

Interview with
COLBY SEEGMILLER

April 18, 2021

**THE PANDEMIC YEARS: COVID-19
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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COLBY SEEGMILLER

Colby Seegmiller was interviewed by Jace Ercanbrack on April 18, 2021 at his home, in St. George, Washington County, Utah. He talked about the COVID-19 pandemic years, the Black Lives Matter movement, the capitol siege, gun topics, and current Dixie State [Utah Tech] University issues.

JE: Could you say your full name, spell it, and your location, as well as your age if you're okay with that?

CS: You bet, [clears throat] excuse me, you bet. Colby Franklin Seegmiller, C-O-L-B-Y F-R-A-N-K-L-I-N and Seegmiller is S-E-E-G-M-I-L-L-E-R. I live [in REDACTED] St. George, Utah 84790. Do you want any of that spelled out?

JE: That's okay. No, that's okay.

CS: Very good. And I am forty-nine [years old].

JE: Perfect. So, just before we begin, let's just get kind of a sense of, let's touch briefly on your background. So, kind of just give me a quick minute of where you grew up, how long you've been here, things like that.

CS: Okay, very good. I was born in Bountiful, Utah. My dad was actually from St. George, my mother was from Tremonton, Utah. They met at Utah State [University] while they were going to school up there in Logan [Utah]. And when they graduated, my mother got a job with Stevens-Henager College teaching business machines, so type, that kind of thing. My dad got a job with Salt Lake County; he had a degree in sanitary services, so he inspected dairies and restaurants, and tested watershed systems, and that sort of thing.

So, we lived in Bountiful, that's where I was born, Bountiful Utah, we lived there until I was four. So, I was born up there, and my younger brother was born there, and we moved to St. George. My dad was offered the opportunity to come down and help run the family farm with my grandpa. They wanted to see if they could make a go of it. So, my dad had made arrangements with a civil engineering firm down here that was designing water treatment plants all over the state. They were quite new; they all had known each other in school up at Utah State and so he came down to work for them part time and to work the family farm part time, to make a living. So, we moved down here in 1976, I believe it was, yeah, it would have been '76, and built a house up on Donley Drive in '77. And so, that's where I grew up, was on Donley Drive. I was there until I graduated from high school and went and served a mission for the LDS Church. Really enjoyed growing up in St. George. We were all over the top of the Hill, the side of the Hill, down to the airport when it was up there. There were a lot of younger kids that lived on the Hill at that time and all of us were good friends and had all kinds of adventures climbing all over the Hill.

JE: Okay, that's awesome; that's really fun. So, like I said, this is going to kind of be mostly about the pandemic years, but we're going to touch briefly on kind of your thoughts about what's been happening surrounding the pandemic as well, and then also a little bit on your business as well.

So, first question, what were you doing before the pandemic started?

CS: So, I'm a licensed structural engineer here in the state of Utah, and well before the pandemic we opened up an indoor shooting range here. And so, that's where I was working prior to the pandemic, sellin' guns, and teachin' people how to shoot, and that sort of thing.

JE: Okay, so how did you first hear about the pandemic? What were your thoughts, like, first thoughts, feelings, and reactions to it?

CS: Some of our good friends were actually on the cruise ship in Japan. And they had quarantined the ship, and they've been in quarantine, I believe it was for about two weeks. As we were now just starting to hear about it coming through, and here we had some friends that were living it. The wife was diagnosed with COVID and they pulled her off of the ship and put her in a hospital in Japan, in the city they were there in. And within a couple of days her husband was diagnosed, and they ended up shipping him out of Japan to an Air Force Base in California. So, they were separated for a couple of months.

So, we were hearing about it on the television and the news and whatnot, and it seemed a little bit surreal. And as they were talking about the impacts of it on China, the big thing that impressed my mind was that the numbers didn't seem realistic, and it came out later that they were lying about their numbers. But for everybody to be all worried about it, it didn't sound like it was really that big a deal. And everything that our friends had gone through, seemed like it was a little overkill, especially for them, neither of them had any symptoms to speak of really. She said for about forty-five minutes she felt a little funny, but crud, that could've been some bad fish. And so, he never felt bad, so I guess you would call them asymptomatic. So, as we were looking at this and hearing reports from them as they made little Facebook, or YouTube videos and Facebook videos, it didn't really seem like it was that big a deal. So, for us it didn't seem that it was going to be that much of an issue.

