**COVID-19**

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In the past 18 months every American citizen has had to learn a new way of life. A pandemic way of life where loss, panic, and fear play a much bigger part in day-to-day routines. Each and every one of us have had our own trials and tribulations with this cursed virus we call Covid-19. The time of loss is upon us now more than ever. 640,000 American lives have already been lost due to this pandemic, with 4,550,000 deaths worldwide. Social gatherings, public institutions, travel, and especially education have changed forever. This pandemic has also devastated the American economy due to unemployment rates, unemployment insurance claims, less consumer spending, and much lower small business employment.

The first week of July in 2020 was a rollercoaster of emotions for my family and me. I didn’t quite understand the seriousness of the virus until my grandmother passed away from Covid on July 8, 2020. I felt so helpless. Scientists say the initial cause of the virus was some people in China contracted the virus from eating bats. I personally find this hard to believe and expect that there was some type of third-party intervention. She was only 68 years old. All I could ask myself is why? Why did this virus happen? I wanted justice for her but found it nowhere. No one responsible for this virus has been held accountable. I feel like this whole corona virus and its origin has been covered up and swept under the rug. I really wish I could know what exactly happened and what went wrong. Regarding my grandmother's death, my family had so many regrets and kept saying what if… I hadn’t seen her for 8 months since the pandemic had started. It wasn’t until the day we went to the funeral home that it really hit me, she was gone for good. No one could get into the hospital to hold her hand as she passed, that haunts me to this day.

Covid 19 has not only crippled the U.S. economy, but it has also divided us politically. I’ve always believed “United we stand, divided we fall”, Abraham Lincoln said this prior to the civil war. We are once again learning the many truths of that statement. As a country I believe we haven’t been this divided or isolated since the Civil war. Protests and riots between civil rights movement groups, the capitol riot, legislative and executive corruption have plagued our country. Even topics such as Covid vaccination and the safety of our families are divided politically. Everything is just messed up right now, we have got to figure it out.

Covid-19 has completely ruined college for me thus far. I had dreams of what college life would be like with new friends, more freedom, and was looking forward to all these once in a lifetime experiences that everyone talks about having in college. The closest thing to a college experience that I have gotten to have were the first 2 weeks in the dorms last year with my buddy. Even then, nothing was normal due to the Covid restrictions and regulations. I have lived at home ever since we got kicked out of the dorms and have had a full-time job. I can’t help but feel like I’ve missed out on a lot and can’t say I have had a real college experience.