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How Coronavirus has impacted me and

The Covid-19 pandemic has catastrophically challenged the infrastructure and social mechanisms of society. It is known as a virus that originated in bats and can infect other species via a SARS-2 vector much like the pandemic in 2003. It is a deadly virus which essentially causes organ failure, commonly attacking the brain, lungs, kidneys, and heart at random. Unfortunately, my grandfather Juan Enciso passed away April 10th, 2020 at 4:13 am from Covid-19. I only know this because my grandmother was on the phone with him and he said he would call her back because the doctor came to see him. I have no doubt that many more will die because we cannot develop immunity. I fear that the development of the vaccine is the only way to stop the pandemic. I, however, cannot shake this feeling of utter frustration with regards to human behavior. Worldwide, people are dying, businesses are shutting down, and mental trauma has not been taken seriously. I want to say that in this grim reality humanity cast aside petty rivalries and unified under a common goal to save our species. The truth is this tragedy is overshadowed by a global political war about how to run society.

Coronavirus strained my family and it didn't appear like it was going to be a problem but as weeks went by the stresses built up. In January I was not afraid, but suspected it would arrive in the United States and that it was being suppressed by the Chinese Government. Nonetheless it arrived at the coasts and gradually spread silently. Around late February, when I was locked

away with my family we followed the daily reports. Then the panic buying started and the stay at home order was issued. I was not concerned that the pandemic reached orange county mostly because it is not as densely populated as Los Angeles but my family stayed indoors. Staying indoors was not a problem. My family, however, could not go outside. We are especially vulnerable and are more likely to die from Covid-19 because we are latino, disabled, elderly, and have a history of cardiovascular disease. My mother, father, and I devised quarantine protocol, which meant that my dad would leave home in plastic overalls and a N-95 mask when buying groceries. My mother already had a problem with this plan but my family voted that my dad should be sent outside. Isolation life is inherently stressful because of concerns over whether there is enough money to pay for basic necessities or whether the virus has spread into my home are realities without recourse. My mom was the first to break down. My mom became very stressed out and she always raised alarm when my dad didn't follow protocol. It began to stress the family. I even questioned the rather extreme precaution of being isolated to my room for the entire day when groceries were brought into the house. Then the antagonism against my father broke out. She blamed him for spending her money which is partly true but didn't consider the abnormal circumstances that plagued my family. Now we have no money and owe a great deal to private creditors and banks let alone the bills that keep coming each month. My family can only survive off of welfare given to us by the state. There is also the complete crash of the mortgage market which directly affected my Dad's income. He is struggling to find competitive rates and make money brokering between the client and the banks. My sister in late April was accepted to UCLA and she got so excited but then realized her scholarship can not cover her fees. She does not have any money but my mother and I told her we will find a way for her. She was so

disappointed that she considered registering for UCI but she had options like Berkeley and UCLA. I was not going to let her settle for less so I made her pick UCLA. She cried and still didn't believe our family could provide. It's hard to watch your family lose cohesion and their will when times get tough. Then the news about Grandpa came.

My grandpa died very quickly in the hospital, he said he had stomach pain and then cardiac arrest. He wasn't always the best man he could be, he left my grandma and mom to fend for themselves when he went bankrupt, but he tried to redeem himself. He was very nice to me, and felt very sorry for him because all he wanted was to be adored and loved. I loved him and hoped that when I graduated from UCLA, his school of choice, we would share in the victory in being the first from both sides of my family graduating college. My grandma prayed the rosary every day on the televised Catholic mass. My mother loved him in spite of everything, and she still has to continue going to school to achieve her masters. I felt guilty that I didn't talk to him more often but my grandma always told me that he was so proud when I called him on his birthday and pressed my mother to join me on a call on father's day. I will never forget his deep voice, his wrinkled face, and his toothpick biting habit. People don't deserve to die, and I can't imagine the pain of losing more than one family member. But, people are still dying and are going to have to push on. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't prioritize people first. Lately, I have been hearing absolute nonsense about reopening the economy while the cases of Coronavirus and deaths keep rising. I cannot put into words the frustration I feel when these protestors are calling Coronavirus a hoax when I have lost a very important figure in my life. But this frustration and science denial has more to do with power politics.