So, my initial opinions on it were, "Eh, not that big a deal." And then, I should throw in because I'm working at a gun shop, we hear all sides. There's folks that wear a pretty thick tinfoil hat. Even some of our employees were, some were wiggling out; some were complaining government conspiracy. And in my initial views of it, it sounded a lot more like a government conspiracy than anything, because it was— a lot of it just didn't make sense, and the things that they wanted us to do to protect ourselves didn't make sense at the time.

- JE: Okay. Knowing kind of what you know now about the pandemic and everything, how has your views changed now, in proportion to when you first heard about it?
- CS: Now, as we've seen people even closer to us actually die because of it, I would, I tend to take it a little bit more serious. I fall into some of those categories, being overweight and diabetic, could mean that I could end up with it. So I, for a long time I wasn't worried about the mask. I was, you know, I always thought it was a good idea to wash your hands, but I had a hard time believing that the mask was going to be what saved us because it was going to hold all the COVID, but we didn't consider our mask to be hazardous waste when we got done with it. Kind of wasn't— and still just didn't make a lot of sense to me. So, over time I did see that, yes, we've got a problem and we need to protect some people that fit into the areas where they could have problems that they fit into those— Oh, heavens— put them in the endangered groups, I guess you could say.
- JE: Cool, cool. What are your thoughts when they tell us that we need to embrace the new normal as part of the pandemic? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Please explain.
- CS: This has been something I've been a little nervous about, or I wouldn't say nervous. I just have been concerned about it as to how that's going to play out. Is there going to be a new normal or are we going to get back to the way we were? Some of my concerns to be a new normal, that we've got to wear a face mask everywhere we go. I believe that that could actually cause more problems for our bodies because we don't end up with immunities. My wife's a nurse; she was an ICU [Intensive Care Unit] nurse and she worked nights for sixteen years, and during that time our family hardly ever got sick. Not to say we didn't get sick, but when the flu went through and the other bugs would go through the area, and through schools, and whatnot, we didn't get sick, the kids didn't get sick. And we really believed that was because she was being exposed to things early on as people were coming into the ICU and to the hospital. And she brought those things, and that helped with the immunity for us, because we didn't see it. Now, when she quit working the floor, within a couple of years, we noticed that we were getting sick more frequently, the children are getting sick more frequently, because we weren't being exposed to things in minor natures all along. I think the mask could give us the similar problem where we're now not being exposed to things. And it's not just the mask, but even that we're being so, so careful that we're not getting those immunities that we need to have to fight off the problems and, and issues we have. So, I get a little bit concerned about that and wondering if that's going to actually cause more problems as we go down the road.
- JE: Okay. Have you gotten the vaccine and if you have, please explain why you got it or why you didn't get it?
- CS: [Laughter.] Oh heavens! Yes, I did get the vaccine. I ended up with the Pfizer two shot jobbie. So, earlier in the year I had been in to see my doctor, my typical visit with him and of course with being type 2 diabetic, it was, I listened to what he has to say to make sure I'm taking care of myself the way I need to. And I tend to trust him; I think he's got

a good head on his shoulders and has given me great advice up to now. And so, I had asked him early on about vaccines and whatnot, and he wanted me to get a flu shot, which I haven't typically done. I have an aversion to needles, you can point it at something else, but when you point it at me, I get sweaty palms and whatnot, so I wasn't [a] very excited person about it. And then he also asked me to get one other vaccine, and right now it's eluding my mind as to which one it was, but this was earlier on in the year before the others were available. So, I got those, and then I got an email from the hospital that I was now eligible to get the vaccine for COVID. And so, I sent him a text and said, "Do you want me to get this?" and he said, "Definitely, go get it." So, I did.

