

Interviewer: Marcus Shilts

Interviewee: Brittany Thatcher

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Abstract: Brittany has lives in Knapp for about five years and she works in a dental office in Eau-Claire. She is married and has a two year old son, so she has a full plate, all at the age of 28. I asked her about her thoughts on Covid and how it has affected her, especially with her job in dental. Her viewpoint is one of just weariness and just lack of any care, who can blame her after a year and a couple months of this whole ordeal. She also voices her frustrations that she encountered in her office from the lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available to patients just cancelling and then the shutdown that we all went through. She also touches on her frustration with all these businesses being closed and not being able to recover from the year of no steady income.

Marcus Shilts 0:01

Okay, so today is May 2nd here in Menominee. And I'm here with my interview. He Brittany. Brittany, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Brittany Thatcher 0:10

My name is Brittany Thatcher.

I am 28 years old. I am the lead dental assistant at Aspen dental.

And what else you want to know about?

Marcus Shilts 0:25

Where's abouts do you live?

Brittany Thatcher 0:27

I live in Knapp, Wisconsin.

So that's probably

about 10-15 minutes away from Menominee. About 47 excuse me, 37 minutes away from Eau Claire. And that's where my office is located/

Marcus Shilts 0:38

About how long you lived in it?

Brittany Thatcher 0:42

For too long, no, I lived in Knapp for about five years.

Marcus Shilts 0:48  
Before then?

Brittany Thatcher 0:49  
Before that I lived in Eau Claire.

Yeah, I feel like the majority of my life I probably spent in all clear growing up, I lived in Eau Claire,

when I was going to

school, I actually lived in Fort and Stanley and relatives over there. So just made the whole living situation a little bit easier while I was working and going to school.

Marcus Shilts 1:13

Okay, kind of same general few counties, not out of state or anything. So, here just talk about, you know, how COVID is affecting- How it has affected you and everyone it's been? We had, we've had it for about a month in a year in three months, roughly. So you know, we've seen about, you know, 654,000 cases here in Wisconsin. So you know, it's obviously affecting a lot of people,

How many cases?

654- 654,000 I'm sorry, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. And you'll have those, you know, about 5% or hospitalized majority of them being in the 80s, 60 to 80. So like our elderly, and our age group, 25. and whatnot. About 1% have been hospitalized. So when you first learned COVID, you know, a whole year ago now, what were your initial thoughts?

Brittany Thatcher 2:15  
So actually, that's a very funny question.

Marcus Shilts 2:20  
Especially working in dental.

Brittany Thatcher 2:23  
So

when we first heard about COVID, my husband and I, this was probably back in November, before they shut everything down. And I was not very worried about it. I was like, you know, what, we had H1-N1, swine flu like, why is it different,

Marcus Shilts 2:44

So much hand sanitizer

Brittany Thatcher 2:49

Like, just regular,

flu season So I was not concerned about it, but more so also, because I'm around people all day, every day who just don't give a hoot.

Brittany Thatcher 3:05

Exactly. So I'm all up in that all day, every day. So I was like, I'm gonna get exposed to it. I'm gonna get to be the first person to be exposed to it in that range of the population. But I was not concerned about it. I don't think I was concerned about it until I was at work one day, and they were starting to limit the supplies I could order like masks gloves, any like surgical protections, like face shields, anything like that. All important. Yeah, basically all the important stuff and like I get it, but at the same time, I was like, why are they limiting? My...

Brittany Thatcher 3:48

What do you call it? PPE. I'm like, Okay, are we not as important as the people who are on the "frontlines"? That was in quotation quotations. That was very annoying, because then I started getting calls from patients asking if we had the equipment to wear in the office around them and that was making everybody like our patients nervous

or like,

we're honest with them. Like if we do we do, we don't we don't and nobody wanted

to come in. So I

started freaking out. I was like, Am I gonna have a job like what's going on?

Now I was like, November is when I kind of started worrying about it not so much but that's when I was like, Okay, this is kind of starting to light a fire underneath.

Marcus Shilts 4:34

And you know that that was a very weird time, and I'll be touching more on employment, and whatnot. Because I go to Aspen for my checkups or whatnot. So there was a time when I couldn't make it in but I'll be touching on that soon. Has that been any-Like, do you see it as the word affecting you in the long run, especially after this is done.

Brittany Thatcher 5:05

Myself personally, I don't think it's going to affect me in the long run. So I'm just one of those people where it's like it is what it is. And there's nothing that I can really do to change it. I mean, I did. I do my part, I wear my mask.

I mean, sometimes I forget,

but I'm only human. Especially if like I have the disposable ones. I almost always have my clock one in the car unless like I'm washing or something. But I just, you know, it is what it is. And I don't think it's going to affect me in the long run. Like I've already had folded. I had to quarantine. I did have COVID Yeah. I yeah, that's it was...

Marcus Shilts 5:45

I'll be I'll be touching on that, dont worry.

Brittany Thatcher 5:49

yeah, that was fun. It was, it was just it was more of an annoyance honestly.

Weil, it won't affect me in the long run?

I don't think so though. Because I do my part. I wear my masks, even though like I'm vaccinated. I had the whole thing. I had the part one and part two of my completed vaccine

Marcus Shilts 6:10

Work you over pretty good?

