

Interview with
SHARON MURPHY

November 30, 2020

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

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SHARON MURPHY

Sharon Murphy was interviewed on November 30, 2020 by her granddaughter, Chloe Wimmer. She related her experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic.

CW: This is my interview with Sharon Murphy on November 30th, 2020. So I'm going to start with you just kind of introducing yourself, how you know me, and just a little bit about you.

SM: Okay. Well, I'm Sharon Rasmussen Murphy, I was born June 25th, 1949 in Provo, Utah. I'm Chloe's grandmother. Her mother, Jenny Murphy, is my daughter, and my husband is Joel Murphy. And I lived most of my life in the Utah County area. Right now I reside in Pleasant Grove [Utah].

CW: Okay. There's a lot of questions I have. So, the first one: how did you feel like when this [the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S.] all started happening in March? Like, were you scared? Did you feel scared and worried about that?

SM: Oh yeah. I was really scared. Very worried. Very, very worried.

CW: How long did you think that this was going to last? Like, did you think it would go away in a few weeks?

SM: Oh, no. I felt, I think it's going to last a couple of years. I always thought that, I mean, as time went on, then I knew for sure it wasn't going to go away.

CW: Yeah. I kind of already know the answer to this, but did you have fears for your own health and for your family members' health?

SM: Yes. Big time. Yeah. Especially Natalie [Sharon's daughter].

CW: Tell us a little bit about Natalie and what she does.

SM: Okay. Natalie is a registered ICU [intensive care unit] nurse. She went to Salt Lake Community College. She was in the burn unit for about 25 years at the University of Utah. Now she is in case management and she knows quite a bit about the goings on because she's in the hospital, right, with all the information and she's seeing what the sicknesses are. So, she's very educated on the subject.

CW: What did the beginning of lockdown look like for you? Were you super strict on it, kind of loose? What did those first months look like?

SM: Oh, we were super strict. We never left the house. Never left, stayed in our pajamas; didn't go anywhere.

CW: No family over, [or] anything? Probably not until May-ish?

SM: Nope, it wasn't until then. Neighbors were picking up food. Family was picking up food from different places. Yeah, we weren't, we were obedient.

CW: That's good. Well, another interesting thing we could talk about is your mask business. So, when did you start making the masks? What inspired you to do that?

SM: There were no masks to be bought. It was so early. The first ones I did weren't the best. They were just okay because there were not great supplies. I found that I could wad up kind of knit material and that was better on your ears than the elastic because the elastic seemed to hurt your ears more. And I got, after it was all said and done, I just had one Facebook post from your mom. And I had like almost, I don't know, a couple of hundred masks I made off of that. I was making masks day and night because nobody had them. Nobody could find them. It was a really good business.

CW: Are you still doing the masks?

SM: I was going to, I was going to make a few Christmas ones till I got sick. I'm just kinda thinking of when I feel better, I'm just going to pack it up.

CW: Yeah, that's probably good. You've done your fair share.

SM: I've had my fair share. Unless I want to make some cute ones. You know, with sayings, I've been making those, like Ruth Ginsburg ones, and all that, but I've been making some that say, "Be kind," 'cause I've got rubber stamps I can use to send a message. But I'm just kind of burned out on them and I've had that mess in the front room forever. And I think now that we've both been sick, it's just time to move on.

CW: Yup. True. So, besides making masks, what are some other things you did to cope with just being in the house and being bored?

SM: Oh, we watched a lot of the James Bond movies and we watched a lot of stuff that got we recorded, PBS stuff. So, we were right in the middle of the one about the royalty on CNN, but it got sidelined to COVID, so that they quit airing because it was 24/7 COVID on TV.

CW: And that's what sucks too, is like some of our shows they were making new episodes of, you couldn't even watch those.

SM: No. And the other thing is when you get all the notices on your phone of all the new cases and, you know, and then the scary thing was when people like the Rose family, you know, when they started losing family members. And then my lady that does my hair, Stephanie, you know, her father-in-law died. So, it was just, it was just about too much. And then my good friend, Alice, her husband didn't die of COVID, but he died and we just met at the cemetery.

The sad thing was, that you could[n't] connect with anybody until the weather got better, where you could go down to the park and meet in the park and wear masks and eat lunch and social distance. And that kind of helped out a little bit. And then I had friends that had big enough decks where we could go out on the deck and we could talk all day and eat and gab and, you know, have a good time, but we were socially distanced outside. And so, you know, that's come to an end because of the weather.

