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0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy
Project

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**West Virginia Participant 23 (Hispanic/male/43), interviewed on
March 3, 2022**

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Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The Fake News and Information Literacy Project

Stephen M. Underhill, PhD, Principal Investigator

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|---------|
|  | Marshall University IRB | |
| | Approved on: | 9/17/21 |
| | Expires on: | 9/15/21 |
| | Study number: | 1779793 |

Key Information

You are invited to participate in a research study. Research studies are designed to gain scientific knowledge that may help other people in the future. You may or may not receive any benefit from being part of the study. Your participation is voluntary. Please take your time to make your decision, and ask your research investigator or research staff to explain any words or information that you do not understand. The following is a short summary to help you decide why you may or may not want to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later on in this form.

The purpose of this study is to understand the Appalachian experience with fake news and how people determine what is/not credible online. We expect that you will be in this research study for one hour. Though you will be anonymous and your identity will be kept secret, a redacted copy of your interview transcript will be posted online on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website (https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history/).

You will be asked 64 questions. Your dialogue will be recorded on Microsoft Teams and housed on Marshall University's OneDrive, which is password protected. The recording will be destroyed at the end of the semester (during finals week). To protect your privacy, you will be identified by your state of residence, race, sex, age and participant number. For example, the Digital Scholar website will catalogue your interview with a pseudonym like "Kentucky Participant 5 (White/Male/65), interviewed on October 5, 2021." Please avoid mentioning your name or other identifying information in the interview. Your name will not be on the transcript. The name of the interviewer will not be included in the transcript or otherwise on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website. All identifying information will be removed before transcripts are posted online. But once transcripts are posted on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website, they will be permanent. We will not be able to remove them.

How Many People Will Take Part In The Study?

About 24 people every semester people will take part in this study. A total of 24 subjects are the most that would be able to enter the study per semester.

What Is Involved In This Research Study?

You will be asked a series of 64 open-ended questions about your thoughts and feelings on fake news and disinformation online. You will be asked about your opinion of sensitive social questions like issues of race, class, religion, etc.

With your consent, this interview will be recorded. You will only be identified as "you" during the interview. The Microsoft Teams recording, which will be with the camera turned off, will be stored on Marshall University's OneDrive and will only be shared with the FYS small group, the FYS graduate assistant and the professor. These people will use the recording to verify consent and make a

Subject's Initials _____

redacted transcript. Definitized transcripts will be uploaded to Marshall University's Digital Scholar website (https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history/).

What Are Your Rights As A Research Study Participant?

You may choose to not take part in the study. You may leave the study up to the point that the interview is complete. Once the redacted transcript is posted on the website a participant may not withdraw. Refusing to participate or leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide to stop participating in the study we encourage you to talk to the investigators or study staff first.

The study investigator may stop you from taking part in this study at any time if he/she believes it is in your best interest; if you do not follow the study rules; or if the study is stopped.

Detailed Risks Of The Study

Because the recording will be destroyed at the end of the semester, and because the only a deidentified redacted transcript will be posted online, there is no foreseeable risk in the study.

What About Confidentiality?

We will do our best to make sure that your personal information is kept confidential. However, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Federal law says we must keep your study records private. Nevertheless, under unforeseen and rare circumstances, we may be required by law to allow certain agencies to view your records. Those agencies would include the Marshall University IRB, Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and the federal Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP). This is to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. If we publish the information we learn from this study, you will not be identified by name or in any other way.

What Are The Costs Of Taking Part In This Study?

There are no costs to you for taking part in this study. All the study costs, including any study tests, supplies and procedures related directly to the study, will be paid for by the study.

Will You Be Paid For Participating?

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Whom Do You Call If You Have Questions Or Problems?

For questions about the study or in the event of a research-related injury, contact the study investigator, Stephen Underhill at 304-696-3020 or at underhills@marshall.edu. You should also contact the investigator if you have a concern or complaint about the research.

Subject's Initials _____

For questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity (ORI) at (304) 696-4303. You may also call this number if:

- You have concerns or complaints about the research.
- The research staff cannot be reached.
- You want to talk to someone other than the research staff.

Did you receive a copy of the consent form?

Please say Yes or No

Do you agree to take part in this study and confirm that you are 18 years of age or older?

Please say Yes or No

Have you had a chance to ask questions about being in this study and have had those questions answered?

Please say Yes or No

What is today's date?

Subject's Initials _____

West Virginia Participant 23 (Hispanic/Male/43), interviewed on March 3, 2022

The participant agreed to the terms of the consent.

Interviewer: Tell me about when you first started using social media and news started to appear for the first time on your feed, like Facebook or Twitter.

Participant: Let's see, first time it happened was several years ago. This was before the Trump era. It became a lot more prevalent in both Twitter and Instagram and Facebook. A lot more prevalent during that election season, 2015, 2016, when it became a lot more prevalent, and even worse towards the second election in 2020.

Interviewer: On a normal day, how do you use the Internet?

Participant: Most of the time I use the Internet is to search for new recipes, scroll around for, well, something to kill my brain, and a lot of the time I actually use it to do some classes. Well, classes isn't the right word, but to further my education in one form or another. Now, I'll scroll through the headlines but that's about it. Sometimes social media, not as much as others though.

Interviewer: So, what type of websites do you visit?

Participant: Let's see, if I'm doing something for work, it's usually the ENA- Emergency Nurses Association. I'll also visit BuzzFeed for my killing my brain, along with some other similar type websites. One of my favorites is recreation.org when I'm looking for vacation ideas. I also visit a lot of them, you know, I'll scroll through Yahoo because that's my main source of email. So, I'll scroll through that every now and then. I'll also scroll through Facebook and Twitter occasionally and I'll get over to Daily Mail for my generalized news source. There are some others, but that's usually what I am doing.

Interviewer: OK. So, what have you searched for online in the last week?

Participant: Let's see. I searched for chili recipes for a chili cook-off competition that I might enter. Let's see, I did research for the upcoming war on Russia to clarify some information, but also search for, you know, just random things that I discussed with friends to see who was right and who wasn't. And once again, social media, just to see how some of my friends are doing.

Interviewer: So, to go along with those questions, what websites do you visit to pass time when you are bored?

Participant: The one I spend the most time on when I'm bored is actually Twitter for recreation, like just vacation websites in general. Trip adviser, recreation.org, Atlas Obscura is one of my favorites to go past the time. Amazon because I get bored a lot and I wanna pretend like I have money to spend.

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Interviewer: I relate to that one. So, what do you typically do on those sites and why do you visit them?

Participant: In terms of the cooking websites that I go to, it's because I really do enjoy cooking and I have a lot of cookbooks and sometimes I just wanna try and see if there's something new out there I want to try in terms of social media to kill my brain. I see what my friends were doing. I actually don't spend as much time on there, just because I find it frustrating. In terms of Twitter, I'll scroll through and just see any conversations that I might enjoy joining, which doesn't usually last very long. I said recreation websites and Atlas Obscura just to just see what kind of ideas to give me like if I'm gonna be out in a certain area, you know, family's out in this one area. So, maybe I want to go see what kind of weird things there are to do over there. Weird, and neat, but fun.

Interviewer: OK, so thinking about these questions, what do you think other people are doing, both people you know and people you don't know? How do other people pass time online?