That being said, I'll tell you what, at work hearing of my tinfoil hat guys, whether it have been customers or one of a couple of my employees, I was a little hesitant only because I knew that I would get ridiculed a little bit about that. I know we've had a pretty good stand in our place, but we haven't had masks. We haven't worn masks through except for about a week when they came out and said there was going to be a \$10,000 fine if the businesses didn't comply. We didn't want to pay a fine, so we complied. It was about a two-week period and after that masks have been off in our store the whole time. We do squirt things down with a good sanitizer that's intended to kill the nasties. Yeah, stuff like that, and so we felt like we've done an okay job with that, but it wasn't necessarily pushing for following all the mandates there. So, when it came time to get it, I was, I was willing, and I wasn't really concerned about the ramifications. I'm old enough that if I became sterile and wasn't going to be able to have kids, that we were well beyond that. That wasn't going to be an issue. If I died from it, I guess I wasn't overly concerned or worried that way so, I got it. I didn't have any issues with symptoms other than my arm was a little bit sore, just like what I was expecting there, but I didn't have any other symptoms at all.

JE: Good, that's good; that's really good. Okay, so how do you think the federal government— this is kind of a loaded question. How do you think the federal government, state, local, tribal, university— you don't have to talk about all of them, but— and including our healthcare system has handled the pandemic? Tell me a little more about your thoughts on that.

CS: [Laughter.]

JE: Again, you don't talk about all of them. You can kind of make a couple of—

CS: Oh no. And then this is coming from somebody that doesn't know much of anything that way. And I say that 'cause I'm not well-versed or studied in pandemic or, or that related things, but none of us are for the most part. We do have people that are experts in those fields, and my guess is if you ask, those expert experts, were we ready for this? No, we probably weren't ready for it. Could we have been ready for it? I think we could have had plans in place, I think they wanted to put the blame on the current administration then as to not having a plan in place to do all of this. This is actually something I think we should have had in place years before because we've had scares somewhat similar with a MRSA and SARS and some of these other— I don't, MRSA was one of them— anyway, with all

these other things that we've had come through, and we haven't had to go full scale like we have on this. And is this really a full scale? I would compare it to what we see in some of the movies with the virus that comes through and makes everybody a zombie, and you know the zombie craze was big a few years ago and so we had a lot of movies that kind of hit that. Where when they went through and people died, it was almost everybody but a select few. Could this have been in that same boat? Had it been in the same boat, we'd all died.

We don't have things in place; we weren't prepared. I think we're a lot better prepared now, but I also, just as a lay citizen, think that we've been told one thing one way and one thing another way. A lot of it because of politics, a lot of it because of the unknown. Some of it because people were scared, and this came out anyway. And that has concerned me quite a bit, to have experts come out and say, "This is how it should go now" and then that it turns, and, "Oh, now you need to wear two face masks instead of one." It just all seemed to be, almost like every day, it seemed to change for a little while. I mean, that kind of, that really frustrated me because I didn't understand why we were so far off. And then to top it off, they come out and those that didn't believe that this was that big a deal, well then you don't believe in science. And what I'm seeing is, I didn't believe your scientists and you don't believe my scientists, and so to say I don't believe in science just showed that you don't know either, because there's, there's so many scientists out there.

So, I think we could have been better prepared. And I think we need to continue to work on being prepared for the next time we have to deal with this. And it could be in a couple of months that we have another strain that comes through we've got to deal with, and should we shut all of our economies? Like, Canada, at this point again, has already shut back down and requiring people to stay home. Is that the right way to go? I think that we've devastated a lot of things and that our country is having to spend a lot of money to try to cover people financially who were affected by it and there, and there's so many that were. We were fortunate with a gun store; we were considered an essential service and we were able to stay open, and everybody wanted a gun. And so, we were not financially affected by it, but so many were. I think that we could have done something a little more— not so, "Oh no, we're losing our minds, and here we go," but be a little bit more level headed going through it.

JE: Good, that's very good. That actually leads into my next question, which would you kind of answer it as well? How do you like, or as a local business owner, you know, how has the pandemic affected Rowdy's Range? Would you say that because of the economic difficulties that many have encountered, that this has harmed Rowdy's Range? You know, if so, kind of explained further. Could you talk about that?