Brittany Thatcher 6:11

Yeah, but I've always been sensitive to even like my flu shot. I didn't start getting flu shot until after I had my little boy.

Marcus Shilts 6:20

And how old is he?

Brittany Thatcher 6:21

He's he's gonna be two and a half soon

Marcus Shilts 6:24

Terrible twos

Brittany Thatcher 6:25

Don't even talk about it,

Its awful now.

He's awesome. He's my best friend. I

don't have any time for myself.

I don't know, I just try to do my part. Honestly, both like if I'm out in public, and I know I'm going to be going to the store.

Okay, I might as well just have my mask in my purse, because nobody else knows I'm vaccinated or myself or my closest friends and family going out. So I don't want some stranger coming up to me being like, oh, "you dont have your mask on". Okay. Well, what about you? What about the nine times you forgot your math? You know what I mean? Long Run, I don't think it's gonna affect me, honestly.

Marcus Shilts 6:49

All right. And you're saying that you had a shortage for a while of all your PPE and whatnot. But how long did it take for that to normalize? Or even get better? Because I hear sometimes.

Brittany Thatcher 7:27

I think I am not gonna go from the time that I started thinking about COVID. So not from the time that I was worried about in November, I'm gonna go from like the start of the new year, so that January would have been 2020. Exactly. It probably did not get better Marcus until about four or five months ago, I was only limited to purchasing for my entire office for a whole week. Five boxes of masks, which meant that we had to store and use one mask on Monday, one mask on Tuesday, one on Wednesday, one mask on Thursday, one mask on Friday, we actually had to package them and sterilize them because our doctor at the time, the dentist, you know what, I want you guys to be as safe as possible. And you know, you ever use the sterilized like the sterilization of an M11 to sterilize them. So we know they're sterilized. Let's do that.

Brittany Thatcher 8:25

One of our hygienists was pregnant at the time, and her biggest thing was okay, yes, we're sterilizing it. But when we're running it through the sterilizer, it's being rammed with steam, which is probably one of the best ways to sterilize something, but who's to say it's completely dry on the inside. So if something's damp, those are gonna start to mold and then we're breathing in spore. Like, that's still not helping. But um, so we have that limitation to masks. And that was like, every two weeks, I could order and I would have to call

Brittany Thatcher 8:59

our

Oh, what do you call it? Our purchasing department? Okay, to do that? And if I didn't have my supplies, and was my butt getting yelled at, because I'm the one who knows that?

And I'm only in charge of doing the order for like the general

dentistry, so I wouldn't have to worry about like, hygiene supplies or anything like that

the lead hygienists would do that.

But I mean, it's still stuff that's used by the whole office. gloves, I can only order five boxes of gloves.

Marcus Shilts 9:35

They are still hard to find, at some places.

Brittany Thatcher 9:37

I can finally order like 20. So that's awesome. And then every week, so it's not terrible. So it's almost down to what my average was two years ago, I'd say, I'm gonna say two years ago, because a year ago, we just started this whole thing. So for me two years ago, every two weeks I'd probably be ordering about 20 boxes of gloves, per-se

Marcus Shilts 10:02

How did that like mess up your patient flow and whatnot? Because I go there. So there was whole time where I couldn't really make it in. Still messing with it now?

Brittany Thatcher 10:16

With the past couple months, I would say no.

If it would have been more like six months ago, to like that midway that half a year, mark that six month mark for COVID? I would say definitely, because there were some times where it's like, Hey, we only have, say, X amount of supplies for the whole week. We need to cancel patients and sometimes reschedule and it would be whether or not they are a high need patient or not. Just to give a couple examples. So if we have patients who are coming in for medical clearance, and they have to have dental work done prior to the surgery, they would be a hygiene patient. So us having to decide whether or not somebody is high in need or not, if they're considered healthy, was really hard to do.

Same with our hygiene patients like we would have patients who are like, hey, if you have gone through scaling and root planing, which for like I guess like for the general public, that just means there are patients out there who have deep cleanings. That's a high risk patient but who's to say that that person who has gingivitis and this person has periodontal disease, how do you decide who's not high risk because once you have that gingivitis standpoint, you're basically on the knife's edge, like you can either teeter towards periodontal disease, or you can try your best at home to get rid of it, which we all know. If you've ever worked in the dentistry, industry, you know that most people aren't going to progress at home, it's just gonna get worse. So that was really hard to do. So rescheduling patients that way in determining who was more important over each other, I guess the way I looked at it was to me higher risk. Exactly. How can you determine somebody like that unless, you know, they have no cavities. They're already a model patient getting all their stuff done on time, like when they're supposed to. Like me, I'll use myself example. I probably haven't had my teeth cleaned in a year and a half. And that's because I tried to take care of everybody else at the dentist, my job.

It really messed up a lot of stuff. And we were closed for a while. I think we were closed for about

three or four months. And that sucks. Yeah,

that's suck big time. I am a workaholic. So I had no idea how to be at home. I didn't I was getting stressed out. I'm like, I have already cleaned this house six times. There's nothing else for me to do.

Marcus Shilts 12:53  
Babies are full time job.