Participant: So, a lot of my colleagues at work, they spend a lot more time on social media. I know this cause they talk about it all the time. They ask me questions, "Did you see this person's post? Did you see that person's post," and I'm like- "nope." Because it's not that I don't care, but if they're not telling me in person, then I'm not gonna go stalk them on the Internet. I do know a handful that spend time with not so friendly or not so friendly, is not the right word. Not so family friendly, there we go, websites, explicit materials for their viewing pleasure. And I know a lot of people spend a lot of time on news websites.

Interviewer: What types of devices do you use to access the Internet like your phones, tablets, laptops? Which do you use the most and which do you use the least?

Participant: I use my phone the most because I tend to not be at home for large portions of the day, so I'll get on the Internet while I'm running around waiting in line or just sitting down just out and about. I will use my laptop. I prefer my laptop when I'm at home because it's got a larger viewing screen and easier for me to type.

Interviewer: I relate to that. I prefer to use my laptop when I can. What social media forums like Twitter or Reddit do you use, when, why, or for what do you use them? Please share any you try to avoid and your reasons for avoiding them.

Participant: I'll start with my avoiding ones. I avoid Facebook and Instagram more than anything else, just because I personally feel that they do a lot of information harvesting. And sometimes, when I do a little search on Facebook, you know, or anywhere else, it'll show up on an ad in Facebook. And I know that's not only Facebook, that's any search engine, usually Google. But you know, Facebook seems to be the biggest in terms of pushing? You know, like, "hey, look, we know you search for this, here's some ads," you know? Not quite like that, but that's what it seems like. Instagram is not very laptop friendly, so that's my biggest reason for not

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using Instagram a lot. I actually do like Reddit a lot. I forgot about that until you mentioned it. Actually, Reddit is one of my preferred go-to social media. Reddit and Twitter, both of which because it's very easy to control what's on there. I use social media as an escape away from the real world and I feel that a lot of people spend a lot of time bringing reality back into social media, with Reddit easier than Twitter. I can go around on my Reddit stream, I can literally control what shows up on my feed where Twitter, I can only control who I follow, whether we have the same political views or not is a different story. But, you know, I can only control who I follow, and it's up to them what they put on there.

Interviewer: I have never used Reddit, but I've heard so many people mention it that I really need to look into it.

Participant: It's not bad. Like, you have such small niches of stuff, like one of my favorite topics is called is a book series called *Red Rising*. There's an entire community on there, and so we just chat about *Red Rising* the series and then, you know, I also follow *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, because I think that's one of the best TV shows around, in all honesty. Even though it is a kids show, it's fantastic. It's well written and everything. Anyway, so you can actually literally control, you know. I like pictures of traveling. So, I follow some of those forums and just some random stuff. I just actually really like it.

Interviewer: I'll have to look into it. Alright, so when thinking about people you likely disagree with, please describe which forums you think they likely use and why.

Participant: I think they use Twitter and Facebook. The reason why I believe they use Facebook is because it's one that's been around the longest in terms of social media. At least, for my recollection anyway, and they have a platform, and they can basically just delete whoever they believe they don't want to follow. And I know you can do that on other ones too, but it's easier. Twitter, I believe, is actually the biggest sounding board, because on Twitter you can be almost be 100% anonymous and it's easy to share, and because you're anonymous, it's easy to push your ideals without having any type of real repercussions, in terms of defending whatever ideals you want to believe or argue. So, I believe those two are the two biggest ways to push news.

Interviewer: Alrighty, so describe for me what you do when you want to find out something factual.

Participant: So, with everything on the Internet, you got to take it with a grain of salt. It is hard with all the misinformation; reporters aren't reporting anymore there. They're giving their personal thoughts and pushing a bias. Both sides left and right, and it's really hard to figure out what is factual. So, the way I personally do it, and the way I've actually been doing it for a long, long time, even before social media is, I actually try and find multiple sources outside of the United States websites that I think are decent in terms of sharing unbiased information, because they don't live in the States, so they don't really care about what goes on over here. So, I will visit a lot of outside sources, not the US-based websites for my factual information. And if I am

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searching within the US, which is easier than elsewhere, I go to multiple sources to try and figure out what is the truth. Not as easy that way. A little more time consuming, but in my opinion it's worth trying to find out the truth, and it should be worth your time and effort in terms of researching properly.

Interviewer: So, with that, how do people around you find out something factual?

Participant: Most people would just do a Google search and just call whatever the first couple of things fact. I hate it when they do this. Some people will actually pull up Facebook and say, "I found this information on Facebook." I'm like 'goodnight'. I seriously- it's just Facebook doesn't even have to list their sources. Just somebody random throwing out whatever they think. I hate it when they use that one. Not a fan, and not as big a fan of Wikipedia, but at least they have a place to document where they have their information. But I forgot the question. I rambled.

Interviewer: No, you pretty much answered it. The question was:, how do people around you find out something factual?

Participant: OK. Yeah, that's about it.

Interviewer: All righty. So, everyone comes across things that surprises them on social media, between advertising, news, and commentary. Please describe a time when you came across content that you doubted was trustworthy or made you distrust its author or its purpose.

Participant: Well, most recently, the war with Russia invading Ukraine. That was one of those. You know, they've been threatening for years that they're gonna do it. And when they finally did it, I was like, say what? And so, I actually had to go around to multiple sources to see what was actually going on. But sometimes it's a celebrity, like a celebrity death, like Robin Williams a few years ago, killing himself. Like that was, I couldn't believe it. I actually had to go find out from other sources that it was true or false and turns out it was true. So those are the two biggest ones that come to mind.

Interviewer: I did the same thing recently with Betty White's death when I saw it from one of my friends.

Participant: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: I stopped believing that friend.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Alrighty, so share a time when you talk to your friends or family about such content.

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Participant: So, the content that I discuss with my family the most, regarding these types of issues, is usually clarifying things with my mom regarding COVID. She is not the most educated person. She never learned how to read, and she reads at about maybe a third-grade level. So, her understanding is not really up to par for what most people consider educated. So, the vast majority of her news comes from either watching it on TV, from whatever source she chooses, or second hand from other people, or Facebook. All of which can potentially be horrible, horrible, giving wrong information out there. So, a lot of my discussions regarding this type of stuff is what usually with my mom or dad trying to help them understand. More of what they're seeing and reading on the Internet.

Interviewer: Alrighty, so tell me about a time you saw such content on the news.

Participant: I don't follow the question, like what kind of content do you mean?

Interviewer: Just the content we've been talking about, like what you come across?

Participant: Oh, COVID. So specifically, again, going back to COVID, that is the big sensitive issue, which it finally, finally seems like it's starting to go away. Now for the last two years, it's been everywhere in the news. Nobody knows what to believe. Nobody knows what to understand, and it has been both sides spreading an agenda- and I call it an agenda because that's 100% the way it feels like. Each, every news source has a way that they want to push the people to believe, and this makes it extremely difficult to find factual information. Every time I was at work and listening to the news, I would hear some information. And I'd explain the rationale why it wasn't true or why it was true, because people are usually asking me because of my medical background. So it was the biggest in terms of me seeing both, seeing it on the news as well as seeing it in social media everywhere.

Interviewer: OK. So, if there are social media sites that you think are untrustworthy, what makes them untrustworthy?

