

Edwin interviewed by Linda Jeronimo  
April 14, 2021  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Linda Jeronimo (00:02): Good evening, my name is Linda Jeronimo. Today the person I will be interviewing is a good friend of mine. His name is Edwin. He prefers not to say his last name. So, I am going to start off by reading the consent form that he agreed to sign.

LJ (0:16): This oral history project is being conducted by Linda Jeronimo, a student at Guttman community college, City University of NY. By signing this form below Edwin has agreed permission for the audio recording, notes, transcript, videos, and photographs resulting from the interview to be gifted to a college at City University of NY without restrictions. If you, Edwin have guaranteed permission to do so, the interview may become part of an archive and the interview will be made available for the used consent with City University NY mission. According to any restrictions placed on their use by you, Edwin, and I interviewee. I Edwin have read this above and the interview affirms she has explained the nature of and purpose of the oral History. The interviewer and interviewee hereby gives grant and assigned all right title, interest including copyright or whatever kind of form.

LJ (1:33): The day of the interview will be February 15, 2021 and I have signed this consent form. Edwin, he prefers not to say his last name and he also signed, and today's date will be April 15, 2021 and he doesn't have to sign the bottom part because he is over the age of 18.

LJ (1:50): So, I'm going to start off by reading the question he feels comfortable with and also just letting guys know that there is a lot of background noise and I'm sorry for that.

LJ (2:03): Do you give me permission to record and distribute this oral history project?

Edwin (2:07): Yes, I give you my consent.

LJ (2:14): So, if you don't feel comfortable answering any question you don't have to. So, can I have you first name?

E (2:22): Edwin. I don't want to say my last name.

LJ (2:27): Can I have your age?

E (2:29): Twenty-one.

LJ (2:31): Your occupation?

E (2:33): I work at a hospital.

LJ (2:34): And the neighborhood you live in?

E (2:41): Currently my location is in Indiana.

LJ (2:43): And the place of origin?

E (2:51): My place of origin is New York City.

LJ (2:52): Your first language?

E (2:54): English.

LJ (2:57): Racial identity?

E (2:59): Hispanic.

LJ (3:00): And your gender identity?

E (3:04): I'm a male.

LJ: And your sexual orientation?

E: I prefer not to say.

LJ (3:10): Where are you from?

Edwin (3:10): My parents are from Mexico. I am from NYC, United states but, I moved to Indianapolis.

LJ (3:19): Okay, so tell me the long story of how you and your family ended up in New York city and if you don't feel comfortable answering any questions, please let me know.

E (3:32): Well, first my father's father, which is my grandpa he came over here because he was trying to escape corruption from the president, and you know federal government. Stuff like that. My grandparents brought my father over and his siblings. And then, my mother also left Mexico because of poverty.

LJ (4:00): So, I know you're familiar with covid. How are you currently coping with the pandemic currently?

E (4:08): So, during this pandemic, it's been hard. Tough times. Many of my family members got sick. My grandfather ended up in the hospital, my grandma ended up in the hospital. I had two aunts that died and one uncle that died. Like each one died one month apart. So, you know that happened.

LJ (4:35): Do you have a self-care routine? And if you do, what do you do?

E (4:41): What is that? I currently don't have a routine.

LJ (4:49): What is your initial response to covid and how has it changed over time?

E (4:56): My initial response of covid was like, I thought that it was going to be like that Ebola thing. Where Ebola came out for a certain amount of time, but they found a vaccine for it fast you know. I thought it would be like any other diseases come out, they find a vaccine in a certain amount of time. I didn't really think it was going to impact the whole world like this. And yeah, I didn't think I wasn't going to get it either or anyone else in my family was gonna get it.

LJ (5:36): The next question is how has the coronavirus changed your life?

E (5:44): The coronavirus has changed my life in many different ways because during this pandemic I've learned certain things.

LJ (5:52): What kind of certain things you learned?

E (5:59): The certain things I learned weren't physical things, more mental things.