Brittany Thatcher 12:54  
They are a full time

job. And that was awful.

I know I love my little boy, really,

you know, he is my best friend. But it's a lot when you don't

have a minute to yourself

when I'm going potty. And all I hear is a little hand knocking on the door asking for

me to come out.

And then he wants to come into it. It's like no just momma needs like a half hour by herself to wash my hands or something.

Marcus Shilts 13:24  
Yeah, so when things start kinda starting back up, you're able to go less crazy.

Brittany Thatcher 13:30  
So when it did go a little back to

normal when we were able to start seeing patients back at aspen we were only seeing emergency patients. So patients who say something happened during the pandemic and they're like oh my god, I broke my tooth have to get in I gotta get the stick it out. We see those patients or emergency exams just to figure out what's going on somebody like has some swelling, facial swelling, something's we're going to get an X ray for them. But it was still really crazy. Because when we went back, I was the only number one system working. I was working with my one dentist who I probably didn't see eye to eye with the put in the nicest terms. I was flipping rooms or sterilizing rooms, we have seven operatories, which isn't a lot. But when you're the only

assistant and you're filling every single chair, that's a lot. I would work from eight to five and then I would leave at seven because my dentist would not stay to help me do any sterilization.

He wouldn't help

me do any of the patient's notes for the day. He'd be like Alright, see you later.

I'm like, Okay, fuck me

I had an awesome office manager at the time who would hop in and help while my dentist's was shopping on the computer. I'm not even kidding. Marcus. There'd be days like walk into his office and he'd be on Amazon.

Marcus Shilts 14:55

Oh.

Brittany Thatcher 14:56

yeah. So that was fun. And that really put things into perspective. I mean, I've worked for really good dentists. And I've worked with really bad dentists. And after that, it really opened my eyes to see how much he actually cared about his staff. And actually, I guess people in general. So that was really hard to try to get back to normal because that was not a normal thing. I felt like he was hiding a lot. That was just, it was not a good time. So even if, even though it's getting back to normal, it wasn't normal,

I guess, because we

weren't doing our regular patient flow. It was only the high needs, like I said earlier. So that adds a lot of stress to stuff because say somebody came in, they're like, Oh, my gosh, I broke this tooth yesterday. Okay, well, my whole day is filled, so I can't see you for four days. So it wasn't normal. Like when we have our whole staff on board. And we're like, Sure, we can put you in and hang out for 15 minutes or something.

Marcus Shilts 15:59

And you're not backed up for three months worth of patients. One more thing with how it at Aspen to work on when I went there, before COVID hit would go to the dentist's sign in, sit down, watch your Home Improvement channel.

Brittany Thatcher 16:19

Office, every office has that on.

Marcus Shilts 16:21

They do.

Brittany Thatcher 16:25



Nobody gets upset watching the Home Improvement channel.

Marcus Shilts 16:29

Unless you watch it for a long time, then everyone's like, Oh my goodness.

Brittany Thatcher 16:33

I've seen this episode six times or unless you're a contractor. And like, that's how you should be doing that.

Marcus Shilts 16:39

So you've walked in, but now we have to check our temperature a lot more in depth. Do you see that sticking around for even after COVID is done?

Brittany Thatcher 16:52

Maybe I feel like I mean, it'll probably be just a standard of care at that point. Which I don't think it's a bad thing anyways, honestly. Because like what I know is normal for me, obviously isn't normal for somebody else. Like my normal body temperature actually runs a little bit lower, or at least I think it's lower. So like normally I run at like 97.4 and my doctor's orders like are you feeling okay? Like I feel great, chisel a little ice off my heart every day.

No, I don't think that that would be a bad thing if they got rid of it. But I think it's nice. Because say somebody's just regular sick, not even sick. And they're like, Oh, you know, I feel like, I might be coming down with the flu or something. Okay, well, I feel terrible for saying this. Because I've worked jobs where it's like, Okay, if you're sick, stay home. But if you call in sick, it's gonna count against you. And I hate saying that. But at the same time, I think it'll really open people's eyes to hygiene as a normal thing. So like, if you are sick, stay

home, like

why risk going somewhere and infecting the person next to you, and then them getting symptoms a week later. Then all the people that they were in contact with? It's basically the domino effect. That's kind of like, the big thing with COVID right now is do the smart thing. Basically, stay home if you're not sure if you are feeling ill, but

I think it'll just really make people think twice about it.

Because I hate when people come in sick. Like take some take a nap, we'll take a hot shower. And when you're feeling better call us like, even before COVID That was my biggest thing. Because when patients would come in, they're like, Oh,

I have the flu. But I'm almost done with it.

Are you really though, because now I'm working in your mouth, and I'm probably going to get sick now. And now I'm gonna have to call into work. But if I'm not that sick, I'm still expected to come in. So now I'm gonna get my staff sick. And my other patients sick.

Marcus Shilts 19:03

Yeah, big domino effect.

Brittany Thatcher 19:05

So the 100% a domino effect.

Marcus Shilts 19:08

Or, and we see how it affected you at work, how does it affect you outside of your day to day activity and you say you have a two and a half year old son, you know, and you had COVID you've kind of seen it firsthand. How does that affect outside of work?