Participant: The biggest is, again, Facebook, and the reason why I consider it untrustworthy is because they, on so many different occasions, have admitted to harvesting data, and it's been shown that they're harvesting information and data from our computers and stuff, and it is by far one of the worst culprits in terms of social media. Untrustworthy sites? I'm going to generalize a little at Google. Do you know Google is in on it as well? They do, and they don't exactly keep everything secure like they claim they do. Twitter, going back to social media, is another one of those sources where it's not the most trustworthy, but then, that goes back to the reason I think they're untrustworthy is because you have bots that are fake accounts that are easy to create and you can easily go around spreading misinformation anonymously and not even having a real source, and there's no- you know, it gets to a point where it's nearly impossible to find a valid source of information. So, Twitter and Facebook being the worst two social media outlets, in terms of them, you know, not being trustworthy.

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Interviewer: So, on a slightly different note, tell me about your experiences finding conspiracy theories.

Participant: I love conspiracy theories. My favorite place? Well, I have a lot of different places that I go in terms of conspiracy theories. My favorite source for conspiracy theories is actually-- There's a few different podcasts on Spotify that you can find regarding conspiracy theories. You know, one of them is called *Supernatural*. One of them is straight-up called *Conspiracy Theories*. You know, there's a lot of different ways to do it, but the Spotify is my favorite way to find conspiracy theories, but another place to find some- if you're willing to sit down and read through all the extra content -is Reddit. It actually has quite a bit of conspiracy theories. You know, some of them are really farfetched, some of them are plausible. All of them are entertaining. Sometimes, I'll actually pull down a book and actually read a book, but that's not as frequent anymore.

Interviewer: So, if applicable, please describe a time when you shared content that you thought was true but later learned was not true.

Participant: I'm gonna relate this thing back to Obama, during his election time. It's not that I didn't know it wasn't true, it's that I didn't know where to find the information. And I looked and looked, and I could not find it. Then, it was during his first election, when they were trying to- when you had one side, like the the Republicans, trying to claim that he's not eligible to run for president because he was never born in the states. And I would, I looked because I thought this could be plausible because I just thought one of those random conspiracy theories. I thought it could be plausible. I'm like, 'wait, I don't know, let me just do a little research.' So, I actually could not find any information. So that's one of the few times I actually posted politically on Facebook. And I had some friends find the link and give it to me. So, they were able to, show me that he was eligible. I don't know if that's so much of a conspiracy theory because, like I said, the Republicans were claiming that he wasn't legal to run for president because he wasn't born in the states.

Interviewer: OK. So, tell me about a time when a search engine like Google or Yahoo seemed to give you what it thought you were looking for, based on what you already searched for.

Participant: This happens quite a bit. Actually, going along the lines with some of the random thoughts that I have, Google likes to play that autocomplete game, and sometimes, a lot of questions start off the same and because it has such a wide array of interest from serial killers to cooking to how to keep my Venus flytraps alive. Now Google will, on a regular basis, autocomplete something, like when I'm trying to search for some kind of a food-specific ingredient, just trying to learn what it is, and it somehow- and some of those autocomplete things, it'll show like how to cook, like some kind of like random thing I don't think that I've ever heard before. It gets weird sometimes with my random searches. I know that I didn't completely answer your question, but I don't really pay attention to Google a lot when it comes to auto complete.

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Interviewer: Yep. So, the question was fine. So, describe a time when you noticed that search results seemed somehow tailored to you. If anywhere, where on the news have you seen this discussed?

Participant: Going back to Facebook, it is brought up there a lot. Back a while ago, this is going a little more in depth, not necessarily a search engine. But we were talking about restoring a watch. Our phones were in our pockets, and we were talking about finding a place to possibly restore a watch that was an antique that we might be able to get parts for. Again, phones in the pocket, not even out. Later that day we opened up the Internet and the banner across Google, because sometimes Google advertises- or maybe it was Yahoo- one of the things they advertised was to find a replica, find places to restore your antique watch. Like almost word-for-word what we were asking the jewelry store to do. With phones in our pockets, that kind of freaked us out, like a lot to the point where, later, that we completely changed the type of phone we had available. That's how freaky that one got. But there are some other instances like, I did a quick search on camping gear on Google and on another platform. It's got links to websites like REI or Cabela's or just some random camping gear online only stores. Or if I'm doing this search on Amazon, I'll have similar type ads pop up. It gets a little weird with the data mining sometimes, but that first story I told you was definitely the creepiest.

Interviewer: I've caught my phone listening to me so many times where I would have a conversation with my family and then that's like all I get ads for. I've just gotten used to it at this point, because it happens so often, but it did weird us out the first few times it happened.

Participant: Yep. Yep.

Interviewer: So how do you decide what personal information you will provide to social media companies like YouTube or Google? Or any others you can think of.

Participant: In general, if it's just a website and all they're asking for is name, email, and phone number, that is honestly about the extent I will go: name, email, phone number. Obviously, if I'm shopping, I'll happily share what I need to get my product. But name, email, phone number, that's whatever, because you can get that from so many different locations. That doesn't even bother me anymore. But regardless of which platform, using those really three things I share with the most. And trying to get everything condensed for fewer passwords and stuff. I'll use one of mine when they have the options of which ones you want to log in with a used one of those random ones that it's all basically the same. Now it's like that, and again, unless I'm shopping for something specifically, I don't give any more information out because I know it's probably not going to be a good thing.

Interviewer: Oh yeah. Half the time, I won't give my phone number to websites. I don't need creepy texts coming in.

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Participant: Yeah, that too.

Interviewer: So, tell me the ways you try to protect your personal information online.

Participant: So, I try to. Like with Twitter, and where I have a wider array of people. Reddit, Twitter. Since those tend to be a little more anonymous accounts, I try not to give a lot of personal information or share personal information, in terms of where they might be able to find me, like on my Twitter. It asks for location because, it's like, I think that's one of the things you have to put in in terms of where you're at. I put on "I'm on the Death Star." It's easy enough so I don't. If they're asking for it, I try and keep it as anonymous as possible. A lot of this goes back to my medical background as well. Me being in the medical background or in the medical field, I'm very aware of HIPAA laws and HIPAA violations and stuff like that, and I wanna make sure that nobody- if I accidentally Tweet something about a colleague or a patient or something like that, I want to make sure that they can't find me. So, I try and keep it as free as possible of ways to find me.

Interviewer: So, what do you think other people around you do to try to protect their personal information?

Participant: So, I think a lot of this will have to go with education level, because I work with a lot of people with varying backgrounds in terms of education, and nothing against uneducated people, but I have noticed that the less education that they have, the more susceptible they are to getting their stuff stolen. So, it's more than a few occasions I've had coworkers come in and complain about how somebody managed to get hold of their credit card and now they have an extra \$500 that they got to figure out where it went. How they have to contest it now and spend time doing that. This happens less to people who are more educated, and for the record I work with a lot of educated people who are so clueless with common sense that they do the same type of stuff all the time too. So, I just know that the trend tends to be a little more on education, like the less educated, the more likely or the more susceptible they are to that kind of stuff. It's kind of sad, but it happens.

Interviewer: What have you heard about protecting your identity or personal information on the news or heard your friends or family discuss about protecting your personal information?

Participant: I get a lot of people, they try and tell me I use this, I use that, I don't use this. I avoid certain online platforms or going to certain sources that they trust for their information. So, in terms of the news it's usually the news is telling us to protect yourself, make sure you don't do this or make sure you do this to make sure that you stay protected. And that's usually what I hear from the news, that you should be protecting yourself in terms of how to protect yourself. I don't hear that as often in the news. And usually, they just throw out some generic names that are the first to come to mind when anybody thinks that, like McAfee or something like that, and we know how that went. And other people, they just tend to give out what information that they have, which doesn't always seem to be a lot.

