on the down low, like, we hear that the Wampanoag land is being taken out of trust, which means that their land claims are no longer valid which, or just like as a very, very brief overview of how kind of federal recognition and some of these other things work is that one of the parameters for which you can get federal recognition is that you have to be able to tie yourself to land in the same place over a certain amount of time. So a lot of tribes have had trouble because they cannot tie themselves to land because they were removed from the land or the land was taken from them. So obviously, it all complicates things and like, on the one hand, it's, it's good and like, you know, everything going on with the Redskins, which I really hate saying, them changing their name, [26:00] that's also good. But it just it feels like even though these things are really good, on the other hand, like, you know, Navajo nation has the highest rate of COVID in the country, right? So like, there's still there's these great discrepancies and like so sometimes even when these really positive and good things happen, like and you see that there are all these other things that are problems and

negative things that are happening, like, it's hard to feel overall positive or that like any real change is happening, because you still have all these other things that people are just kind of ignoring. Which I think is true, I think with what's going on with Black Lives Matter as well. Like where people are like, okay, like, can we like, can cops be funded so we can stop like, because they don't need to have weapons and all these other things. And then, like, people are like, oh, like now we have a Black bachelor, which isn't really solving the problem and it's like, it's almost tone deaf. It's like, we don't really understand where you're coming from, but like, here's like a consolation prize. [27:00] So I think that obviously it is super complex, but hopefully it sets a precedent to be able to move forward with some other things and to be able to, you know, continue to get land back and to continue to kind of do these things and make that forward momentum and movement. And obviously, like, we'll see what happens, but that's definitely like how I feel about it.

AK: I was watching the Trevor, Trevor Noah on the, the Daily Social Distancing Show, and he was like, society doesn't actually want to do the work of making a better society so we just changed the name of a football team and pat ourselves on the back.

LC: Exactly, exactly. And right and then there's like a whole bunch of other teams that like, nobody calls out, but like are also extraordinarily problem, like problematic and like, there is a lot of there are articles and there have been I think there are documentaries and other things about like mascots, right? And like we're still like, fighting for like high schools to change their mascots or other universities to change their [28:00] mascots, etc. And I mean, like there are, there are some differences like so for example, in Florida like the Seminoles is their team mascot, but they have an understanding with the tribe like so it was very much a decision that came from like the university talking to the tribe. So like, on the one hand, like, is that positive? Like, yes, because they are interacting, but on the other hand, like, Native people are not mascots, which, like is the truth. And that's, that's it about that. But yeah, right. So like, every issue is like a complex issue. And I think this is just like a time when, you know, like, we're really having to like, really tear apart and like reconsider and rebuild, like everything that we're thinking about and like understanding that everything that we do, and everything that we say is connected to everything else for sure.

AK: So I, I promised you a certain time limit here. So I just have a couple of more questions for you. If somebody were to listen to [29:00] this interview tomorrow, what is one thing you would want that person to know? And if somebody's listening to this interview 50 years from now, what is one thing you want that person to know?

LC: I think, so someone listens to this tomorrow, the next day, next week, I think the most important thing is just to like, to just make sure that they're taking time to really like, process what's going on, and like, understanding that we're all kind of going through this and we're all you know, we're all going to make mistakes, but we all need to be like really open to like thinking about the ways in which we change our opinions and our minds when new information is presented to us. Because I think that it's become abundantly clear that people are not super open to changing their opinions, or they're like, oh, that's fake. And I think like with the rise of fake news and all these other things, like that's especially become prevalent. But just being open to being told that you are wrong and like understanding that it's not necessarily someone being like, "You're a terrible person," [30:00] but being able to be like, okay, I was wrong and now I have done these things to like, kind of educate myself and understand the situation because I think that we're all like, no matter who you are, we're all doing it. And so just to be kind, I think, because I think we all just need to be much kinder to each other, and kind of moving forward, especially when we don't know what's going to happen.