Brittany Thatcher 19:25

I mean,

so this one will be a little hard to explain. Well,

because I am that person where when I get sick, I just tough through it. Like even when I had the flu, I'm out getting groceries like I'm out side doing something and I had COVID I think I got the short end of the stick with it and put it that I could not get out of bed. I had the icky poops, yeah, I had everything.

Marcus Shilts 19:55

Worked you over pretty good.

Brittany Thatcher 19:56

Yeah, it did.

My first subtle indication

was, so this is kind of a long explanation.

Outside of work up until December, we had a family member

going through

liver failure. And she was just on palliative care. She was just at home and they were just trying to make her as comfortable as possible until

his her time.

So I believe like the frontline health care system kind of failed, at least our family in that aspect because I think they were trying to make her as more comfortable as possible and not monitoring everything else. Because I think with her coming in and out of the hospital,

she

somehow contract and COVID my husband's mom, so my little boys, grandma does babysitting childcare for us. And Grandma, my husband's grandmother's would be my son's great grandma used to do childcare for us. So she loved having Charlie while she was sick. Just I think it was just kind of

pick me up type thing for her

like feeling normal, you know? And I think with her coming in and out of the hospital that my little boy was then he was the host he was

Marcus Shilts 21:10  
Uh-oh

Brittany Thatcher 21:10  
Yes, because Well, you don't have kids, I'm assuming. Okay. You're such a nice looking young man.

Get a woman.

No, don't have kids. I love my son, but don't have kids.

I think he's the one who gave me COVID because I wasn't going anywhere after work.

I wasn't going out to eat.

If I didn't want to get something like takeout wise,

it was curbside pick up.

We started doing like the grocery apps.

Marcus Shilts 21:50  
Taking all the precautions.

Brittany Thatcher 21:51  
Yeah, exactly. basically taking all the precautions. literally the only time No, probably not even that I was gonna say the only time I probably come in contact with somebody is when I was going to gas but I don't even do that I just pay at the pump and I normally do was for a snack.

But I really think he was the mule because they failed to monitor that aspect of her health. And so once he started not being normal, like his normal Charlie self, like the spunky little boy like, I feel like most kids get cuddly when they're not feeling well. So I was like, Oh, well, maybe he's growing because

every couple months, he's going through these growth

spurts. Usually his little feet grow.

I know he is a little chubber.

But yeah, so I definitely think he was the mule because we weren't going anywhere. And my husband has been working from home e since before they shut everything down because he just has amazing company and they're like, you know what, we're not taking any risks. We're just gonna have those who can work from home work from home, and then we're going to try and standardized the other shifts, and I'm trailing off I'm sorry.

Marcus Shilts 22:58

Oh no, I'm just looking here. (Making sure my phone was still recording)

Brittany Thatcher 23:01

No, it's okay. But um,

it kind of sucked after I got COVID I felt like crap. I couldn't do anything. And usually when I get sick, I'm like on my deathbed anyways, so I shouldn't say it was awful because even when I get like regular sick with the flu, I'm that person who just feels like crap. I tough my way through it. COVID I couldn't do that. I literally had the body aches, it hurt to move. I didn't want to eat anything because I couldn't taste or smell anything. So it's like, what's the point of eating and I'm like, let's see here. Britney, critical thinking, well,

I like food.

I like to enjoy eating. And I don't weigh 900 pounds. I just like to put that on the record.

Marcus Shilts 23:40

Your Iced coffees as well.

Brittany Thatcher 23:43

Yeah, I suck that down. That's that's just water now. But it's sucks though, Marcus. Like, seriously, I was like, what's the point of eating if I can't even taste my food and enjoy it. I just literally have to force myself to eat like I didn't want to spend the energy making something because that energy was supposed to be reserved for me to get better. And that wasn't happening. And having my little boy wasn't feeling well. Okay, little boy doesn't understand he's sick. And he needs to read something. All he wants to do is play. And so when my husband

working from home, it's like, Okay, well, he's on zoom meetings or conferences, just whenever they invite him and he's got to go to him. So it's not like, my husband could help take care of Charlie. All day and like I still had to be Mom, do that full time job of my life. So that really sucked. Because that made things really hard. I also like I said, I live in Knapp. That's 15 minutes away from Menominee Knapp has one gas station and one bar, which the bar scene there's not great. everybody's like, I a hick there the only person I enjoy besides my husband and his family is the gas station attendee. He is awesome. He's got a shaved head and he's always got a good joke for me when I come in, but I couldn't leave the house at all.

After, like people found out I had COVID at work. And after I had spent like two weeks on quarantine, and then I just use vacation because I was like, Well, if you

don't use it, you lose it.

Basically, you might as well use the last couple of weeks, I was out for like a month. Nobody wanted to come by me. They're like, Oh, you're gonna give me the Rona, like jokingly, I'm sure. Everybody was still super like well paid for he had COVID. And even though we were distancing ourselves in the office, like, for a while, we were all just eating like in operatories away from each other, especially if we didn't want to go to our vehicle because it was cold

outside. Nobody wants to go outside on the cold.