LJ (6:06): Mentally wise?

E (6:07): Yeah, mentally wise what I learned was you really see like your family comes more together. You start realizing more about your family. You start realizing how much you really care about certain people.

LJ (6:23): Speaking about that, did you lose anyone close to you? And if you did, how did you feel at that moment? Like how was your first reaction when you found out someone was dying because of covid?

E (6:35): So yeah I did lose somebody close to me. Not super close, but it's someone I knew, like a friend. So back in New York, me and my parents used to go out to parties. We met these two couples. We knew them a long time ago since we first got to NYC, and we had a couple of parties and hang out. And then one day we got the call that the wife died because of Covid. My first reaction was like damn that crazy! because you know she was young, she looked strong. You know we knew her for a long time. We had conversations all that and for her just to die because of Covid. I didn't even know Covid was that deadly.

LJ (7:40): Until you finally saw it your own self?

E (7:45): Yeah.

LJ (7:47): If you feel comfortable answering this question how are you coping financially?

E (7:56): Financially things are not super bad, but it's not super good like gas went up. It's almost (inaudible) a gallon. Where I am at Indianapolis is way cheaper than NYC. So it's not super bad as if I was to stay in New York. But it's still not good because we still have time where we need help. Financially I guess you can say.

LJ (8:40): What was it like to be home so often? Since we've been in quarantine how has it felt being home so often? If you were home often, and if you aren't, why weren't you home?

E (8:58): At first, I wasn't home often because I was in school. I was in college still. So yeah, I was still in college, and you know doing classes. I took 2-to-3-year courses. I don't want to say what it was for my personal reasons.

LJ (9:25): And were you home so often?

E (9:27): Like at first, I wasn't because I was in school. But when lockdown happened, I wasn't really working as much. I had a part-time job, I worked 2, 3 days. And then plus school, I wasn't really home in the

Beginning when the lockdown happened. Like I said, all stores closed. My job got closed down, a land so I was stuck home for a good 3 to 4 months. It affected me badly. I guess you can say that.

LJ (10:16): So, since you are living in Indiana, how is the lockdown different from NYC? Like is there any differences?

E (10:24): Yeah, it's not like NY. I heard New York got a locked-down bad you know you weren't able to go out. All stores were closed, every store you see was closed. That's what I heard, I'm not really sure. But over here we had fast food open you know whatever the government called essential. That was what was open. Hospitals, fast food, gas stations, yeah. Even like Walmart, stuff like that was open.

LJ (10:55): So, everything was open? So, like there wasn't a real lockdown?

E (10:59): In Indiana, most of the time people would just drive, mostly like a sub place where people really just drive the cause. There are not really many sidewalks for people to walk. You know most of the time people would go through the drive-through instead of going through indoor eating. But also, they would get busy but like it wouldn't be a good busy because there would be less workers because of quarantine. We couldn't have so many people in the store. They would do, like I said drive-throughs. Like everything was open but the only things that were open were drive-throughs because everything else that required you to go inside and eat and go inside and have contact with others was closed.

LJ (11:50): Speaking of jobs are people in your household currently working? And if they were when the lock down happened?

E (12:01): Well, my mom and my dad their job was closed down in the beginning during lockdown they didn't really work. Well, no, I lied my dad did work he's still working until this day he worked since this whole pandemic, I think. My mom did not, she stayed home she didn't have a job well she didn't have a job because her job closed down. And now there are both working.

LJ (12:37): What have you learned about yourself and your family since the beginning of this crisis? If you did what happened? If you didn't, why did you feel you didn't learn anything?

E (12:51): In the beginning of the crisis like me and family were not that close like we were like a family if I see you, I say Hi and if I don't see you, I don't say Hi. But during this pandemic, since my grandma and grandpa got sick everyone started getting together. You know pray and stuff you know that's also one thing I learned when you really need something people come, but sometimes when people don't need anything they just don't come. But

this time we were all praying for my grandpa and grandma because they were at the hospital and thank God they are out.