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Interviewer: OK so, how have you responded to how the Internet companies try to customize or control what you see on their platforms like Google searches?

Participant: The companies make it a little easier. Like, I don't ask for any specifics, but sometimes, sometimes some companies, when you go onto a new website that you haven't been to before, they'll ask for cookies. That's an easy way to track everybody. So, depending on the website, sometimes I'll decline it, sometimes I'll say yes, because some, and a lot of times, it just doesn't bother me anymore, and I already know that they're going to be listening in on me with my phone. I already know that they're going to be harvesting my data, regardless of what I do to try and protect myself and so, to an extent, I don't care about when they ask if I can block it or not, just because I'd rather the website work properly because that's the reason I'm on the website. So, if they if they claim that cookies is the way to go, then alright, whatever. Let's hope that the Internet, the online firewalls and security that I paid for is functioning.

Interviewer: So, what have you heard others discuss about this?

Participant: I don't usually, actually. Most people don't, really. Most of my coworkers and colleagues don't usually talk about Internet security. I'll get the rare one that will start blowing off some conspiracy theories that they have. But for the most part, that's not usually one of the things that we discuss on a on a regular basis.

Interviewer: So, if you were to explain to your friends or family how false information spreads and can be found on the Internet or how to avoid false information, what would you say?

Participant: I would tell them upfront, do not go to social media in any way shape or form. Just because that is the easiest way to spread misinformation, because everybody is allowed to create a social media account. And like we've discussed earlier, you can create fake accounts and just try and claim that you're right, even though you've created a new account to validate what you just said. And so, it's basically, you say, patting yourself on the back, so avoiding social media is definitely the easiest way to avoid misinformation. There are supposedly trusted websites out there and I gear them towards that and once again I always try and tell them go for a few different sources just because it's hard to sift through it all. But you just have to read and read and figure out which ones you know, like I said the truth is there just have to read and figure out which ones, what's where and what you feel is reliable after doing it so many times.

Interviewer: OK, so this one is a series of questions, so if you need me to repeat anything I can.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: What do you think determines what is seen online or how things spread? How does it work? Who benefits? Who do you think made this system? What do you think controls information online or in our apps?

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Participant: OK. So, in terms of how this is spread- what was the first few questions again? Just wanna make sure I'm answering.

Interviewer: What do you think determines what is seen online or how things spread? How does it work? Who benefits?

Participant: OK. So, for that series of questions, I think everybody has opinions. It doesn't matter how much money they have, what platforms they control, what movies they make, what stories they write, what stories they tell, where they work, if they're educated, not educated; everybody has an opinion. Their opinions are their own. And a lot of times, these opinions of these people is much easily spread because of their power and wealth. The movie stars, for example, even though they may not control social media, they are looked up to and they easily influence the people who follow them, for good or for bad, whatever your definition of good or bad is, they- you know, election years are horrible, are an easy way to show this. Again going back to the movie stars, their political agenda is what is benefiting, what they believe is benefiting when they get on their platform of millions and millions and millions of people. Yeah, like across the world, like you have your Dwayne the Rock Johnsons, whatever he says goes to goes around the world, you know, whatever his political stances are. And same for, you know, like *The Hunger Games* girl, like Jennifer Lawrence, I think, and choose artists, music artists, musicians, they all use social media to benefit their agenda. And the people who are less educator there, there's a lot of people out there, education or not, educated or not, that are easily swayed by these easy platforms, in terms of who controls what's out there. The people who own it control it. Facebook has an agenda; Mark Zuckerberg owns it. He has something that he believes in, and he will. It is easy for him to control what information is out there. What he feels is offensive, he's going to take off and what Twitter feels is offensive. Whoever controls Twitter and the CEO's and all that other stuff, whatever they find offensive, they're gonna censor it. And it's the people in power that can do this. Google does the exact same thing. Sometimes it's with marketing, and not even politically. I know this because my in-laws own a company, and they have to pay extra money to Google so that it shows like their companies shows up in the search results. So, it can show up on the first page or two, instead of pages 12 and 13, where it gets buried because they didn't pay Google. Again, everybody has an agenda, and the higher up you are, the easier it is to control what information is out there. And the benefit to doing this is if you control the information, you create a society of uninformed people, and it becomes easier to control them because they don't know what's going on. We become a bunch of-- pushovers isn't quite the right word--but we become a bunch of uninformed citizens who only know what's going on because social media, because of whatever is on the media. And if they're censoring that media, we all know what happens there. It's in the history textbooks. If you start censoring the information, you start censoring what you feel is offensive to somebody or whatever, you start canceling it out like the cancel culture. It becomes problematic because then we become, we start to digress. As a society, we become uninformed and uneducated regarding different aspects. So, in terms of why they're doing it, I don't know why they want to do that. I was only going back to conspiracy theories. Maybe there's a new world order they're trying to create and maybe

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because they're so rich and powerful, they think they're going to be on top of the food chain. I don't know. Did I answer all your questions, because I know there were several there?

Interviewer: Yeah, you answered them all and I entirely forget every time that Google has more pages to your search results, I always just go with what's on the first page.

Participant: Yeah, I go for the first two or three pages. After that. I just want to go, whatever.

Interviewer: Alright, so. These next questions, they are all connected, but I'm gonna go through them, you know, like one at a time. The Internet is full of stories that divides people about things like Coronavirus, the Capitol Riot, Stop the Steal, Antifa, Black Lives Matter, climate change, QAnon, and the political parties. If you were to decide, how would you like schools or the news to talk about what controls the Internet and what is seen?

Participant: So, a lot of those political parties that you threw out there, Antifa or Black Lives Matter, things like that, the biggest issue is it becomes- It feels like they're trying to make everything racially charged, racially biased. I would like to go back, granted, this might show my age, but I honestly feel that, back in the late 70s, 80s and 90s, that those much more overall acceptance and less of this racial divide. I think, though, is become blown way out of proportion in terms of how racist this country seems. And how I would like for it to be presented in the media, to schools? I- honestly, I don't know if there is a way for it to be unbiased anymore. It should. It needs to be, and it needs to stay unbiased. But unfortunately, the people who teach these subject matters, again, going back to the everybody has an opinion. The people who are teaching it to our children, even getting into universities, they have their own opinions. And just it is very easy to persuade somebody that your opinion is right when you're in a position of authority. Because they may not know better. The younger the kid, the easier they are to convince that my sense is right, and your sense, and that person's sense is wrong. And the more time you spend with them, teaching them, the easier it is to persuade said kid in the public school system how they should think. Instead of teaching them that they should be able to think for themselves, which, again, showing the facts lead the opinions out and that's the way it should be, teaching the facts. Let them create their own opinions. But, yeah, unfortunately I don't think that's going to happen because, once again, the people who are teaching the facts, they have an opinion, and they tend to- you know- they have control of the kids for 6 to 8 hours a day. 100% their attention focused, so it's easy for them to teach their opinion, bias or no bias, to the youth.

Interviewer: Sounds very true, because I've had teachers give essay topics about something specific that could be controversial, but you have to write about one side of it cause that's what they want for the essay.

Participant: Yeah. And depending on how they grade it, if they agree with you, then you know maybe you passed because you agreed with them. If you fail because you present to your facts and it was different then right there is your biased opinion, you know, they're going to fail your class and if you don't conform to the way they're thinking regardless of which direction it is, then

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they they've already you know their opinion is what is the right opinion and everything else is wrong.