And then I guess, like, 50 years from now, like, I hope that we have a society by then. And I hope that somebody can listen to this fifty years down the line, but just understanding that this is, while this time is really hard, and like while we're all really struggling, and I mean, it is bleak. It is so bleak, and it's so hard to like want to, you know, wake up some days and just like interact and kind of do these things that like a lot of really important things are also happening right now that are potentially going to impact like where we are in 50 years. Whether that is good or bad. [31:00] And that, you know, we, that there are people that are trying and there are people that are working towards, you know, making things better and like working towards equity – that was the word, because I get equity and equality confused and I like equity better because I think that it is more encompassing and more kind of meets people where they're at. But just that there are people that do care and are concerned and you know, like are taking the pandemic seriously and are taking the Black Lives Matter movement seriously and are taking Indigenous rights

seriously. Because I think that it can be kind of overwhelming, especially when the loudest people are not. So yeah.

AK: So finally, I like to leave some open time at the end of my interviews to give you a chance to share anything that you would like to get in the historical record that maybe you were hoping I would ask you about and I didn't.

LC: Okay, so yeah, so I think that just in general, [32:00] this has been just like a really interesting time to kind of reflect on like, where we will be in the future. Because I think that, you know, at any moment in history, like people are like, this is the worst it's ever been. These things are terrible and like not to say that my experience, like, discredits anybody who like was previous to me, but I think that one of the things that I've been spending a lot of time thinking about is like, how is this going to get written about, like, how can we impact the way this gets written about? Like, how are, how are the ways that we construct narratives changing? Especially because too, I think that we're finally realizing that like, you know, like, a lot of history gets erased, and a lot of things get erased. So thinking about the ways in which we can make sure that like, all these voices are still going to be heard. Just moving forward into the future and thinking about the ways in which we can actually maybe hopefully learn from some of these because I think that there's a lot of really important work that's going on right now. And I think that this has also just been, [33:00] for me personally, like a time where I've really spent time thinking about how I want to change and grow as a person. And like, that is also exhausting and overwhelming. And just knowing that there are other people that are also, you know, exhausted, but just still doing the work and still, you know, everyday waking up and being like, okay, like, we can keep moving forward. I think that gives me a lot of hope, even though things feel extraordinarily, extraordinarily bleak. And I think that for me personally, like even, even if things change dramatically, which they may or they may not, knowing that like we can think about new ways of existing and being, and that also gives me kind of relief, to think that like, this doesn't necessarily have to be the way it is and that we finally have this opportunity where we can start to think about like, okay, like in our like dream society in our dream world, like, what would that look like? What does a better society kind of look like and function? So yeah, so those are kind of [34:00] the things that I've been spending a lot of time thinking about.

And just like on the flip side of that, too, like, I think that this has been a really stressful time for me as well, just like in terms of like, our, like Indigenous communities, especially in the U.S. because you know, COVID is hitting disproportionately elderly folk, and a lot of our knowledge bearers and language keepers and ceremony holders are older. And I think that, like there is a certain urgency that I've definitely been thinking about, and like some of the things that I, you know, have, we put aside and put aside like, we can't, we can no longer put aside like, I think that that is kind of terrifying to me, because on the one hand, we have to weigh like, is it worth it to get those stories and get that knowledge? Like, how can we do it in a way that's safe for them, but also making sure that we have that for the future? So thinking about like, all of these things and how they interplay has been really, it's been a lot. It's been a lot to think about, but I think it's important. [35:00] And I think it's important to know that the work is getting done, whether slowly or not. And just that, you know, we can exist outside of all of this and that we can keep pushing through. But it is going to take all of us actually taking it seriously, I think.

AK: Absolutely. Well, thank you so much for taking time to share your story with me today. I can't wait to make it available as part of the over nearly 40 interviews that we've collected specifically about COVID and almost 300 interviews about women, trans, and non-binary people at Brown. So thank you so much for your time today.

LC: Thank you.

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