

## Covid-19 Interview Avery Wallace

**Interviewer:** Cullin Peterson

**Interviewee:** Avery Judnic

**Date of Interview:** 9/18/2020

**Location of Interview:** The interviewees dorm on University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's campus.

**Format:** Video Recording, Zoom

**Transcriber:** Cullin Peterson

**Additional Transcriber Equipment used:** Otter.ai

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### **Abstract:**

In this interview with Avery Judnic, a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, she will be touching on a variety of topics ranging from her experiences as a high schooler to her college experience. Being a freshman in college, in 2020, means that Avery's spring of 2020 was spent in high school during the COVID pandemic and her fall semester is being experienced now as a freshman in college. Her class has experience from both high school and college during the pandemic. As she discusses her concerns of the pandemic pre-college and during college, varying trends and ideals are displayed in her experiences. Understanding the life of the class that has been thrown into the thickest of it all will reveal some of the most impactful effects of the pandemic. Avery focuses on her experience in her hometown compared to the college life, as well as the concerns of her and her fellow classmates. "It's not about business, it's about teaching, and inspiring young people to do other things in their lives."

**CP:** Hello, I'm Cullin Peterson. The date is November 18, 2020. The time is 6:25pm. Um, could we start with you giving us your name, and some demographic information such as your age, race or gender?

**AJ:** My name is Avery Judnic. I'm 18 years old. I am white and female.

**CP:** All right, uh, where do you currently live, and what is it like living there right now?

**AJ:** I'm living in the dorms at my university, Eau Claire, and Wisconsin.

**CP:** So, what primary activities take up your day, such as a job or schooling, or any other extracurricular activities?

**AJ:** I am pretty much doing school most of the time or just hanging out in my room or with my friends? I'm not working right now.

**CP:** Have you worked in the past, before, during COVID-19?

**AJ:** Yes, I worked at a little restaurant in my old town.

**CP:** How was that working there, how was... how did COVID-19 affect your, um, your work schedule? Or any time that you had there, how did it affect it?

**AJ:** Um, it kind of didn't, just because, in my town, it's really, they didn't believe that COVID like existed, so it wasn't required to like wear masks in the restaurant or anything like that. So, and everyone still came in. We didn't lose any business or anything like that. So, I guess I worked more because I didn't have school.

**CP:** So, it did affect your education? And at the time you were in high school? Correct?

**AJ:** Yeah.

**CP:** So how did that affect your education in high school, as a senior?

**AJ:** Um, I pretty much lost, like three months of learning, because it's not easy learning online. with teachers who don't know how to teach online. So, yeah.

**CP:** Did you find your experiences as a senior in high school similar to, um, your experiences at UW Eau Claire, with your professors?

**AJ:** Um, no, cuz I think they know how to teach better than high school teachers. And they're just they're probably more tech savvy anyways. I don't know, yeah, I think it's better.

**CP:** So, I want to know what your initial thoughts were before COVID hit the United States? What were your initial thoughts then, and how have they changed since the last six months have continued on?

**AJ:** Like right at the beginning of COVID?

**CP:** Yep. So, when it was first, you heard about it overseas? What were your initial thoughts, and then how have you thought about COVID-19 change since then?

**AJ:** Well, I definitely don't think it come to the United States. And I don't think it really affect us. Because it because I'm in a small town, and normally global things, or even like things that happen in America, they don't normally affect my town. So, it was really kind of crazy when like, school was first canceled. Um, I definitely, I worried about it more in the beginning. And I probably should still worry about it now. But it's just like something that I feel like we have to live with now. And it won't be gone for a long time. Like in the beginning. We thought like two weeks of no school would just like fix everything. And that's obviously not the case. So yeah.

**CP:** So, at the time, what was your biggest concerns regarding COVID-19? Or, what was your family members and friends biggest concerns for COVID-19?

**AJ:** Um, well, I live with my grandparents. So obviously, if I would get it and give it to them, they're more likely of dying than if I would of lived with like normal age parents. So, I was really worried about just like, honestly, everything.