CS: Yeah, yeah, it has not affected us that way. We had people coming in. Our sales were dramatically higher than we've ever seen and what the downside from it has been that other companies that were hit hard and had to shut down because they faced employees that had COVID, or their families had COVID and they had to be quarantined, it slowed down production of a lot of products all the way back to the raw material stages. So, in

the gun industry, the gun manufacturers had a hard time getting steel to make their parts out of because the steel plants were down because A they've been shut down, and then B, they had employees that were coming back with COVID, would have to slow the process down. Our safe manufacturer that we sell at the store is located here in Utah, and they are still fighting that sort of a situation, yet their sales are higher than they've ever been as well. And so, that creates a really big gap for us, for us to be able to order product right now. I can order it today and I won't see it guaranteed for six months, which I was, we were usually three or four weeks before that. So, it's been great for our economy and for us, personally, but, it's affected so many other people so negatively. One of the things that we tried to do was we tried to go to lunch every day. We were doing okay, so we went out and tried to support the restaurants who were struggling. Now, I just like going to lunch, but we felt like we were at least doing something and trying to leave a good tip for the servers that were able to work so they, at least were— they were doing better than they could have been.

JE: Good, that's really good. What, or how do you feel that your local business has been able to contribute or what have they been able to contribute through this global pandemic that other local businesses have not been able to? Please explain further, kind of go off of that.

CS: That's, I don't know. That's kind of a hard question. I think what we have provided for some people is peace of mind. During this pandemic time, we've had a lot of other things going on where there were riots going on in multiple big cities, and that scared a lot of people. The pandemic alone scared a lot of people. If you watch the movies, people don't have any money anymore, they've got to go find food and they start branching out to where they find it and we see home invasions, and this is all from the movies. And then, a little bit with real life things, we actually saw with the riots they were looting and going in and causing all kinds of problems, so people wanted to buy guns. And in the country, they estimate that seventy percent of the gun purchases made during the pandemic rushes were, from first time gun buyers. And that's a good thing all the way around. We think that we have more people that have a firearm that they can defend themselves and have the mindset to defend themselves, versus thinking that waiting for the police is going to be what will defend them. Most places, it takes quite a while for the police to get there, even when they know that it's a drastic emergency, it just takes time. And so if you have the ability to defend yourself, that you're that much better off. So, that was the peace of mind that people were able to come in and get as they purchased a firearm and purchased ammo, so that they were helped out or working that way.

We also had our training skyrocket, as well. We put together a basic course for people to come in that had never done it before, and take a four-course class to try to help build some skill and build some comfort level in how to use their firemen, and teach them how to do it safely. And so, again, more comfort and peace of mind for them.

JE: That's good. That's really good. And that kind of goes into my next question, which, what are your thoughts on Black Lives Matter? What are your thoughts on the capitol siege? As well as what appears to be a recent uptick in gun violence that we were seeing,

with a lot of these shootings that are happening pretty recently? And why do you think, like, these occurred? Why do you think they are occurring?

CS: There's a lot to that question in my mind. Let's start off with the Black Lives Matter. I find it very interesting that I'm being told that I'm racist beca— and I have White privilege and that I treat Black people differently. Truth be told, for me; I didn't grow up around Black people or people of color, whatever. I don't have animosity towards any of them. I don't, I'm not nervous around them, and just saying it that way, nervous around them makes me uncomfortable because I don't want it to. I don't like painting the picture of, "Ooh, it's us and them," because it really shouldn't be. I grew up around family that had some animosity, and I don't know why. I never heard why there would have been any animosity, but it didn't make any sense to me. We've done a little bit of traveling, even through the pandemic. Ended up in Florida, we ended up in a neighborhood one morning that was, there weren't as many White people around. And we walked into a breakfast restaurant where everybody in the restaurant was of African descent. And the one thing the whole time that I was excited about was seeing how they dressed. We had guys in there that were in business suits and with a darker skin color, the suit colors that they could wear are a lot more bold than what I can get away with, and I just thought that was neat. I really enjoyed seeing that. Hairstyles, it was fun to see that, just because growing up here in St. George, we didn't have a lot of those opportunities to be around people that had the darker skin than I had. So, I was enamored by that. Not at one point, not at one point was I concerned about it, about being the only white people in the restaurant.