Yeah, I felt like I felt very alienated. Yeah, that was it was very rough,

Marcus Shilts 25:41

Kind of like, like a leper sort of.

Brittany Thatcher 25:46

I was a COVID leper.

Marcus Shilts 25:57

Your family members were they pretty worried about that as well?

Brittany Thatcher 26:04

Maybe not so much on my husband's side of the

family. And I might cry. I'm sorry. Because I don't think I know we used to work together. We used to work together for like a month.

But I actually found out my mom had cancer in July. And so

it was really hard for us because I couldnt see my Mom at all

we didn't know how it was going to go for her because they said she was very borderline stage for what they were going to call it stage three. And she had Hodgkins, which is like the best worst case scenario, because that one is very treatable. Now she's in 100% remission.

Marcus Shilts 26:46

So that's good.

Brittany Thatcher 26:52

I would see my mom almost every weekend or every other weekend. Yeah. And my mom telling me I couldn't come to see my brother or her or sister or my dad was really hard. And that was that lasted up until...what month are we in now May? Yes. March, I just finally got to see my mom in March.

So that was really hard. Like, especially with my,

with my physical immediate families, my mom, brother, sister.

So that was really hard. And like what I found out, my mom actually called me during work. And she was like, hey, come see me, you know, because I was like are you sure because I don't want to kill you. Because if I would have kept seeing her Marcus, and if she would have gotten sick, she would have had would be able to go in and if she would have gotten sick, she would have been able to go get for therapy. Yeah. And she was going she had a little port. So they would give her doses to inject it herself. I don't know if that's like administer

So she had a home port she

could do. So she was doing the half of it at home, and then half of it in the hospital, if she would have gotten sick, she wouldn't have been able

to do anything, because every week she went in, her doctor would have to do an exam. And if he couldn't do that, she probably won't be in remission.

Marcus Shilts 28:22

So the fact that you know, you didn't want to hurt your mom at the same time. This is a whole complicated situation.

Brittany Thatcher 28:35

So that was it was in that aspect of my life

that made things very, very hard.

I am that person where if like, even if my friends call me, maybe some people on my list, they were like, Britney, I need your help. Right

now.

I would drop whatever I'm doing, or be like, I can't make it now. But can I get there in two hours? Like that's the kind of person I am and finding out that my mom was sick in July. I was there every weekend, helping out yelling at my brother and sister telling them to do their chores because my mom didn't tell my brother. I don't think my brother knows at all still.

Yeah. And so that's okay. My sister was super stressing my sister just turned in July. And so my brother and sister both babies of July. So if he would have just turned 13 and she would have just turned 16. So my sister understands that and I'm assuming my brother would also because he's fucking 13. But my sister was super stressed out about it. And just like I can't even imagine what it would have been like for my sister. But going down there and helping because my dad would work. Just weird shifts.

I don't know what you call but he was

like distribute goods that stores or purchasing from his company. And we'd have a route type thing and fill their orders. And so he was hardly ever home so I took it upon myself to be down there every weekend trying to help for as long as I could. And so I just made things harder because I was trying to be that person putting on a happy face being like mom's fine, she's fine. And inside, I'm like, my mom's not fine. Like, I didn't know if she was getting better, or things were just gonna escalate really quickly. Where one we should be fine. And then they'd be like, so we only have this much time left. And that was scary.

Marcus Shilts 30:25

Yeah, luckily, it worked out.

Brittany Thatcher 30:29

She had a really good oncologist. He'd been doing it for like, 45 years. So I think he's good. But that made things really hard. For my personal situation, really hard. I don't think it affected my husband very much.

Marcus Shilts 30:45

And he works at home. So he's Yeah. Okay. And you know, like you said, ypu were, you had to self isolate, stay away from your parents. So this whole flattening the curve, How has that affected like your community and all I can hear from Knapp? So it's a smallish town, so they're usually very-

Brittany Thatcher 31:06

Honestly,

this is gonna sound dark. I honestly don't care how it has affected my community, because I live with a bunch of old people. And I feel like Knapp is a place where you're born, you live and you

die if you don't live in that place. I just feel like people who are born in small areas, and like, don't venture out and explore. Like, they stay in that same area.

Either people just

live here and they live till they're like 130. Exactly. Like they're like, to me, I didn't care if somebody, like my next door neighbor who's like 90 died. I don't know my next door neighbor, because I can't relate to anything with them. Unless they're like, super cool. They're

like,

I've got this awesome, dirty old man joke for you come here. And I'd be like, I don't know if I want to come by you. But I don't think it honestly is affected our community. I think there has been like two deaths in the community since COVID, the whole thing. Like they had the Fourth of July celebration, they usually do and one person got COVID. And then they locked Knapp down. Like don't come out of your house. And nobody did. Like you saw your neighbors in their yard. They were just like hey neighbor.

Marcus Shilts 32:28

Pretty normal.

Brittany Thatcher 32:29

So yeah, when I think like for the most part, people in Knapp just keep to themselves anyways, because majority of now is elderly. The most use I see of my neighbors doing is going for golf cart rides, because that's what old people do. Everybody has a golf cart.

Marcus Shilts 32:48

My great grandmother's the same.

Same old route all the time. Shes content.