**CP:** Could you provide examples of how that affected your day to day activities, or how that, uh, affected your decision making?

**AJ:** Well, I didn't hang out with anyone for like three months. I think I hung out with one person outside of my family that like regularly came to our house. Me and my grandma got really close and fought a lot, a lot more. But kind of just stayed at home all the time other than other than work, and I was nervous about going to work too.

**CP:** Did you see any friends or acquaintances, uh, changing their daily lives as you did? Or do you think you took a more serious approach as they did or less of approach?

**AJ:** I think some of them took a little bit like of it seriously, but none of them have like older family members that they're with all the time. So, I, sometimes I actually felt like stupid for like not hanging out with people, but like, I'm not gonna, like kill my grandparents just hang out with you. So, I thought it was more careful than all my friends.

**CP:** Uh, what do you what do you think is your biggest challenges are the biggest, biggest challenges that you and your family have faced during the covid 19 pandemic?

**AJ:** Probably like being not okay with having your kind of like distant family come over? Like, because we're not having Thanksgiving this year with everyone that we usually do. And I know that was really hard for my grandma... to like, just say you can't come? Because we're very open to each other, I guess. So just like, within the family telling, like you can't come because it's dangerous.

**CP:** Have all your family members shared the same, uh, grievances, or have they all kind of have been on different pages with that? And how has that affected the family dynamic?

**AJ:** I think most of us have, I think one little section of our family like, doesn't necessarily believe that it's as dangerous as others. And that has to do with other things. But I think most of us like agree with each other. So yeah.

**CP:** So, um, does that cause any tension in, in your family? Or is it just been kind of a "don't talk, don't speak about it at all," topic?

**AJ:** Well, I think we're pretty, like open with each other. And we're understanding of each other and like this respect each other's like, thoughts and what we want. So yeah, it's not really done anything. That way.

**CP:** Do you think that people around you have been practicing, uh, safety guidelines and protocols? Um, and to what extent have they been doing that?

**AJ:** Well, I think that people like a college that I'm surrounded by have taken more precaution than others. Like, um, my friends don't really party or anything like that, and but they're not overly like cautious about it either. Like they still live their lives. So, it's okay.

**CP:** What would you say would be the greatest effect, that effects that COVID-19 have had on your college experience so far?

**AJ:** Obviously, online classes, not being able to, like, be in person for most of them. Um, and probably like, because we missed out on a lot of them meeting things in the beginning of the year, that would probably, like make friends easier that way. Like, it's probably harder to make friends. But I wouldn't know because this is my first year. And I'm bad at making friends anyways.

**CP:** So, do you associate a lot of the challenges of a freshman being a freshman on campus? With COVID-19? Or do you see that a lot of the challenges is separate? And maybe see, COVID as not as effective as it is, or it possibly is?

**AJ:** Well, I think for school, it's definitely about COVID. But, like, the social aspect of it, I think not many kids are like, very concerned, when they meet someone new, that they should be cautious about it. I guess.

**CP:** How do you think people who take COVID-19 seriously should react to, um, the individuals who take it less Seriously? Do you think they should enforce it a little more, or, speak their opinion a bit more? Or do you think it's more of their choice?

**AJ:** I think it's kind of like a choice. Because like, it's basically surrounded by opinions. Like, we don't know, COVID-19 that much to base it off, a lot of facts. So, um, I mean, if you say something, you should just be respectful about it. But if you're, if you see someone like obviously, they have COVID, and they're hanging out with a bunch of people, you should maybe say something to them, or kind of just mind your business otherwise.

**CP:** Had there been times that you've felt uncomfortable sharing your concerns about COVID-19 with others, or have you been pretty open with it?

**AJ:** Well, in my hometown, I definitely felt more uncomfortable sharing it with, like my employees. Like every time I wear a mask at work, I'd feel dumb. But they should be feeling dumb. Um, other than that, not really. I'm kind of open about my opinions about that stuff.

**CP:** So, you said you felt dumb at work sometimes? Did you feel attacked in a sense? Or did you feel that they thought differently of you because you practice social distancing and safety protocols?