Interviewer: So, going off of the topics I listed with the last question, if you happen to see stories about Stop the Steal and the Capitol Riot, what do you make of why the presenters were there? Why do you think some dressed in costumes like hunters and trappers or with animal pelts or with Norse tattoos or as Roman soldiers? Or in groups like Cowboys for Trump? What does this mean for stories about voter fraud and voting rights?

Participant: So, this they did the exact same thing that the Antifa and the Black Lives Matter riots. All of that. They did the exact same thing that the other side did. They covered their faces. They hid themselves from society, they, you know, rioted just like the other side did. You know, they had an opinion just like the other side. They were trying to protect themselves, just like the other side and they obviously chose a much more poor- well they chose a better secured location, so it was a little easier for them to be found out. But they did the exact same thing that the Black Lives Matter and Antifa did during those eleven months of rioting and all those major cities traveling in caravans between different society and between different cities so they can go cause more problems in other locations where there are no problems. So, all they did dressing that way was trying to do the same thing that the other side did. In terms of what it stirs up and what they believe, why they dress chose Cowboys versus, you know, whatever, I don't know. Maybe they just felt that that's what white people do. I don't know.

Interviewer: So, where did you learn about this topic and what does it mean to you?

Participant: This is one of those topics that I had to do a little research because I couldn't believe it. I heard in the news and passing one day when I was at work. So, I did my normal research to a few different websites that I feel is trustworthy so I could figure out what exactly was going on, and I still don't know. I'm not gonna say that I know everything that happened because I don't, because when it boils down to it, I don't care. But, in terms of what it means to me--it just means to me on a personal level, it just feels like those that are empowered, those that are in control there trying to make an example of the Capitol Riots and the people who did that, who all happened to be into- minority is not the right word anymore- The voter minority, how's that? The voter minority cause they tend to have all voted for Trump, so the voter minority. Pretending voter fraud doesn't exist, the voter minority they're setting an example for them, but why they're pressing so hard to, you know, prosecute all these people and why they're not doing the exact same thing to all those other rioters for 11 months. I mean, everybody knows that Seattle was completely destroyed. New York is still having issues. It all started around that same time from the BLM riots. And almost nobody, almost nobody, is being prosecuted from all of those riots. But for some reason, our government is pushing for- controlling or pushing for making example out of storming the Capitol. They're not doing the same thing for all the other destruction and riots and everything else that was done. So, I think it's a double standard. And they're showing that if you don't conform to one side that you're going to be prosecuted. That's what that's- what the Capitol Riot prosecution is telling me that if you don't agree with our

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government that they're going to basically make an example out of you in terms of what could happen if you don't think like I do. If you don't believe what I do.

Interviewer: So, this goes to a different topic. It says if you happen to hear about the- I believe it's pronounced QAnon. I did not hear about this topic, so I don't know if I'm pronouncing it correctly.

Participant: Yeah, you're right.

Interviewer: What do you make of how they talk about themselves and what others say about them? Why do you think we hear so many conflicting stories? And where did you learn about this and what does it mean to you?

Participant: So, I am not 100% familiar with QAnon. I've only heard bits and pieces through my wife talking to me and scanning the headlines. I'm not even gonna pretend to comprehend what exactly they believe or what they do because I genuinely don't know what they are, what they're doing, who they're backing? Well, I don't know. I genuinely don't.

Interviewer: OK so, if you happen to be following the story on the Coronavirus, what sense do you make of the different information out there about whether people should get vaccinated and/or wear masks? Why do you think we hear so many conflicting stories? What do you think causes the different opinions and where did you learn about this and what does it mean to you?

Participant: OK. So, in terms of this specific thing. This is one, though that's a little closer to my heart, if you will, considering I'm in the medical field, there is a lot of misinformation. It is easy to create it. I think that this whole mask mandate, the vaccine mandates, what it boils down to it, I think it was- I think it was blown out of proportion because there was an agenda, the political agenda. And it was an easy way to get their way of thinking out there, you create a panic. You create misinformation. You start focusing on the horrible, horrible, horrible and only the horrible. Then you can't really see what's going on in terms of reality. This was like all of the major news outlets, 100% admit to being biased. So that's why such varying stories- what do you call it?- the misinformation, it's easier to spread because once again if I hear a story on MSNBC and I share it on Facebook one of my friends who doesn't have access to the news or doesn't do their own research, they're going to see that they're going to take it, and they're gonna run. They're gonna share it. They're gonna start spreading this information to other people. In terms of the mask mandates, I 100% believe it was a way to control the people. Because this virus, I'm not saying that it's not deadly, but it is not as bad as the media made it out to be. The information is out there. It has been buried. I know this because I had to go search for it. But it is public information, but it's hard to find, and people who are not willing to put the time and effort into it are not going to find this information. They're not going to find the numbers. I think that it started off as a political ploy. Blow it out of proportion and I think that it continues to be so- to be political- be a way to control the people. You know, like wearing masks, getting vaccinated. It's a way to create division among the United States and I know this is not just the United States

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problem. I know it is a problem across the world. But you know we only, we have a better idea of what's going on within our own country versus elsewhere. So, it's easier for me to speak with in our country because our country is for the most part free and the information is out there, whereas you have countries like Chile, that is a socialist country. They 100% control the media, as do other dictatorships that are out there in the world. They control the media. So, you know ours is still an overall free place, so we can still get our information. You just have to look for it. And again, I think that it was blown way out of proportion, or an easy way to create divide and oh what do you call that? I mean, just walking around and the way and the fact that the media is kind of encouraging everyone else to treat people who think differently than you like shit. I mean, calling people names, berating, belittling them, just because they think differently, just because they don't want to wear the mask, just because they don't want to get the vaccine. It is commonplace in society now to berating and belittle and if the other person actually has a different opinion, educated or not educated, you shut him down. And I've seen this happen both left and right. So, this is just me stating what I know. It was just one of those things that- it was an easy way to get a political panic across and it was an easy way to control the way people act, the way people think. And the way they continue with these mask mandates, you had to be vaccinated to go eat a freaking hamburger out in New York and California. And the shop owners are the ones that have to report to the bosses- to their bosses to their government that this person broke the law if they didn't wear a mask and have to enforce it. It's ridiculous that Big Brother is spying on my neighbor, tattling on them for what they believe, for what they're doing. And it would not have been known had this person not actually gone forth and gone and tattled. You know all those super spreaders left and right, were both doing it. But the right was the only one being posted about and being mocked. I'm sorry. Yeah, right, there, there are- the Republicans were the ones being marked on media, on the social media as well the media outlets, CNN, MSNBC, all those news sources were mocking, mocking people for their political beliefs. And it encouraged one neighbor to do the same to another neighbor. It encouraged coworkers who do the same to other coworkers. Mock them, make fun of them, and if there's an opinion that is different and then just shut him off and not even listen or talk to them anymore because they think differently. That's what I feel. I know we went off way off from the original question about COVID vaccines, but when it boils down to it, that's what the media was trying to do, in my opinion, trying to make everyone divided so that they can make it look like somebody is a hero.

Interviewer: No, it's perfectly OK. Everything you say is valuable for this. So, to go on to a different topic, if you happen to be following coverage on the House Select Committee to investigate the Capitol Riot. What sense do you make of how Republicans and Democrats disagree over the scope and purpose of the committee? Where did you learn this and what does it mean to you?