Brittany Thatcher 32:53

Yeah, I don't think it honestly is affected my community. Big at all. Unless like, like myself, like, it's been like directly. Hey, I just was talking to you, and I found out I have this, probably stay in your home for a while. But I don't think it did. Because you just see all these old people out on their golf carts all the time. Like that did not change at all.

Marcus Shilts 33:17

So obviously nothing bad was happening to community but with all this lockdown, just in a wide scheme. How do you say this sort of affect people mentally, emotionally, physically being just everything shut down?

Brittany Thatcher 33:32

I do not think like just the general public, I



don't think it has been very good at all.

I'll use myself as an example. I'm a very stressy person. And I get inside my own head sometimes where I feel like I'm going a little psycho, but not being able to go anywhere. Like I think I am a very lucky person.

Because

I have my husband who would do anything for me. Like we've never even been in fights, like maybe some arguments for like five or 10 minute thing. But we've never been in a verbal or physical violence, violence type of thing. I mean, I'll tell him I want to slap the shit out of him sometimes, but I won't do it.

Marcus Shilts 34:19  
Normal couples stuff.

Brittany Thatcher 34:20  
Yeah, normal married people.

But

I've seen a lot of things like just on Facebook, because that's all you can really do when we were locked down that

maybe not some of my friends but just people

I know whose family

members

who have like mental health issues like

depression or suicidal

Marcus Shilts 34:46  
We have seen an increase in all this to look anywhere else. Like you said look on Facebook. You'll see things about this all the time.

Brittany Thatcher 34:53  
Yeah, I definitely think it's gotten worse. And I think that maybe one of the good things from COVID is that definitely from for a mental health standpoint, it has made people a little bit more aware. Like I lost a cousin a few years ago to self harm, and I'm actually super happy, not to sound wrong, I'm super happy it happened before COVID because if he would have been by

himself, he was living alone, if it would have happened during COVID, who knows how long it would have been till if he was found by somebody, probably not the prettiest picture to walk into.

So,

I think his main thing, people more aware of stuff like that, I think.

And I'm very lucky

to have never been in a situation like this. But like, I recently because I want to be a better person. I've been donating just like clothes I haven't worn in a long time, to the point and refuge house in Eau Claire, for battered women. Because I can't even imagine living in a home where I have to walk on eggshells,

I guess so to

speak.

I just from things I've heard and everything like that, and just reading stuff, or hearing my husband's grandpa's police scanner, from domestic calls like that. I'm sure that's gone up and that I could never even imagine.

Marcus Shilts 36:21

Being stuck there. Like being in abusive situations, whether you're a wife or even kids, because school

Brittany Thatcher 36:29

Yeah, can't do anything for school, can't go over to your girlfriend's house when your husband being an asshole. That is probably just a very broad terminology. Like, I feel like if you're in a situation like that, I wish people knew that there were places that they could go because there obviously are, but during COVID, like, whether it be a man or woman or a child in a situation like that, like you can't go anywhere you are out home, and you have to make the best of it. And you can't make the best out of that. You just can't. And I think that's unacceptable. I feel like our, again, our health department's failed the public our, what do you call it? Like our police departments like somebody who's there to protect you? Like, I can only imagine like officers being like, well, I don't want to go there. What if they have Covid? Like I'm sure they wouldn't? But what if some of them were like, you know, "To serve and protect". I mean, that goes from everybody. I mean, I'm just a dental assistant, but I'm there for my patients. Like, I'm not just the dental assistant, like if somebody needs to talk to me, they're like, you know what, Brittany, I think I'm gonna leave my husband. I'm like, you know what, you think that go for it? Like you probably have your reasons to lay it out on me. You know what I mean, but I feel like there are a lot of shortcomings, or departments that are set to be there for us. And they were like, Well,

I mean, this is how I feel. But like,

you're kind of SOL so deal with it. Because we can't help you right now, because we've got this going. I think that's unacceptable.

Marcus Shilts 38:07

Getting little political, I guess you could say with COVID. We're seeing you know, like what happened in Minnesota and whatnot, all these riots going side and side with Covid and everything.

Brittany Thatcher 38:22

It's everything.

Marcus Shilts 38:23

Would you say these probably might have contributed to it, and everyone at home and unable to work, because, you know, we saw for George Floyd and whatnot to say, we were seeing people going against that, but now we're just kind of seeing it everywhere.

Brittany Thatcher 38:38

Yeah, no, I think.

Marcus Shilts 38:41

Even the violence going on?

Brittany Thatcher 38:42

Yeah, no, definitely.

I mean, I feel like and maybe not so much Menominee. But I feel like Eau Claire as a region, violence has gone up a little bit. And that's just throughout the past couple years. But I definitely think that's probably a little bit of a contributing factor. People being home, people not being able to afford

things.

People just not being listened to honestly, like, I have a cousin who's black. He lives in St. Paul.