With Black Lives Matter, I believe that it has turned to a— Oh golly, I'm not even sure I could, I know what the right word to say is— ultra-political movement that is not necessarily serving the interests of the people that it's trying to represent. That's my personal opinion. I think we could get farther without having to be so radical. But on the other side of it, I do have some understanding as to why they have to be so radical at times; they want to be heard, I understand that and I don't blame them for wanting to be heard because they haven't had the voice in the past, even though we say, "Oh we're doing so much for you." And I think that's a problem, as well, that we've got political sides that are trying to bend over backwards to say, "Oh, we're here for you. We're here for you," when that really, I don't believe that they are. I think this is a problem we just need to work together on, and, but we need to try on both sides. It needs to be a strong try. I do believe that oftentimes the other side becomes just as racial as they claim the other side is, because, almost like they're entitled, "Well, you've done this to me for so long that I get to do it to you now." And I think that we all need to be playing fair and playing safe in that instance.

Can you read the question one more time to me?

JE: Yes, what are your thoughts on Black Lives Matter, the capitol siege, and then the last part is, as well as the recent uptick in gun violence that we are seeing. Why do you think they're occurring or have occurred?

CS: Okay, very good. So the capitol siege, I could say right now I supported what was going on at the [U.S.] Capitol that day. There were people that were there trying to have their voices be heard, and this has been something that both sides have said, “Yes, you can do that,” and, on both sides, it often times goes awry and becomes violent, and it shouldn’t. This should have been a peaceful protest, or a demonstration. I wouldn’t even call it a protest really, as much, I guess it was, that was their intent. My personal belief is that people showed up that were there to cause problems, and then it was a mob mentality that took over and caused the problem.

I find it interesting that it happened in Seattle [Washington], where they took over a portion of the city. And my friends that were more aligned with that group’s political ideas said, “Oh, they’re just kidding. This is just a joke,” and there wasn’t any joking going on. They were taking over the city. They were looting and ruining businesses, destroying businesses, burning them to the ground. But that’s okay, was the mindset, we’re going to let them do it, it’s not a problem. But then we go and now somebody comes in, and puts a little scare into our legislators, and now they’re traumatized for the rest of their lives. They’ll never sleep well again, and I find that rather comical, that, “Oh no, you did it to me, now it’s a problem,” but you were okay with it when other people were being traumatized. And I struggle with that. It shouldn’t have happened. They should not have gone in, but it doesn’t mean that they shouldn’t at another time have gone in.

If we feel that we’re being misrepresented and things aren’t happening, I’ll be up [at] that capitol, and I will help siege, and we will go in and we’ll stop it. That is what the Second Amendment is about, is that we are supposed to have the ability to carry arms to defend ourselves from a tyrannical government. And if it turns tyrannical, I’ll be right there with them. And that’s not to say that our current political system, with a two-party system, that one or the other side, I’m afraid they’re going to try to take over. I’m just saying, if it does happen, in such a way, it could even be my side of the party that I think has gone overboard and now take over, I’ll go stop that, too. And that’s why, as we start to talk about guns a little bit, that’s what the Second Amendment is. I’ve had multiple people say to me, “Oh, I, if you want to have guns, and you can have the guns like they had at the time.” And that’s fine, if the government is gonna step down and put all their guns and go back to the guns that they had at the time, that’s fine, too. We’re here to defend ourselves if necessary, from a tyrannical government, then yes, we need to have the firearms the same that the government has, because that’s the intent. And don’t kid yourself, that is exactly what was happening at the time, and they wrote that for that. And, and it’s in the history books that we fought the British specifically because we weren’t being representative, represented and they were trying to come and cause problems. So that’s my feeling on that and the Second Amendment.