LJ (13:38): Over all with this pandemic what you think has been the hardest thing that you've been through?

E (13:47): Overall during this pandemic the hardest thing I've been through was being less active. Everything was close, the gym was closed, you couldn't go outside you know I didn't really have much space in my apartment.

LJ (14:04): And since you moved cities, it is different?

E (14:09): Yeah, so I moved from one state to another state. You know I don't really know much I just moved recently to is not that long ago but, I don't really know much how things are over here. So, I wasn't really like you know active I didn't know nobody so basically, I was just alone the whole pandemic. And the hardest part was going through it alone. But I guess everyone had to do that because of the whole quarantine and lockdown stuff but I think that's the hardest part but also trying to be more cautious and like cleaner than you already are.

LJ (14:59): What has been a positive outcome from this pandemic? Anything positive?

E (15:05): Yeah so, a couple of positive things like being closer with my parents. Before the pandemic mostly me and my father used to go at it but during the pandemic, he got sick, you know things happened, I started realizing more like you take things for granted. I realize how much I really do care about my parents. I learned how much they care about us, for me and my siblings.

LJ (15:43): What has been your favorite thing about lockdown?

E (15:50): My favorite thing about lockdown is my PS4 because even though I was on lockdown I still had a connection with my friends to play and stuff and even though I am a little old you know I love my video games.

LJ16:11): So, I am going to skip some questions because he said doesn't feel comfortable answering some of them.

LJ (16:18): Would you ever be getting the Covid vaccine if you did why? And if you don't why haven't you?

E (16:26): At the beginning, I thought about the Covid vaccine because there were so many rumors about you know lies about it.

LJ (16:37): There were just jokes about it in social media?

E (16:40): Yeah, social media portraying the vaccine as a big bad thing. You know I don't want to get into that stuff you know I prefer not to talk about deep into it. But I got the vaccine my first dose when was it? I got my first dose at the end of January, and I got my second dose around the beginning of February.

LJ (17:11): Was it because of your job at the hospital? Or because you felt force getting the vaccine because you worked at the hospital? Or it was your choice?

E (17:19): At first, I am not going to lie. I did feel forced since I work at a hospital. You know we were given the chance to get the vaccine without waiting in the big line. We were given the chance to get the vaccine without paying you know because we work at the hospital. I was forced because they kept coming and coming to my workspace and they kept kind of trying to persuade us to get the vaccine. At first couple of times, I didn't like it because I found it annoying how they kept coming and coming and asking but, then I thought about it telling me all the pros about the vaccine. It sounds like it can actually work. And it's like this pandemic is going to make history so I actually got the vaccine because I was worried more about my family because I work at a hospital. I got the vaccine because I wanted to prevent myself from getting transmitted with the virus. I don't want to catch the virus and I also didn't want to bring the virus to my family.

LJ (18:48): Did you feel scared working at the hospital in the beginning when you heard about it?

E (18:57): Yeah, in the beginning yeah, I did feel scared I got there almost all floors were full of COVID, like all floors were full of isolated rooms and there were people being isolated stuff like that. The Hospital felt, you know hospitals are sad you know when you go to the hospital it's not a good feeling being at the hospital. You know when covid was big, big, it felt even more sadder and scarier. It felt like we were at war. Obviously not with the country but this war is with a big virus.

LJ (19:44): Okay now I am going to ask you some question about Black Lives Matter Protest and if you know feel comfortable just let me know and I will stop asking the question.

LJ (19:53): Do you remember when you first heard about George Floyd and all those people that got killed and arrested or just criticized because of who they are?

E (20:13): where was I? I was at home I didn't really know about it, wait no actually I was at work. I pay attention to the news, but I don't go out of my way to look for the news. You know on social media things get passed on. So, at first, I saw it, and this has been going on for a long

time. It's not just you know African American people, it's colored people in general who get treated the way we are not supposed to be treated. Because I have colored myself and yeah, I didn't really think it was a big deal for me at least because it's something that happens every day throughout America. You know in America it happens every day but this one hit hard because there was actually a video of it happening and to answer your question I was at home or work don't really remember it was one of those two.