He was, I want

to say he was like an assistant office manager of Boost Mobile. And when I heard about George Floyd and everything going on, and the buildings being like, basically the whole town up in flame. I literally called him I'm like, you are not allowed to leave your house. Here. I'm like, the only way you're leaving your house if you are coming in my house. And he's like, you know what cousin? He's like, I'm not worried about it because I'm a good kid. And I'm like, Jordan. The next guy walking down the street doesn't know that. Like these National Guard people walking down the street, don't know that. I'm not saying that it's because of this reason, but you are black. And

I know you don't have the best wrap sheet, so to speak, just because of Tim and I have to pick on him. I'm like, but you definitely have come really far because he was that kid who was not in a good situation like, I know he's got stuff on him. But the fact that he's trying to turn his life around and then like Marcus, he literally could have been walking down the street and somebody could have been like, you know what? Why not? Like, Jordans that kid, he dresses like a thug, but he's not a thug. Like, he wears those stupid pants where his butts showing. They're just, it's probably just because he's buying clothes that don't fit him and his butt shows. But he's not a bad guy. I know that, but you wouldn't know, do you know what I mean? So I definitely feel like that aspect. It did help with the George Floyd thing, but I'm sure if I were everybody going stir crazy.

(The time stamp is really messed up, my software reset all of it on me, please forgive me.)

Brittany Thatcher 0:00

They just want to be heard and nobody's listening to them.

Marcus Shilts 0:02

Kind of going mad.

Brittany Thatcher 0:13

Just without the axes. Well, they probably did have axes at Target. They got into the building somehow.

Marcus Shilts 0:23

And you mentioned you how the Health Association, how you feel like they've handled this the government the health of whatnot. Like we've had the the mask mandate, businesses have been shutdown, Aspen's corporate. So they could afford to shut down, but you're able to come back, but we have some other little businesses are just now opening up again.

Brittany Thatcher 0:50

Yeah. Which actually is really sad, because I've always loved shopping at like local business stores. Because I am a fucking hipster.

Marcus Shilts 0:58

We are in a Caribou.

Brittany Thatcher 1:02

We could be at the Raw Deal, which is really hipster. You want to see girls who don't shave their armpits and dye them blue. That's where you go. Not that there's anything wrong with that. It's just not my cup of tea. They do serve tea there also.

Marcus Shilts 1:18

Organic?

Brittany Thatcher 1:22

Actually, the Raw Deal is probably one of those places, though. It's open again, I

believe. And I've

seen a couple new places open. But that's in businesses that it shut down. I forgot your question. I'm sorry. How's the health department affected things like that>

Marcus Shilts 1:40

How the government handled it? shut down all that, you know, the government, health department, I feel like they kind of go hand in hand. Like we have the mass mandate, which everyone was way against and now with vaccinations, but mainly looking at businesses shutting down, like we have, you know, little mom and pop place shut down. But you go to, like Walmart or something.

Brittany Thatcher 2:00

Honestly Marcus,

Why not?

If I were in charge of things, and it's kind of it's kind of like, bring them full loop back to H1N1. They didn't shut anything down for that. Why is it so different? If I could have been in charge of things, I would not have shut anything down.

Marcus Shilts 2:18

If the only things I were closing would have been like food industry, I guess I wouldnt even close them, I would have been like curbside only or drive thru.

Brittany Thatcher 2:39

If you're not comfortable going out, or you don't feel that you're healthy enough to go out. Don't go out, just like when I said, you know, like for the thermometers and your sick, typing temperatures as a standard of care. I don't think that's a bad standard of care to have, in general,

be smart.

Because I mean, at least from my personal point of view, it did not affect us. At all. My husband makes enough where I won't even have to work. I just like working. I don't want to rely on a man, I independent strong woman sometimes. Sometimes, especially when I need to cry. Stuff be girly. But it didn't affect us. Or at least he didn't let on that affected us. But it really didn't affect us. I was buying shit from Amazon all the time. Thanks. Credit cards. No. But for real, though, I would have just been like, what's the point in shutting everything down? Or if we were shutting things? Like maybe like a soft shutdown or something being like, Okay, like a curfew or something like shops can be open from this time to this time. Down, say like for a couple hours

to sterilize and then open from this time to this time, like, because then you still would have seen. Seen, I don't even know like the technical term for it, because I'm not on that side of things. But like that intake like that production still being available to companies like you got these car companies like right across the street here, your Chevy, people aren't buying cars, maybe they were, I don't know. But how is it that they are still up and running, and yet my local store we'll say Bob Smith's meat market or something as an example. That's not a real thing. It probably is somewhere else. So like, how come they can shut down still be profitable, but Bob's meat market so to speak, everybody goes there and I was like, oh, Bob's is closing. Like, I think that's ridiculous. Because that's somebody else's life who's being completely changed now. Like me, I work in the health field, just the dental office, but it's not just the dental office. Like I can't tell you how many times I've caught in like a mass on an X ray or something. Yeah, and being like, okay, you need to go to OS and then that person being like, holy crap that was that was cancerous like I just got it removed. Sorry, I'm checking my phone. My husband's mom just sent me a picture of Charlie. I don't know. I just gotta look at it. I'll show you he's writing with a little dinosaur and turtle t shirt.

Marcus Shilts 5:23

Oh my goodness, feel like those dinosaurs are everywhere.

Brittany Thatcher 5:27

You seen that dinosaur ever?