The uptick in violence is mind-boggling to me. It has been every day, every day. Even today, there was yet another one, a mass shooting. And I don’t like the term “mass shooting” when, you know, two people got shot. One guy goes out and shoots two people, I don’t see that as a mass shooting. They’ve changed the terminology, and I think that they’re probably showing more of what’s been going on, what’s going on right now,

versus in the past, maybe, they haven't reported on all of those situations. But I think this, I, but I'm still, I'm still mind-boggled by it. In fact, the one today was a law enforcement officer or ex-law enforcement, I'm not sure where he was, I haven't heard enough about it yet, but somebody that should know better, and shouldn't be in that kind of a position, thinking that this is how you do things to get things done so—

Getting rid of guns. Yeah, if we get rid of all guns, all of them right this second, then okay, yeah, let's get rid of guns, but it's not gonna happen. We've got so many guns in the country and so many that are hidden away. So many that are buried, so many that are unknown, that there is not a way to come through and take all of the guns and actually get all of them. And if you don't, that's when it's not, it won't work and now we have a country that is actually less safe, knowing exactly in full well that we were not attacked on our mainland during World War Two, because our citizenry was armed. And we're in that same boat, that's what does protect us. I think that an armed society is a polite society. So, I think we have got some serious mental problems, and I think after a pandemic where we've all been locked up and told many different things, that our minds will probably start playing different games on us, and that's where some people are really being affected by this. That's my opinion on that. Not that that makes it okay, that we should accept a little gun violence because of it. We shouldn't accept any violence at this point, but that hasn't played out very well in the big cities. We've accepted violence in those cities.

JE: Okay, thank you. This is kind of a bigger question as well—

CS: Uh oh.

JE: But, it's the last question. Have your beliefs about the American political system changed? I guess we'll break it into parts. First part: have your beliefs in the American political system changed in the past year? How so?

CS: Growing up as a kid, my mother was a strong political proponent. She worked for Republican Congressman James Hansen here in the state of Utah. She was a field representative for him, here in the Southern Utah area, and she got to help people that needed his help. So, I heard a few of the stories as to folks that had problems processing their passports. For some reason it got hung up and a call from the congressman would tend to unclog the pipes and it would start moving along, and different things like that. People would want to go in and talk to him about their opinions on national monuments and that kind of thing, as they were going through them at the time. So, as part of her, my mom's job, she got to go to high schools and encourage kids to register to vote and explain to them why it's important to vote. And so, that was instilled into us as kids at my house, that voting is our opportunity to have our voice heard.

I've got a lot of friends that live here in Utah, that have similar political thoughts that I do, and their feelings are that when we vote in Utah there's so many of us that are on one side versus the other that our vote doesn't count because there's just so many, and that's how it is. Well, I've heard people from the other side say the exact same thing. Their vote

doesn't count because there's too many people on one side of the ship. So, have my thoughts changed? I wouldn't really call it a change, I just— I'm seeing that our political divide is getting wider and wider. My friends that are on the other side of the river on this, say that my views and my friend's views are becoming more and more conservative. And I struggle to see how I'm becoming more and more conservative, because I look back into the '50s and I look at the Cleaver family and how conservative they were. And you compare it to how families are today, they've lost conservatism since then. And that's how I feel that we are, we're being pushed more and more to the, the liberal side of things, in my opinion, and they're the ones becoming more and more liberal. They're willing to accept things that we wouldn't have accepted even fifty years ago, and we even went to war over to protect our nation from. And yet, they're willing to step in and say, "Oh, this will be so much better for us. Let's do this."

And so, I feel the political divide is getting wider and wider, which I think is going to make it harder and harder for us to come to standard common ground to even pass basic and standard laws. The only way you'll be able to do it is to have, have one party be a lesser party and not have as many votes. And the other party is going, like we're seeing currently with our current new administration, Mr. Biden is trying to come in and undo anything that Trump had anything to do with, that maybe even was still good for our country. And I see that, it's interesting that it's okay to tear that all down and then take it even farther to the other direction. And then, when we get somebody and they're going to do the same thing, and I think this is going to be a pendulum swing on the country that could destroy us. As we're a third party, a three-party system, or two-party system, I would love to see it become all of a sudden, a four-party system and our extremists from both sides kind of slip off into the wayside and have two others come in and, and give us some common sense. Because I do believe that we all have the intent of making a better country. And I think that's one thing that we don't keep in mind is, my party says, "Oh, the other party is trying to tear our country apart." I don't believe that they're really trying to tear it apart, they just see a different direction that we should go, and they want our country to be great, still. So, I struggle to see how we come in and come to a resolution on all things. It's looking harder and harder and I'm not sure it'll ever happen again.