LJ (21:22): So am I going to skip some questions. Do you believe their issue with the criminal justice system in the United States that helped blamed these protests? And if yes, what are those issues? And when did you become aware of those issues?

E (21:43): I believe there is some problem or issue that caused the protest and stuff but like I said this has been going on for a long time. I realized these problems throughout my whole life, throughout the time I know and can remember this being going on since who knows. And yeah so, the problem I feel is there is so much inequality between police officers and people in the criminal justice field and regular citizens. Because I feel sometimes, they think they're more in power than others. You know it builds up their ego and stuff they start thinking their better than regular other citizens. You know also, in the criminal justice field the government protects them too much and we can't act we can't see nothing you feel me?

LJ (23:11): That's all you have to say?

E (23:12): Yeah.

LJ (23:13): Did you go to protest? Did you want to? Were you planning to? And if you didn't go, why didn't you go?

E (23:21): I wanted to protest. I wanted to go there doing it downtown in Indianapolis. I didn't go because we still had Covid around.

LJ (23:30): OH yeah! People still went out.

E (23:35): I feel like that happened when people forgot what was going on. I wanted to go but am not the type, but I respect the fact we had to stay home because I want this to be over as fast as possible because I don't want to stay in my house and do nothing. I don't want to keep wearing these annoying masks that hurt. You know I work at a hospital we got to wear these masks every day, they hurt my ears it irritates me. I actually wanted to go because it's not just Black Lives Matter only to all people in general of color. We all get mistreated, mostly people of color get mistreated. I wanted to protest not just for one race for all types of races because it happens to everybody not just one person.

LJ (24:40): Do you have any stories or experiences being involved in the protest that impacted you?

E (24:51): No sorry, can't answer that I don't have any experience.

LJ(24:57): Did you learn more about the history of racism in this country since this protest started?

E (25:30): I actually did! Throughout my school life they taught us about racism also me well am Mexican American I have the skin color of a Mexican. People in general cops think we are less than them. You know I have had personal experiences of racial inequality. It has happened to me. I saw it happen to my mom and my dad, my family members, and my friends I have seen it happen to them. I already knew how it felt you know how things went down. During the protest, I did my research. I actually learned more about it because of the protest it pushed to start learning about it more and learning more about my laws and my constitutional rights stuff like that.

LJ (26:09): What have you seen your peers doing that inspired you in this crisis?

E (26:18): To be honest I have not seen my peers. I Am the type of person to inspire my peers, I do not get inspired by my peers. I guess you can say is being cautious, helping others, you know, donating cans of food, basically taking care of each other because time are tough right now, we should be watching out for each other instead of hating.

LJ (26:57): Do you believe we are any closer than when George Floyd was murdered?

E (27:04): To be honest I believe a protest won't help not because I'm ignorant or anything because the system is so messed up that you know the government will always protect its people. The government is the top of the top and is always going to protect the people that work for the government. Regardless of if they protest is going to help very little. When they started doing the riot breaking in stores that did not going to help.

LJ (28:18): Yeah! I'll add to that. You know in downtown Manhattan or wherever yours was located, they were destroying stores how did you feel about that?

E (28:33): Yeah, I feel that was not a good idea why people did that. I feel people just did that to get free stuff because lotting was not it! People should not have done that, and it doesn't have a meaning to do it. At the end of the day people remember the lotting than the actual protest. The protest was to be heard not to attack, lotting just messed it up, looting just took the attention from the regular protest. The government is always going to do that. I don't know if you heard, you know they offered George Floyds family a certain amount of money to drop the case and chargers. It is an example of how the government will always protest its people.

LJ (29:14): I am going to talk about 2021 right now If you don't feel comfortable just let me know.