Marcus Shilts 5:29

They have it at Boyd,

Brittany Thatcher 5:30

Really, I've never been to Boyd. But I think a lot of stuff for people because some people like say they have to shut their business. Or say they tried reopening it. And it's not successful when they reopen. Like, they have to find a whole other means for income.

Marcus Shilts 5:53

Or to just shut down.

Brittany Thatcher 5:54

Like, who knows, like, I'm glad I don't have to deal with that, like, I feel. Well, I'm also very close with my practice owner. But I feel that like, if I was ever in that situation, if she was like, Hey, I have to let some people go. Whatever the case may be, I probably would be one of the safe ones when cuz I'm a hard worker, and I don't half ass things, I just whole ass things. But I also care about the people I'm with. So I care about my office as well. And I think that's why our office does so well. And that's why it was able to come back. Whereas like some people are just nervous. And I feel like these are local mom and pop shops, you know, everything's brought into them. So it's going to be a little bit more expensive than what you were to go to Walmart or Target or something. I think that was a big part of it because people can't afford it. Exactly. And it's so it kind of affected everybody. Okay, my husband and I like buying mobile. But I'm also that

person where it's like, okay, I really love Bob's meat market. But I'm not going to pay \$40 for the steak, which would not be ideal anyways, unless it was just this prime piece of meat. That was inappropriate. I'm sorry. When I can get a \$10 steak at Walmart, you know what I mean? Like so there's that difference, like people are trying to save everywhere, trying to make ends meet. Some people just don't give a fuck. And they're like, whatever, like Bob's closed, who cares? But then you realize Bob's your neighbor, and you see him moving because he can't afford his house.

Marcus Shilts 7:32

That would obviously be your opinion. Has your opinion changed? You notice throughout COVID cuz I so we've been at this for a year and three months, people were, like pretty nervous about it. I saw analogy, it made me chuckle it was COVID is kinda like your check engine light you're worried about at first, but then after a while you need to go to work.

Brittany Thatcher 7:53

I would agree with that. I mean, at the end of the day, it's it is what it is. Honestly, and I hate that saying my Papa used say it all the time. No, he used too and now like, I'm gonna say now that I'm older. I'm only 28 years old.

Marcus Shilts 8:11

I remember when my mom was 28.

Brittany Thatcher 8:15

God I am such an old lady, no. I totally get that now. Like when I was younger when I was like 19. And he'd be like, "Well, Brittany, it is what it is". I was like, it's not it is what it is because I can do something about it. It's you can it literally is what it is and whether like the Spanish flu, what they say it lasted 24 months.

Marcus Shilts 8:39

Yeah, yeah, give or take that Yeah.

Brittany Thatcher 8:43

We're just now like halfway through it if say COVID is going to be 24 months long. And it is what it is, people are gonna keep doing what they want to do, or they're gonna be like, EFF this, I'm gonna do my own thing and start like, my own little colony out in the woods somewhere. We don't have to wear a mask, like they're just going to do what they want to do. Yeah I know, I'm shedding they'll be able to make a rug out of all my hair.

Marcus Shilts 9:09

Alright, final question for you. So this has been quite the experience. How do you see this affecting you in the long run?

Brittany Thatcher 9:18

This interview, with you, I'll probably have to drink after this.

Marcus Shilts 9:25  
With COVID, I mean,

Marcus Shilts 9:29  
but a year and three months of craziness. You kind of look back at it, forget about or disdain?

Brittany Thatcher 9:42  
In the long run, I'm hoping to be like this sucked. But I still did everything that I could do to make it better for myself and my co-workers to keep them safe. My friends, my mom, my husband's grandparents. Like everybody I said, you know, people make mistakes. They forget their masks whenever like I got vaccinated, I finished my vaccination. And I'm not saying that like people should go get vaccinated like if you don't want to that's 100% your choice. I used to not get my flu shot. So fuck it like, let's have a little like you a smallpox party. There and then you're fine. Let's have a Rona party.

Marcus Shilts 10:23  
Yeah, share blankets.

Brittany Thatcher 10:25  
Use my tissue, I just sneezed into. Yummy. I don't know, dude, say your question again. So I can answer.

Unknown Speaker 10:36  
How do you think this experience of COVID will affect you in the long run? Overall pandemic?

Brittany Thatcher 10:43  
I really don't know.

Marcus Shilts 10:44  
Just kind of let it happen.

Brittany Thatcher 10:45  
Yeah just whatever goes back to like the Super 2010 YOLO. Like,

Marcus Shilts 10:50  
Oh, no. Oh, man.

Brittany Thatcher 10:53  
That's awful. You shouldn't let me say that.

Unknown Speaker 10:55  
That just shows how old, that was about 11 years ago?



Brittany Thatcher 11:04

I don't know. I feel like I have that fuck it attitude anyways, but I'm still gonna do what I think is right. And it's just it is what it is honestly.

Marcus Shilts 11:15

I think that's it, unless you have anything else you want to toss in as a little PS

Brittany Thatcher 11:20

Not really.

Unknown Speaker 11:28

This is the interview with Britney Thatcher here at Caribou in Menominee. So it went well, and thank you.

Brittany Thatcher 11:35

Tune in next week, for Britneys opinions.

Marcus Shilts 11:38

All right. Thank you very much.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>