This is a significant political event as well as a pandemic. The political climate is absolutely volatile and it must be said the Trump administration has played a part mobilizing radical sects of the right wing. Politics plays a role in the direction this country will choose to conduct society. The medical experts want extensions on the stay at home orders to combat the spread of the virus. The Trump administration had ignored such orders and gambled on a speedy recovery. The problem is because there is no evidence for herd immunity this virus is going to prolong well into the next year and probably the next. The public is deceived in what to prioritize public health or an economy. In my opinion public health must come first because it prioritizes people's right to live in a safe environment, and if people die from loosening restrictions then what does that say about our values? I cannot in good conscience agree with the Trump administration. It's outright predatory forcing people to work without government assistance much like the noble elite in medieval Spain. It might have to do with the upcoming election and his silent campaign against the democrats doesn't help the union. The real enemy is this virus. But because of partisanship and years of tension our country would seem more concentrated on eliminating each other. This division is incredibly dangerous and Michigan's protestors deeply scare me. They brandish their weapons in the name of the 2nd amendment but it means something more than citizens enjoying their liberal rights. It's an ideological war between two core factions that can mobilize the people to fight the other. Briefly, think of the Spanish civil war between Isabella and Joanna. This crisis is not a product of the virus but it easily allows grievances to resurface. I now want to redirect attention to my thoughts on the virus and how it affects my future.

I had to make serious considerations for my future. I will not be returning physically to UCLA until I am inoculated because I have a responsibility to not spread the virus to anyone else. I don't want more people to experience grief by losing a friend, a loved one, or their children. Secondly, I plan to go to work full time after college to help my parents pay the debt that they owe instead of going to law school. It's hard because I have always wanted to become a lawyer but I have responsibilities to keep my family safe, and my sister—whom I am so proud of—needs financial assistance from me to pay her UCLA fees. I worry about being able to pay for both my sister's education but I don't want her to enter this new world with the tools she will need. Then there is the issue of taking care of my grandma, she is going to need assisted living, and I think I will have to accommodate for that as well. She had a pulmonary embolism and she is significantly weaker. I spend more time with her because I feel it is very possible she could die during this pandemic. I take more pictures of her and I listen to her tell stories because of my deep underlying guilt. Then I need to find work that will allow me to work from home, and it's difficult because I lack the qualifications for the jobs that I can work from home. I might not have a job to support myself or family because of this virus. I don't know how I could survive because of this virus. For now my daily life is pretty mundane but I have important responsibilities at home.

Since the stay at home orders my rudimentary knowledge of computers has proved to be invaluable to my family. I have been very busy backing up their data for school and work and every now and then they come to me with a problem. Thankfully, I have been able to resolve these issues but something occurred to me. If everyone is working from home the longer they use the computer without understanding basic principles and operations the more likely it is not

going to work. My mom deleted all of her saved documents because she thought she downloaded a virus. I worked from midnight to 4:30 in morning recovering her drives and backing up her files in an external hard drive. Those files were imperative to restore because it was the latest work for her master's program. It's stressful for me to become the expert within my family and save their work. It isn't something you can learn in a day, but I am the last defense if something goes wrong with computers. Aside from doing schoolwork this is my profession. I learn what I can and download safe software in the event of another technical problem. If there was ever a time to really understand the mechanisms of computers now is the time. The transition to zoom and online learning for UCLA staff isn't easy and there are many online threats that can crash the system. The infrastructure itself is at risk because it takes one computer virus to kill computers. I cannot fathom what hell IT workers are undergoing during this pandemic. This Coronavirus attacks our infrastructure and is the reason it is a huge issue. People are not prepared to deal with this let alone build a work-around.

If there is anything to take away from what I said it is that the Coronavirus attacked not only society's vulnerables but the society's infrastructure. The new normal is staying at home and tackling the outside world. People die and lose their jobs and it takes great willpower to resist despair. It's so hard to keep going and pretend it's alright. It hurts so much to struggle like this and learn to live a new way of life when there is no clear way out of this crisis. But, do not despair. I'm not giving up. I want to live my life and help others get through this because this time in nation we will all be equals in struggle.



Bridgette Enciso (Left) and Juan Enciso (Right)

Juan Enciso (1944-2020)

Favorite song: Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head by BJ Thomas

Favorite Meal: Steak (Well done) with a side of white rice and refried pinto beans

Traits: Complete Workaholic, Cheap, Charismatic, Boastful, and above all Accomplished