Participant: Once again, I believe that the Capitol rioters are being used as martyrs for one cause and targets for the other. Now we're going to make these people into examples of what happens when you do what I don't, you know, when we think differently, when I don't, when you don't, when you don't fall into complacency. We're going to make these people, we're going to make examples out of these people, the Capitol rioters. Both left and right are doing it once

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again, one who is trying to make martyrs, the other one is trying to make them examples. I'm not following it. Not to the point where some people are. Like, I'm not following every minute, every detail of these Capitol Riot prosecutions, because it honestly makes me angry that these people were caught, identified and being prosecuted and they were actively sought. They were actively hunted, searched out- searched out for actively because it was the Capitol. It was the Capitol building and it was people; they were Trump supporters. They were actively sought for, hunted and brought down, if you will, for justice. Same type of mob mentality happened during the Capitol Riots that happened during all the BLM things. But nobody has gone around to prosecute anybody or gone down to search for some of these perpetrators. They're not doing it. Reasons? I don't know. I don't want to know. I don't care to know, because once again, it gets down into that political BS, they're all puppets. There's an agenda. Whether I agree with that agenda or not doesn't matter. But following the Capitol Riots and the prosecution there of the people who are actually caught makes me angry because nobody is trying to find the BLM rioters or the Antifa people who created it, that it seems like they're only doing it to the one side so that they can make an example out of it, and the Republicans are taking advantage of this and say, "hey, look, this is a martyr for our cause. All they did was stood up for what they believed in, et cetera, et cetera." So, I try to stay away from it because, overall, it makes me really angry that a riot is a riot is a riot. Why aren't the others being searched for and prosecuted either?

Interviewer: So, you mentioned Black Lives Matter and this section goes along with that. So, if you happen to see stories about the Black Lives Matter protests and Antifa. What do you make of the protests after George Floyd was killed? Why do you think some burned buildings or other property? Why did protesters denounce the police? Where did you learn this and what does it mean to you?

Participant: I think, this all goes down to a political agenda, once again. It is a horrible, horrible thing that happened to George Floyd, it should never have happened. It caused some people to get upset, obviously, but what they made- the BLM-made George Floyd out to be a perfect citizen, when it's easy enough to dig up his records and show that he wasn't a model citizen. Does that mean he should have been treated differently in the, you know, things happen the way they threw down? No, I do not believe that at all. I think it just got out of, whatever the circumstances, where I saw some of the videos, but again videos are edited to show something and not something else. It's easy enough to do that. So, in terms of why they're writing, why they were burning places down, it's anarchy. It's easy enough when you're in the mob mentality. To say "hey, now let's go burn a building because, why not? I got a Molotov cocktail. Let's go do some destruction. Nobody can do anything about it right now." This goes into the psychology that a lot of people are inherently evil, and you have to actually try and suppress those types of feelings so that they can actually be good. But that's a different line of thinking. In terms of the looting and stuff like that once again, that is easy. Nobody is going to be held accountable. So why not go and storm this building and take it? Take whatever belongs or whatever is inside there. Just go take it. Take it with me and nobody is going to find me, nobody's gonna hold me accountable. In terms of denouncing the police, a huge mistake. There are not many people who are willing to go out and serve and protect the people. Yes, there are racist police officers, but

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there are racist teachers. There are racist politicians- there is racism everywhere. I'm not saying everybody is racist, but there are racist people in every aspect of society. So, denouncing the police, I think was a huge mistake. I think politicians denouncing the police was an easy way because all this once again happened during the 2020 elections. And it was an easy, very easy stance for the politicians who denounced the police who killed this martyr George Floyd so that they could get their votes so that they could get into Congress. And once they get into Congress, it's almost impossible to get him out. And now they have the government to protect them from whatever it is they want to do. And they can do quite a bit in the government without any type of true repercussions again. Well, in terms of why people are burning buildings down and things like that, that goes back to the there's no accountability. Nobody is going to find these people because it's a riot. So, I have a beef with this store owner over here because they didn't give me a discount or I got fired at this store. So, let's get back at him. Let's throw a bomb in there. However, the bomb might be or- Let's just break it down and steal everything. So, they lose money. Maybe that's how they wanted to get back at them. And maybe it's easy enough to convince a couple of people to go along with you. So, I don't think finding people like that was a difficult thing to do, but I think it all boils back down to why were they denounced? Why did it go on? Why was it allow to happen? And it goes back to politics. There was an agenda out there.

Interviewer: Alrighty so, to go onto a slightly lighter subject, what content do you post online? What type of content do you try to make visible for others to see? And what kind of, what type of content do you try to hide others from seeing?

Participant: When I post online, I know the beginning part of our interview, it sounded like I'm on the Internet or I'm on social media a lot. And the truth of the matter is, I'm not really on social media a lot. Because once again, if you're a friend and you have a story to tell me, tell me when you see me. If you're not gonna see me, message me. I'm not gonna stalk somebody out for a story and when it comes to Twitter, I just try and post, when it boils down to it, knowing that the world is kind of crappy and that there's so much negativity everywhere. When I post on social media, with the rare exception to vent about something, usually at work, or a long line because of whatever. Most of the time I'm posting something to make somebody laugh. So, in terms of going back to the do I want to hide anything? The only thing that I hide is being in the medical field, cause my sense of humor gets a little rough for some people. And like I know people walk around bragging all I got a dark sense of humor, until you are laughing about a situation with the dead guy right next to you, you probably don't have quite the sense of humor that I do. So, the only thing I truly try to hide or when I find something that is genuinely twisted for the general public, that I find hilarious that's usually when I try to hide. Because I don't wanna offend anybody, I'm not racist by any means, but I see the humor in a lot of stuff. You know, so if I think it's funny, I'm gonna laugh. It's just so that's- yeah, like I said, I just tried to post things that make people- you know, make people laugh, brighten their day up just a hair, if I can. Like I said, I'm only trying to hide the darker twisted side of my humor so that not everybody is freaked out about what I'm laughing at.

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Interviewer: So, can you remember a time when you were careful about what you chose to like online because of how it might affect the visibility of other people's contributions and content in your social media feed like on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram?

Participant: So, I am friends with a handful of girls on Instagram and Facebook. I know them in person. I know that they have a lot of, they have a lot of issues. So, when they post something that they are proud of, specifically referring to the way one girl dressed, it was a little on the showing excessive skin. But again, knowing that she needs positive validation in her life, I liked it, so that she could feel that much better about herself. And, once some of my coworkers found it because they're also friends with the same person, and they saw that I liked it, and so they pulled me aside at work, more joking than anything else. But I also know that they were probably trying to see if I would confess something else as well, whether they believe my explanation or not, I don't care. But you know, sometimes when I like something, I have to be a little more on the careful side. Just because, I know my- I know some of my friends, stories, backgrounds and some of their insecurities and I try to be careful so that I don't make them feel worse about themselves, so if they post something on Instagram or Facebook that they're proud of, so why else would you post it there? If you're scantily clad? And posting on social media that everybody can see usually doing that because you're proud of it. You're proud of the way you look. Maybe you look nice for the first time in forever, I don't know. But you know, I just try and be a little more mindful so that they don't think you know so that others don't really think that I liked it because of any other reason. But again, boiling back to the "if" they believe my explanation or I don't really care, I'm there for my friends to try and help them out and make them feel a little better for themselves if I can.