**AJ:** I think I maybe felt like they thought I was a little like over the top with it, because they made jokes about it sometimes. And they would like make jokes about COVID. But not attacked, because I didn't take off the mask. I didn't feel offended or anything like that.

**CP:** Do you think students on campus kind of had the same experience as you in their own hometowns?

**AJ:** Um, I think it depends on where you're from. Because with like smaller towns, I think they're more opinionated. And you, like you, hear everything everyone talks about. But with larger cities and all that stuff, you're basically just in your own little neighborhood. And you don't know what other people are talking about, or what they feel like. And I just, and not everyone lives with their grandparents either. So I, I was probably a little bit more scared than other kids about it. So yeah.

**CP:** Uh, I have a question about the administration on UW Eau Claire's campus, how do you think they have um, how do you think, how effectively have they dealt with COVID-19 on campus? And if there's any ways they could improve? Or if they're doing a good job? Could you provide examples of what those would be?

**AJ:** I think they're doing a decent job with kind of keeping it under control, but not like, making it seem really. What's the word? Like, like a boot camp or something like that, like, where you have to follow strict rules all the time, and I think we still have a lot of our freedoms that we would have, otherwise, um, but like, at the beginning, a lot of the students were out, playing volleyball on the volleyball courts, and they were not socially distance or anything like that. And they, they handled it decently. Because then they required masks on the field and all that stuff. So, I think they did it, okay. And like, now they're making you, um, register, your visitors and all that stuff. They didn't do that in the beginning, which I was confused about. They, like just started doing that. So, it's kind of like, kind of like spontaneous parts, that they just all of a sudden, they're enforcing this now. So, some of it doesn't make sense. Like it all should have just happened in the beginning. But I think they're doing okay.

**CP:** So, would you say that the campus has evolved their policies as COVID-19, um, continues over the course of the semester? And in what ways could you provide examples of how they've changed their, their policy?

**AJ:** Um, I think they have like evolved over the few months. Because with, we have antigen testing that's required weekly for on campus students, and like, over the past few weeks, they've like actually organized it. It's like, not a mess anymore. At the beginning, they didn't like know how they were going to handle it. It seemed like because it's very disorganized, and it just didn't make sense. And with like, the rules and all this stuff, I think I think there's still enforcing them, well, I guess. They haven't, like added too many things. So, yeah.

**CP:** Do you or other students feel that the campus is infringing on your rights somehow or both forcing you to do things in some sense? Or do you think it's all justified in a sense?

**AJ:** Um, I think it's all pretty justified we're not like our rights aren't being taken away because we have to wear a mask indoors. That's not like a that's not a right. That's like saying putting on your seatbelt is taking away your right. It keeps you safe, I guess. So, I don't think they're taking anything from us.

**CP:** Alright, um, do you think that your second semester will change? Um, do you think there'll be a drastic change from second semester the first semester?

**AJ:** I think we might go online. I think that'd be the most drastic change. Or it'll kind of stay that similar. I can't see us going all back in person. But I can see us going online.

**CP:** How do you think students have generally felt about online classes... at UW Eau Claire?

**AJ:** Well, I think it sucks it, um, you definitely don't learn as much as you would in person, because like, with my, with my in person classes, they're even like, the hours are cut in half. So, you're obviously not getting as much information as you would. And I just think that it's relying heavily on the students with their own personal motivation. And I don't know if a lot of students have that.

**CP:** So, do you think that you're being cheated in some sense of your education? And do you feel unprepared for your future, with the cutback of classes with going online?

**AJ:** I think we're getting like maybe cheated out of a little bit of money just because we're not paying for online classes we're paying for in person experience at a college. So, I don't like, I don't think that would cost as much as being in person. And with, um, Thanksgiving break going, right, online afterwards, they're giving us the option to stay on campus or not, just so they don't have to refund us on our housing, which is a good business move, I guess. But if we I think if we choose to stay home, we should be refunded. Because, I don't like that.

**CP:** So, do you think that campuses should run based off making money as a as almost a business? Or do you think they should be caring for the students and, uh, providing those refunds for the time they're missing?