LJ (29:53): What do you think about President Trump being impeached?

E (30:02): I feel like President Trump, I don't really know about the impeach thing. But what I do want to say is President Trump has done a lot of bad things, I don't support Trump but to be



real but not just to have a biased answer I am really thinking outside the box, President Trump or any other type of person that does bad things deserves a punishment. The impeachment wasn't a bad idea because we can't have a leader in the United States doing bad things because what type of leader would that be?

LJ (31:03): So, I am going to ask you a question about Trump and about everything that's been going.

E (31:13): I prefer not to talk about those types of topics because it gets me mad and angry, and I don't like talking about things like that.

LJ (31:29): Okay, so I am going to ask you some additional questions. So, you know how you live in Indiana right?

Edwin (31:30): Yes.

LJ (31:39): You moved to Indiana. You went from New York to Indiana do you plan on going back. You know how over here is worse where you are, do you have plans coming back.

E (31:59): I want to go back; I plan to go back and am not certain about actually living there. I would like to go there for vacation and stuff but to go back to live and stuff am not really looking forward to that. I learned moving states over here everything is not as pricey and also

because of Covid the pandemic over there is worse like NYC is like the heart of the pandemic you can say because all the things that are going on I don't really think I will go back.

LJ (32:55): So, you know how you said your parents are from Mexico you count yourself as a Mexican. If you feel comfortable saying, has anyone been racist to you because of your skin color?

E (33:15): Yeah, a couple times. Well, I am a big guy, and I am big, so nobody really comes up to me and tries to do you know who wants to try a big person. But I can't say no people do look at me as I am walking around my mom and dad. People look at things a certain way. When people look you can tell their energy. You can just feel the energy on the way they look. We can be waiting for help at a store and people they would skip us. They wouldn't really help as if I was to be a white, blue eyes person.

LJ (34:18): They wouldn't take us seriously because of your skin color?

E (34:19): Yeah, when it comes to prices and stuff, they wouldn't want to give it to us they would think we can't pay because of how we look and are.

LJ (34:44): So, I wanted to bring up this topic since you said you got COVID, and you got the vaccine. How did you feel? So, when you got COVID, what was your first reaction when you got it?

E (34:55): When I first got Covid I didn't really know. When I got it, I didn't know because I wasn't really educated on that. I just knew the symptoms so when I got it, I wasn't really sure if I had it until I started eating my food and I don't taste nothing and then I started coughing my lungs would start hurting a little bit It wasn't bad it was just that at the beginning and I didn't really think much of it I told my mom I don't feel good and I told taste food I just rested. Next morning, I woke up at 7 am or am with a high fever and I was coughing a lot, I didn't feel good to stand up or to walk. I was in bed all day. I didn't even know I had COVID, I was really surprised that I got it because I wasn't really thinking I was going to get it. but yeah, I caught it.

LJ (36:44): Last question so You know everything that has been going on the crisis, the pandemic, the black lives protesting, the president and the government. Do you have a solution if you had one or was a president or leader who would you do to help in the world we are living in right now?

E (37:21): I don't really have a solution. I am more thinking like if I was a president, I would be truthful with people or if I had any type of power I would be as truthful as I can. I would love to influence others. I would help the people who are more in need then the people who don't really need it

I would set it up the military in every state to give out canned food or whatever they need. I would help out with money.

LJ (38:45): That's all, is there anything you would like to share? Before I stop this audio.

E (38:51): I don't think so, just stay safe that all. Just stay 6 feet away and keep your distance. Listen to the president to whoever is telling you to do the right thing not the bad thing do it for your family and if you don't care think about how long you won't be able to party anymore.

LJ (39:24): I am done interviewing and just to confirm again with the professor yes, he still agrees to me sending this video and give his consent and, I am sorry if there were background noises there were so many people in my house right now. There were some edits he didn't feel comfortable sharing (2021), so some parts were skipped because he did not wanted to bring that topic up. That all for my Oral History project.