Interviewer: So, please tell me about a time when you tried to influence or change the content of what you see on YouTube, Google or social media results by searching something differently.

Participant: So, going on the medical field, there's a lot that gets discussed. Maybe not always correct information, as we both know at this point by a long shot. But one of the things that sticks out in my mind was an argument on Twitter. There's one guy wearing this- actually, surprisingly, doesn't have to do anything with COVID or racism or anything like that. It just has to do with the way he practiced medicine. He felt that, you know, he felt he believed one thing, the way it should be done in the way should always be done because of his degree. He's a doctor. You know me as a nurse, knowing a lot, maybe not as much as him, but I know a lot. I got into an argument with him about why he practices some of the way he does. Because again, I know a lot about medical processes, disease processes, maybe not as much as other people, but I do know I know where to find this information and I have a lot of resources here at home in addition to online. And so, we went back and forth arguing about this thing he believed- that he actually believed that everybody who gets admitted to the hospital needs to be on telemetry, which is a cardiac monitor for the net free on for the first, twenty-four to forty-eight hours. And I 100% believe that that is false. So back and forth for a while regarding that. And he didn't change my mind. I didn't change his mind and we both agreed to disagree. After several

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exchanges back and forth, cordial and professional, as far as I can tell. But, you know, I could tell that he was getting a little flustered with my- with my way of thinking.

Interviewer: So, when you are unsatisfied with Internet search results, how do you adjust your searches to change the results?

Participant: That one is a little easier. You just have to figure out a new way to word it because when it comes to Google searches or Yahoo searches, or Bing or whatever, they go by, you know, how you search. They go by, you know, they search in a certain order of things. But sometimes you can just change the wording and it changes the meaning completely, or you changed the grammar in your question that changes the meaning completely. That's why grammar so important. So, you know, when I'm having a hard time finding the answer that I am looking for or finding the topic I'm looking for the answer to it. Sometimes I just need to, you know, I'll find a different way to word it and most of the time I'm successful.

Interviewer: So how do you decide if an online source of information is reliable or credible?

Participant: This goes back to the when you just research. After, if you find the same information on multiple different websites, and then one of those sources is true, or one of them, in my opinion, can be held more, can be considered more reliable than the other sources. In terms of determining it, which ones better than others, it depends. Sometimes it's sometimes it takes a little while to figure out what's good information and what's not. But you know, just takes a little while to find a trusted source of information. But it's all, it's all about persistence, I guess. Waiting and I guess at some point you start noticing that, or if I started noticing that one of these websites was not as correct as I thought. I would start looking for something else and then again it all depends on what exactly I'm looking for also. So, that's, that's what kind of what helps determine the trusted source or not.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about a time when you double checked information online to verify if it was credible?

Participant: Well, most recently with COVID. There, again, is a lot of misinformation. A lot. And that is the easiest in terms of me going onto the Internet to try and find the right answer in terms of, whatever, you know, how it's spread or, you know, what the numbers are, what the data shows. Does a cloth mask- is a cloth mask actually effective? There's certain websites that I'm supposed to trust as a nurse, to give me information to help keep me protected while I'm at work. And no, I'm not talking about the CDC. I'm specifically referring to JCAHO. Where you know their information, as we moved into COVID and further into it before we started to ease up, I guess if you will, it was just the information didn't seem as credible because they were telling us to put trash bags and duct tape on us to protect ourselves. That's total horseshit. But that's what we're doing because there was nothing else. They're telling us to reuse the same bag. You know, the mask that we're supposed to use is a one-and-done disposable and then they say, "Oh well, you can use the same one as long as you put it in a brown paper bag" like, no, that

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does nothing. Or you can use the same one if it's been exposed to UV lights. So, now all the hospitals have to treat these masks with UV lights. No, that doesn't help either. But they- and I don't know what the rationale was for fact reader giving us all this shit information, but, you know, whatever. If I wanted to keep my job, I had to be compliant, so I need a job.

Interviewer: So, you did kind of go over this a little, but I'm gonna ask the question. So, what made you suspicious of this information?

Participant: What we know to be true as nurses in terms of how to protect ourselves changed a lot over the course of the beginning stages of the pandemic and some of the things they were telling us to do was just asinine. For example, we were supposed to- it's actually still going on now -if a person has COVID gets treated in a room, that room needs to be COVID clean, so wiped down 100% and then 15 to 20 minutes with the little portable UV zapper that looks like a rave is going on inside that room, minus music. Might as well turn on the music, in my opinion. But they only do this kind of a treatment for a private room. Within a few months after COVID started, they stopped doing this treatment in our triage area. The triage area is where everybody except for ambulances comes into the department. You show up with a sprained ankle you go to, you go to triage, you show up with the chest pain. You go to triage. You go through that front door, the triage room after a few months was no longer being cared for or treated or cleaned like COVID and a lot of times it was because of the volume when you got fifteen, twenty, thirty people that need to be triaged. Maybe you don't have time to stop every fifteen minutes to take care of a COVID clean inside triage and then exposing- getting exposed once again. Using the protective equipment that they tell us is good and OK, which we all know is a joke. You know you're supposed to wear certain large filtered masks for people who have COVID. When you're in triage, you don't, they don't always tell you the whole story. When they come in, pretending with the knee thing again, you show up with a knee injury, you're gonna tell me why you're here, you sprained your knee. And so, I go get X rays. Then this person goes and tells the doctor that. Oh, and I also have a cough. So, for some reason, now they're being tested for COVID at this point. I've already triaged, like, five or ten more people in the exact same seat that they were already in because it's a knee injury and this knee injury comes in, comes back positive for COVID. So now technically every single one of those people that are triaged since he has been exposed because we weren't doing that COVID zapping cleaning that the CDC or that JCAHO told us was good, and the CDC said was fine. So, you know, do I believe everything they say? No, I don't. Because if they're gonna treat the private rooms for COVID and specially clean those rooms, they should do it for every single person that walks in those front doors that gets tested for COVID, which is a lot of people. And they don't. I've been exposed so many different times, multiple times per shift. Fortunately, I have never caught it, whereas other friends do. I do what I can to protect myself. I know what I need to do. I wash my hands. Those are things that I know we need to do in general, but those trusted places, though, once you're supposed to keep us safe. Not so safe. Their information doesn't. I take it a lot more skeptically now than I used to.

Interviewer: So, what steps did you take to see if the information was correct and what did your findings make you feel about the website?

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Participant: So, the steps that I took to know whether or not alright, the COVID clean, the zapping, the UV lights, I still honestly don't know if that's a valid statement. Because, you know, sunlight kills a lot of stuff, but UV light is different than just straight sunlight. Better, worse, I don't know. A lot of these information in terms of keeping yourself protected, keeping yourself clean is in my nursing textbooks. So specifically, regarding protecting yourself, protecting yourself from airborne precautions, it's in the textbooks that I went through nursing school with, and I have that still in my basement. In terms of what they said is good, what they said is bad. Like I said, I'm at least when it comes to protecting myself from airborne pathogens. I have my textbooks to back up my information. In terms of other stuff, I don't know. Just more research online somewhere. So, I believe that I have a better story to help me understand things better.

Interviewer: So please tell me about a time that your friends or family just distrusted a website or information on a website. Did they double check the information from a different source to verify if it was credible?