**AJ:** I think that they should be caring more for students. Because, in a learning environment. It's not about business, it's about teaching, and inspiring young people to do other things in their lives.

**CP:** So, if second semester goes all online, do you think that there will be a refund for, uh, the academics or the, for your education?

**AJ:** Um, I think they're gonna give us the option to go home so that they don't have to give us a refund. Because it's when you get the option, you have the choice or not to, to use your housing. And if you don't choose to, that's not their fault.

**CP:** Do you feel that other students share many of the same concerns as you? And have you heard any opinions that have varied from yours, or that are different than yours? And if so, what?

**AJ:** Um, I think that probably most students would feel that way about refunding for spring semester. And I've talked with my friends about it, and they agree with me on that.

**CP:** So, with cases increasing in Wisconsin, do you think that this is the right move to going online to prevent an increase in cases? Or do you think that staying or in person classes won't affect the increase, in COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin as much as, as the campus may say,

**AJ:** I think going online for the time being would probably be good, just because with break, everyone goes home, they go to their hometown, and they meet a bunch of new people that they haven't seen in a while and then they come back and then bring whatever they brought back. So I think that staying home for a few like, because since our break is so long, it'd be like two months that we'd be home. I think that'd be safer. Then coming back, after a week.

**CP:** All right. I'd like to shift this more to have you had COVID-19 or has anyone known had COVID, COVID-19, and um, what was your experience, what was your experience with that?

**AJ:** I haven't had COVID, but my cousin and my family members, and one of my friends did and they, they're all younger. So, they didn't really... they didn't have to go to hospital or anything like that. But they did lose like their taste and smell. And it wasn't good, it wasn't fun for them. But I don't think, I don't think it really changed their opinions very much on COVID. Like, they're not very afraid of it. And I don't think that they are afterwards, either, because some of them have said like, Oh, it's just a pretty bad cold. And all that stuff, which we don't know what it is. Yeah. So

**CP:** Understanding that COVID-19 can have a significant effect on someone's mental health, do you think that it has affected your mind in any sense, or your friends minds in any sense, even if they had not had COVID-19? before? What effects Do you think that are playing.

**AJ:** My cousin, my cousin says that you get like, a COVID brain where you can't do schoolwork, to get out of doing her schoolwork. Um, and she says that it's like, it's weird, being stuck in your house for two weeks, and that it's not, like mentally fun. I guess, I couldn't imagine, like, being stuck in your room for two weeks long. Like, that just seems like a lot of time. And it would take a toll on you mentally, because I know that if I don't like get out and do something, my, my brain doesn't like function the way it normally does.

**CP:** Do you feel that, um, people outside of having COVID-19, so they haven't had COVID-19, do you still think that, that or the pandemic is affecting people's minds? Um, I understand that even you even though you may not be quarantining, these effects could still play a role. Do you think, or do you have any examples of how that could affect somebody or has affected you?

**AJ:** Um, I think that it has affected everyone a lot. Because I think there's just more paranoia, and more awareness about going outside and like actually thinking about all the germs that spread so easily. Like, I know, when I touch something on a building, I'm like, I should probably not do that. And I've never thought that way before. So yeah.

**CP:** So, where do you find most of your information about COVID-19? Is it from friends, news articles, social media? Uh, what's your go to source to finding out about the news updates of COVID-19?

**AJ:** Mostly the news and social media and school? They update us, a lot.

**CP:** Do you think they update you on everything? Or do you think they're missing out on things? Are there things that you're concerned about that they haven't mentioned? Or have they covered, done a good job covering, COVID-19?

**AJ:** I think they've done a good job like covering the majority of what we need to know as students. Um, but they don't really, they don't present because like what the news, they don't present the good things to make sure people that are like, they don't want everyone to think oh, it's gone. So, we're not gonna carry anymore even though it's still out there. So, like they wouldn't put on the recovery cases. They never do that.

**CP:** I know there was talk about COVID-19 related deaths being exaggerated. Um, have you heard about, has anyone you've spent time around talked about that in Wisconsin? And what are their thoughts are your thoughts about it?