JE: Thank you. I think that also answers the next question, but I'll just read it for you, if you have any other additional thoughts. Has your view of the American society or the community of St. George changed in the past year?

CS: Yes. I'll go on the St. George one for sure. Oh, boy! This is a hard topic right there. St. George has been, and you can say this very easily, and there's plenty of proof for it, that we've been overrun by folks from California. And folks from California try to get out of California, because their system there has become so difficult to live under. Taxes have gotten high, so high that their property taxes are in ridiculous numbers compared to what we pay here, but that's to pay for the things that they have to pay for with all of the different programs that they put into play. Not that the program is always a bad thing, but you put in everything you expect everything to change, and your wages have to go so high that it can't support itself without increasing taxes and whatnot. So, we've had

many, many, many people come from California. And just look at the landscape and how many homes have gone up [cough] and are selling as quickly as they are around here, and prices have skyrocketed. So, our landscape, our political landscape is definitely changing. They come in and say, "Oh, we're not here to bring our politics with us." But yeah, they have politics, and that they're bringing 'em, whether they say they are or not. And so, I think you can't say we have to be careful with that, because we don't have that option. When people live here and they're part of our community, we have to work together to try to make the work community work, just like with the country.

But things have been happening at Dixie College over the last, and it's not just this year. This has been, things have been going on for quite a while. I felt bad when we lost, oh, Rodney, our Confederate soldier who was our mascot. The Confederate flag, I didn't ever see that as a racist thing, but some people do, so when it came time to get rid of that, the flag itself, I wasn't overly opposed. I just thought this is, I felt it was too bad that we're losing the identity that we had tried to create. So now we're to the point where we're trying to change the name of Dixie College to remove the name Dixie from it. And we're being told as this comes in, "Oh, we're not, this isn't cancel culture. We're not trying to get rid of anything. This is still part of who we are, but we don't want people to see it. So, we're wanting to hide it under something." And they say, "Oh no, no. We're not trying to hide it. We're trying to make it so that it's just not as prevalent because we got students that can't get jobs." Yet, all the pamphlets and propaganda they stick out about Dixie College and why you should come here, is our job placement rates are so high and are good for our students that come here, so they can get out into the workforce and get good jobs.

And I think Dixie has grown beautifully. There have been so many different things have been wonderful. And I'll throw out there the sad things that happened with Barlow Davenport and Ken Peterson and Glenn Webb. I didn't know Mr. Davenport at all, but Glenn Webb and Ken Peterson, I have known quite well and have known for a long time in different capacities than at school. I know their— character. And I strongly believe that there was somebody that didn't like them for some reason, and tried to destroy them in ways that were not legal. And yet, it's swept under the rug and says, "Oh no, we can do this. We can require these things." And nobody was there to protect these guys that— Did they make mistakes? I don't know that I would call them mistakes, but to try to censor them for things and take away their freedom of speech and their rights was heinous. And I'll use that term because I really believe that. And the one person that kind of keeps coming to play in this is still here at Dixie and is still causing problems. When Mr. Clark, in his meeting, said, "We're not trying to secretly change the name of Dixie College" and within another month, all of a sudden, it's out that we're trying to change the name of Dixie College, there's something going on. It doesn't make sense. From the other standpoint, I will say that if somebody feels uncomfortable because of the name of our college, are they not going to come here? They probably aren't going to come here. But right now we've got a whole bunch of students that have protested up at the state capitol, that we're concerned about the name of our college, but yet, they still came here.