CW: Yup. I know it's hard. It's like, we're really hunkering down now. It's too cold. Now that you actually have COVID, it's changed how I'm asking my questions. We might just dive into that now. Yeah. Let's dive into that. So, for context, my grandfather [Joel] got COVID, do you know what day it was? It was like, almost, I think two weeks from this Wednesday or three weeks from then.

SM: It's been about two weeks. He thought he had asthma and he just kind of got a test without me knowing, and by the time he got the test back, Natalie was already here 'cause Jayda [Natalie's daughter] ratted him out because he looked so bad and he kept coughing and he was really tired. And I kept saying to him, "What's wrong?" "Oh, I'm just an old man." And I'm going, "No, what's going on. Are you hiding something from me?" "No." And if he would have been upfront, then your mom wouldn't have got it—

CW: Yup. So Joel, Sharon's husband and my grandpa, was admitted to the hospital. So, what took place there? How did they take care of him?

SM: Natalie got him in and they put him in an emergency room ICU for COVID. They did a bunch of tests. They did rapid test. It came back before the test he took at the hospital. So, within a couple hours they knew he had it. They were going to send him home, but he'd been in the ER for so long now, Natalie and I didn't feel good about it. And we were glad they didn't because by the next day he was getting worse and then he was eligible for a trial medication. And so, that made him so he was gonna stay and get this trial medicine. — Regeneron, He was supposed to have five doses. They gave him three because he recovered so well. He only had a slight fever, never got over 101[°F]. When he came home, he was on oxygen, but his cough was completely gone, and he was tired and he did cough a little bit. But he did lose his smell. So, he was home in three days, instead of five.

CW: Yeah. How did you feel at that time, when he was in the hospital? Were you super scared or did you feel that he was in good care?

SM: Oh, I knew he was in good care because I knew Natalie was going to take care of him. I knew that if he went to Intermountain Healthcare where our insurance was, I've talked to enough friends that they just pretty much don't have room and they just give you oxygen and send you home. And so, then you have to wait till you get really sick before they'll let you back in. And I knew with Natalie that that was[n't] going to be the case and that they would take care of him no matter what.

CW: For sure. How is he doing now?

SM: He's good. He's out of it. He's out of COVID jail. He doesn't have to have oxygen during the day and he's been up vacuuming and cleaning up the kitchen because now that I'm down, it's kind of a mess. So, the kitchen was the worst. And then I'm going to clean up my mask stuff because it's still scattered in the front room and the, that, you know, behind the couch. When I get feeling better, that's going to go into a big thing.

CW: So, you currently have COVID. Tell us about that, when you started feeling sick, when you got tested.

SM: Okay. I tried to get tested right after the day he went in. Well, I tried to get tested before it was seven days. It was like three or four. Natalie and Jayda didn't feel good. They went in and got tested. I didn't have any symptoms. I should have just lied, but I did have a case number from the health department and they wouldn't recognize that because I didn't have symptoms. They were kind of butts about it. I mean, the health department said, "If you want to test, you can get a test." That isn't true 'cause they wouldn't test me. So, then I went back in seven days and I still didn't have it, and I counted out seven days, but because Joel had been in the hospital, he wanted me to wait longer. They started giving me another bad time and I got in an argument and finally they gave me a test and it was negative, probably to get me out of their hair, but the rules aren't the same. And the people don't tell you the same thing. So, I feel like that part of it's disorganized. So then, I kept going longer.

Well, actually the thing that was weird was I think it was the weekend that he didn't feel good and we went out and got all of our food for Thanksgiving, which was good because I ordered food from Harmon's and I went to Trader Joe's and got what I needed. So, I didn't want to go out and go shopping at all the week before Thanksgiving, I wanted to stay away from the crowds because I figured it would be a mess. And so, I was glad I did that. And then the day before Thanksgiving, I just drove up to Harmon's and picked up everything. So then we fixed all of our stuff. We've quarantined. Well, we were in separate rooms and everything and I tried to stay away from him as much as I could. And then our dining room table is like, eight feet long, so we could eat dinner. I was laying on the couch that night and I was watching stuff on my tablet and I started feeling really, really tired. I could hardly keep my eyes open. It was only eight o'clock. I thought, "Oh, this is weird, this doesn't feel right." And then, you know, I had a sore throat and kind of a loose cough. It wasn't like a croupy cough, but I was sneezing and it was like a stuffy head, but that's what your mom had. So the day after, I went back and got tested and that's when they said the spit test wasn't going to work because it was too cloudy with mucus and stuff. And they said, "You're going to have to have the nose test." And when they told me that, I knew I had it. I didn't even think negative. I thought, "I've got it," because I just felt weird enough and tired enough that I knew.