**AJ:** Um, I never really thought that the number was very exaggerated, just because it's a number. And like I guess either you're completely lying, or you're telling the truth when it comes to just like... numbers like that. Because, well, my friends believe that, all of it's a lie from my hometown, so they have a completely different opinion on all of that. So, they think it's very exaggerated. And they're the people that are mad about not seeing the recovery cases and all that stuff.

**CP:** Yeah, currently right on Wisconsin there is a little under 3000 deaths related to COVID-19. Um, have, has anyone you known died from, died from COVID-19? Or as any of your friends, family members, or extended family members died have COVID-19? That you know, of?

**AJ:** No, I don't know, anyone that has died?

**CP:** Do you think the media is doing a poor job of, um, getting those statistics out to you? Or do you think that your friends or your friends don't follow it up as much?

**AJ:** Um, I think the only reason that I don't know anyone is because I don't know a lot of old people. And that's the main like, concern when it comes to people and COVID-19. So I, I think I'm just gonna believe the news because that's the only information we really get.

**CP:** So, uh, what are your thoughts about Tony Evers extending the mask mandate into 2021? Um, what are your feelings about wearing masks? And how have you adapted to that? Or has it just become something normal in your life now?

**AJ:** I don't think that it should be, like a controversial issue, I think you should just suck it up and wear it, because it's, when you think about it based on like, the basics, it's doing something. Because, like, why does anyone wear masks, like masks weren't just invented for COVID. It's to stop the spread of germs, which is how COVID spreads? I just think that people if people would actually start following the rules, that I think in the beginning, if they did that, we would not be as bad as we are now. So, I think we should just suck it up and do it for probably a few years now. It's gonna be I think,

**CP:** So, how is your experience or the people's experience around you that you've heard have, um, affected your way of thinking of your community members, your friends and family? Um, so in a sense, has, how have you viewed others differently, after your experiences with COVID-19?

**AJ:** Well, some people that I know that like, don't believe in all of it, I completely I lose respect for all those people. Because them not wearing masks is like saying "Well I don't care about other people," and if you're not going to wear a mask for yourself, you should just do it for the other people around you, because you know, know what they have, and you know where they're going through. So, it just like when people don't follow those rules, it's like I lost respect for you.

**CP:** I have a couple more questions for you here. Um, what, so after all your experiences, knowing what you know now, what do you think people need to keep in mind in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, or Wisconsin in general, or the United States? What do you think they need to keep in mind, as, as we proceed through COVID-19?

**AJ:** Um just to like, keep your distance, respect other people's beliefs, and wear a mask when you're supposed to... yeah, basically, that's it.

**CP:** Do you think that government officials or police officers should be enforcing, um, social distancing and the mask mandate more than they are now?

**AJ:** Yeah, I think that because like, when the mass mandate was first put in to play, our, um, county department didn't enforce it. Like they said, right away, we're not going to enforce this. And that. That's just like saying, like, "We don't believe any of it," and that's not true for everyone in the county.

**CP:** So, the county department that said that, was that Eau Claire county or your, from your hometown?

**AJ:** That was from my hometown. I don't know about Eau Claire.

**CP:** Alright. For the final question I have for you here. Do you think that will ever return to a time that was similar to pre COVID time? So, do you think things will go back to normal? If normal is the way of wording it.

**AJ:** Um, I think that maybe with more research on COVID-19, we could find maybe like, something that would stop the spread easily and figure out how to stop it instead of just staying six feet apart and being extra careful like that. But I don't think we're ever gonna like go back to like not thinking about it. Like, I'm always pretty conscious now about who I'm around. Especially like in stores, stuff. It's just something that you never thought of before. And I don't think we're ever going to not think that way, anymore.

**CP:** So, do you have any final thoughts or questions about COVID-19 or anything else you'd like to say?

**AJ:** Um, thank you for having me.

**CP:** Yep, thank you for coming Avery. It was a great interview. Have a nice day.

**AJ:** You too.