So, all of a sudden, because we've got a cancel culture going on through the country and we're tearing down anything that had anything to do with the Confederate part of the country— not to say that we were Confederate and supported any of that— they're tearing it down and trying to get rid of it like it didn't happen. And not that we have to embrace it, but where does that put us here at Dixie? — And I still feel if there are people that are hurt by our name, I don't want them to be hurt. Okay, so maybe we do need to change the name because of that. But everything around it and surrounding it sure is, it's fishy, and I find it interesting. Being a member of the community, I graduated from Dixie College, I attended for longer than I probably should have before I went up to the University of Utah. And so, I'm alumni, I've supported the college financially. I've supported the college through my tuition. I have supported the college by attending basketball games, and football games, and— providing money to the college for fundraisers. And I've been disappointed a number of times because of the direction that the college has been pushed when that's not who they were. We built this college as a community, and now the community is not in charge of it. And that's where I'm struggling with it there. Those are my two cents.

JE: Thank you, just in the last few minutes, I've got one more question for you, and then we'll talk just for a second. But has the past year had an impact on your religious faith and your trust in humanity in general?

CS: [Laughter.] That's a good question.— I'm very trusting.— That's just in my nature. I trust people. I think people are good. And I do believe it's to a fault. Right now, I work with people who were involved in law enforcement for quite a while, military. On the law enforcement side, because of situations they've been in for years, they don't, they don't trust anybody, right? Zero. And so, I'll have somebody come into the shop and tell me a sob story about something and I just, my heartstrings pull, "Oh, that's awful. I can't believe that." Then they leave and the other guy says, "He was lying the entire time. You understand that, right?" And I go, "Oh, no. He couldn't have been lying 'cause he was telling me his story." And no, no and here's why he was lying. And these are the things that kicked off and I go, "Oh, wow." I get so tied up in that, but I want, I'm just, I just am a trusting person and I struggle to see those flags that pop up in everyday situations. Fortunately, I haven't been hurt financially or physically by that, but it frustrates me. Our country, our community, I see that lots of abuses have come because of the COVID pandemic, abusing the system, taking money when it wasn't rightfully theirs, lying to take money. So, that side of it, I struggle.

Currently with my faith, I'm struggling with the fact that so many people are stepping away from their faith, and specifically the religion that I, that I practice. I see it every day. People are saying, "Oh, this isn't for me any longer," and they're falling away. And I, and I have a hard time with that, again. So, I haven't had close friends going through that, but people that I have looked up to and I've worked with a little bit. And to see that happening, I'm concerned because a lot of it is that's the direction society has been pushing for a long time. We don't need religion, we can, we can make it on our own. And according to the tenets of my faith, no, we need to have a higher power that helps us in, and, and we've got truths that help us to understand why we're supposed to be here and

what we're supposed to do. And yet, people are really struggling to continue to follow what they at one point knew was true, or felt was true, and are falling away.

So, I'm concerned as to the direction we're heading there. I think that the pandemic directly has had some effect on that. We've had a lot of time to be cooped up and think about things that, and, and follow rat holes all the way down, and take us to bad places that we shouldn't have normally had time to go follow. So, I think that's been that way for our entire society, and that's probably the biggest concern is, we've— After going through this, there have been a lot of people that have stepped up and shown their true colors and been there to help people, and I think that's amazing. Just like after any major natural disaster, people come in and help take care of the problems that others are having and set aside their problems to be there to help. And I think we've seen that for sure, but we've had a lot of downtime and alone time to really start to make negative effects, too.

JE: Thank you. Is there— Before I turn off the recording, is there anything additional you would like to add? Or anything that you would like to say before we turn it off?

CS: I can say, through this whole pandemic, my family has been blessed all the way around. We've added a son-in-law. We've got another son that's engaged now. My kids have struggled with school here and there because of not being in class and having to do it from home, and that's been difficult. But another one of my other sons, now, will be going up to SUU [Southern Utah University] next year, even was able to garner a music scholarship to pay for his schooling. My wife, in her work, has excelled and done well. And so, our family has been blessed even though times have been very hard, and trying, and we've pulled through ahead, and I'm pleased with how that's played out for us.

JE: Well, thank you very much. I'm going to go ahead and turn off the recording.

[END OF RECORDING. END OF INTERVIEW.]