Participant: It depends on which sibling we're discussing. My sister, she seems complacent in having her one source of information. Where she gets that source, I don't know, and I don't care. And she- if you don't- if you don't think or agree with her in terms of those matters, those issues, she is not gonna really agree and just not really gonna listen to the other side of the story. Some of my brothers are the same on the other spectrum. When I get into these discussions with them, I sometimes play devil's advocate. Whether I agree with them or not, just to see what they say, just to see if I can get them to at least listen to the other side of the story. In terms of their specific website that they find information or misinformation, that's going back to playing devil's advocate. And you know, just saying, hey, well, this website says this just to see what they do, just to see how they react. If they shut me down, shut me out and change the subject, I know that they really, really like that source of information so they're not going to be receptive to anything else if they say, oh, and they start to- even if they're not going to agree with me if they at least pretend like they're going to acknowledge that something, another opinion exists, then at least they might be open to something. You know, hearing the other side, if you will.

Interviewer: How do you think the media should cover stories about fake news or disinformation? Should the media do more to teach people how to verify credibility of information?

Participant: So, I believe the media should do much better due diligence in terms of making sure that correct information is out there. I believe that they should be just like when I'm doing a research paper. I have to do a work cited page that I have to tell everybody where I got my information. I believe that media outlets should do this type of thing so that they can show where they got their information. It would lead to much better overall reporting and less bias because then people can actually sit there and find "oh, so they say this, and here's their source. Let me see this source. Let me see this source. Let me see if they did any research." But a lot of times it just feels like they're just talking out their asses and they don't really seem to care. But that's not

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the question the question was, I believe they should be able to give some form of a work cited page if you will. So, give out some of the information some of the- where they found the information so that way it could be a more unbiased opinion and actual facts.

Interviewer: OK. So, this next one has a bunch of questions with it, so if you need me to repeat anything, just let me know.

Participant: Alright.

Interviewer: The term fake news seems to be everywhere right now. What are your thoughts about what it is, where it's at? Who targets it? I mean, who it targets? Who is vulnerable to it? What it means for democracy? Is it a real problem? What are the politics of it all?

Participant: You seem to have broken up for that last portion, but in terms of some of that, what's going on it targets, I feel this information is targeting the uneducated- this fake news. And yes I believe, going back to the- I know that they're educated people who fall, who are naive, gullible, however you wanna call it. But it's just easier to say uneducated because they can be uneducated in so many different ways. I'm uneducated when it comes to business and stocks. I'm uneducated with that, you know, fake news I feel is targeted towards uneducated people and there are lot of people. Politics is very, very complex. And it is not easy to follow. There are so many different players, and these players don't always change, but you still add more to it. So, the Clintons are an easy go-to because they've been around since the 90s and they're still relevant. But you also have other people who are no longer relevant, but others who still are relevant from that same era of politics. And so, I think this fake news is targeting those people who are unable to follow, unwilling to search, unwilling to look elsewhere for information. And I think it's- I think it's easy, easy platform to just discredit somebody without actually having any validation. And I, you know, Trump said this a lot, you know, it's fake news whether it was fake news or not, don't know, don't care. It's irrelevant to this conversation, but it pulls. It proves the point that if you walk around saying it's "fake news" and then you have a bunch of loyal followers who are too uneducated to search for themselves, whether it's fake or not, then you just, all of a sudden you have a new group of people walking around saying, "oh, that's fake news," just because it's different and the same can be said for the other side as well.

Interviewer: OK. So, if you could please offer some examples of where you've seen fake news, who are the people who publish it? What are they trying to get from it and what should be done about it?

Participant: So, in turn, the easiest, easiest one of these to answer is 'what should be done about it?' Should people be held accountable for spreading this misinformation? I don't like to call it "fake news." I'd rather call it misinformation. But it's one in the same, in my opinion. It should, they should be held accountable. But not just me giving news to you, because if I heard it from somebody else, you know who heard it from somebody else, and this is where it gets really, really dicey. It boils down to the media outlet, the media, the news outlets should be held

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accountable for spreading this misinformation and fake news, if you will. In terms of how I have personally heard of it? All different platforms. Who's sharing it? Everybody. You know, it's one side versus the other. It always will. It always has been, it always will be. And there is no- there seems to be no middle ground. I see both sides doing it. I see it on Facebook. I see it on Twitter. Sometimes I see it on Instagram. I sometimes see it on Reddit, right? I see it everywhere. And it's just one of those things where, yeah, at this point, it's impossible to stop spreading it.

Interviewer: OK, great. So, is there anything else you would like to share?

Participant: No, I think we covered quite a bit. You know, I just- I felt like I rambled a lot, but a lot of these answers- a lot of the questions that you asked, don't have an easy answer, which I know is part of the part of the study that you're doing if you will. So, I actually enjoyed the conversation though. Thanks for, you know, inviting me to this, to this interview. I appreciate it. I enjoyed it.

Interviewer: I'm glad you enjoyed it. So, we just have the last few questions for you. So, what is the date?

Participant: Today's date. I believe we agreed that it was March 3rd of 2022.

Interviewer: Great. What is your state of residence?

Participant: I live in West Virginia.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Participant: 43.

Interviewer: What is your gender?

Participant: Male.

Interviewer: What is your race?

Participant: This is a subject for a different day. I am, according to the federal government a Caucasian. But I am of Mexican descent, which means I am a Hispanic-Caucasian, according to the federal government. But this, again, is a subject questioning for a different day. Unless you wanted to reach into that?

Interviewer: If you wish to discuss it, I'm not going to stop you.

Participant: I just find it funny how there are Asians, there are African Americans. There are all, you know, Pacific Islanders, all these different races that you can have. Yeah, it's, you know,

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the South of the US border isn't considered a race. We are Caucasian. We are all considered Caucasian of Hispanic background. I 100% do not agree with that, because in no way shape or form other than my federal government saying that I am Caucasian am I Caucasian. I'm an American 100%. There's a difference between being an American and, you know, being the Mexican race, or being the Salvadoran race, or being South American or something like that. There's a way, I just think that, me, having to check the Caucasian box because the federal government is unable or unwilling to create some form of a race for those South of the border, it's kind of ridiculous, and if they the some of the arguments that they have come across that I've come across regarding this as to why they do it is because, "Oh well, you got people from Mexico, you got people from South, you know, got people from Chile and Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, so that's why we can't create one." Well, when you say you're African American, are you saying that you're from Congo or you saying you're from Nigeria? Are you saying you're from South Africa? What exactly are you saying when you're saying you're that race? You know, when you're saying your Pacific Islander, well, which one are you? Are you Samoan? Are you Tahitian? Wait, that's the wrong island. That's that. That's other side. I don't know. Anyway, I just personally feel that the federal government has shortchanged everybody who was of origin South of the border. But they have catered to everybody else. When they say Asian, you know what part of Asia, you know? Are they saying Russian because Russia is Asian? But so is China and so is Japan. So is Laos. So is Vietnam. You know, where did they create these races, this idea of race and why doesn't anybody South of the US border have an actual race? Anyway.

Interviewer: Another good point, I never realized that.

Interviewer: We would classify African Americans in one column, but we wouldn't do the same for people who live South.

Participant: Anyway, that was a ranting tangent.

Interviewer: No.

Participant: I am, according to the government, I am Caucasian of Hispanic origins.

Interviewer: OK. And so, the last question is what is your highest level of education completed?

Participant: I have two bachelor's degrees.

Interviewer: Alrighty, so that is it. I'm going to turn off the recording and the transcript. Thank you so much for this.

Participant: Again, thanks for inviting me. I did enjoy this.