CW: And so, how many days until you're clear at this point? Because that was on Friday or Saturday that you tested positive.

SM: Friday. I got sick Wednesday or Thursday night, but I don't count that night 'cause it was

kind of late. So, I'm on day four. So I guess, I don't know if it's 10 days or 14 days, that after so many days, I think after 10 days or 14, they consider you clear. That's another confusing thing.

CW: How are you feeling? What's your current symptoms?

SM: My nose is itchy and I've got a really stuffy nose. My voice is kind of going in and out, but I've got one of those blood oxygen machine things that you put on your finger, that your grandpa has, and my blood oxygen is 95. So I'm not worried about anything like that. So, I'm just laying here and I haven't turned the TV on at all. I'm trying to detox from you-know-who. You know, I don't want to hear any more about somebody that thinks they won and they didn't and that's, that's my stress. So just, just been watching the positive stuff. Yeah. Just been watching stuff like that.

CW: Oh, I wanted to ask you, what do you think about people who are going out and crowds not wearing masks? What would you have to say to those people?

SM: I think they're lunatics, I think they're idiots and there's something wrong in their brain. I don't understand it. They think it's all about some kind of freedom, and they have no respect for others. And if they're on my Facebook and they talk about that, I just delete them. I'm done with those people because as safe as we were and as safe as we always have been, we still got it. And I can imagine if I was out and about around more people without masks. I mean, maybe I didn't get it as bad. You know what I mean? Because I did have a mask. And the other thing is, we have a law that it's mandatory to wear masks and people are ignoring the law. And I blame that on the church and I blame it on our governor, because neither one of them really care. It's all about your religious freedom. And it's all about privacy in your own home and your own personal freedom to in-cent infringe a deadly virus on somebody else. So, I got no use for them.

CW: What do you think, what actions could have been taken differently earlier by the government that would have slowed this all down?

SM: I think if Trump got impeached, it wouldn't be where we're at, because he didn't believe it was a problem. He didn't want to believe it. I think we should have been in lockdown longer. And I don't think they should have started church back up.

CW: Yeah. Because I feel like we did everything backwards.

SM: You've got all these people that don't believe that there's a virus. They think it's a hoax, and that's because of the idiots that run our country and they don't believe in science. And they think that this is all a big conspiracy and I don't know how people can get to be that uneducated and that stupid.

CW: Because, I think if they were to be in your shoes, they would see differently.

SM: Well, they don't care about the older people. And also, I don't think that school should be

still going either, but who am I to say? And I know for a fact that Alpine School District is fudging their records. They're not being honest.

CW: I think that's what's happening down here too, with the schools.

SM: Because I know that PG High [Pleasant Grove High School] had 47 cases the very second day of school, and they only closed down for two days. The parents had this big scene where they didn't want their kids to get tested because they didn't want school to close down, and sports and stuff. And they set up a big thing at the high school, and people were out doing their Trump trains, telling people not to get tested, in the big trucks with the flags. And it was complete stupidity. And the article that was posted in the *Tribune* over the weekend said that Pleasant Grove wasn't that bad. And it was complete bull crap. So, we can't trust the school district. You can't trust people that are Mormon Republicans that are running the shelters. They're going to lie. That's just plain and simple. Don't repeat that to anybody that thinks I'm nuts, but I know what I know.

CW: Well, you stand your ground and I respect that. How has all of this craziness impacted you long term and how do you think it will impact your future?

SM: I've been really careful who I get around. I think that it will now give me more freedom. 'Cause I think that now that I've had it, I could go out more. I think it's going to last for a really long time and I will get a vaccination when it comes. I'm not going to be like, "Yeah, no, I'm not going to get that." So, I just think Utah as a whole is a turd. They're just a bunch of coots. They don't, they're all, I don't know. I don't know what's happened.

CW: It's crazy.

SM: Somebody has gotten in their head, 'cause people still wouldn't even get a flu shot and I did get a flu shot. We both did.

CW: Mm-hmm, yeah, it's crazy.

SM: So, yeah—

CW: I think that's most of the questions I have—

SM: Are you gonna interview Gramps?

CW: Maybe I will. I was gonna do someone else that lived in St. George, but I might wanna do that.

SM: You decide.

CW: I might just interview Kat.

SM: Yeah, 'cause you know what else with your grandpa, he—

[END OF RECORDING. END OF INTERVIEW.]