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Sachit Mallya Interview (Transcription)

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Sachit Mallya Interview, Rough Transcript

Clara: Okay, so it is May 7, and I am here with Sachit.

Sachit: Um, so my name is Sachit Mallya, I prefer He/Him/His pronouns. My graduating year is 2023, and I haven't decided my major yet, and I'm from India.

Clara: Okay cool, so where are you staying for this remote spring term, and if you're comfortable sharing, why did you decide on this location?

Sachit: So I'm currently staying on campus because um, I wasn't able to go back home due to the flight restrictions.

Clara: Sorry, cool, so how in general has your academic and personal plans been affected by the move to classes online?

Sachit: Yeah, online classes are a lot weirder, because like class interactions and like, things like that are a lot harder to do as well. Like, for example, if you wanna answer a question, that's really, that's a lot harder to do through online classes then like in person. And like office hours, like you don't get to talk as personally with the teacher, or like, talk to them as much as you would if it wasn't online.

Clara: Interesting. Um, just wondering, but like, what has the transition been like as a freshmen, cause you only got like officially two terms on campus, so like, socially and academic how has that been?

Sachit: Hell yeah, that that was like probably the worst part, like, especially, like I was really looking forward to spring term, you know like, and like, I feel like that would have been the full transition towards sophomore year, like if we completed the Spring term. Like you've fully gotten used to your own class, but our class year never got the chance to do that, and even like academically like, I mean I was, I was trying to get settled in Winter term, but I think like, during Spring term is when like, I would have been fully settled, but I feel like that chance never came, so that kinda sucked.

Clara: Yeah, no I get it. Like, do you think that transition's gonna happen, like, if we're on campus for fall term, or do you think it's gonna be kind of like, going back and then starting a little bit from scratch?

Sachit: I mean, I'll get used to it by fall term, but it doesn't mean that I'll like it, if that makes sense.

Clara: What do you mean by that?

Sachit: Like, I'll be okay with doing online classes because like, when, I've been doing online classes for a whole term, and like, it won't be something new when I come to fall term, but like, it's not gonna be what I'd prefer to do, like have in person classes. Because that, I feel like that's a much better way to learn.

Clara: Do you think it's going to be difficult like, when we actually do transition back to in person classes?

Sachit: I don't think so, because I feel like we've been doing in person classes our whole life and it's kind of like riding a bike, once you know how to ride a bike you don't forget it, so I feel it's like the same thing.

Clara: Okay, cool. So um, how has removal from normal Carleton life just, this is kind of a repeat question but, just affected educational experience and ability to do coursework?

Sachit: Okay. Um, it's much harder now because you don't have the same support system that you otherwise would, and like, for example if I was doing a math class, I would have, like, the CMC where I can just walk and ask for help with questions, and like, even office hours are like, a little more restricted, like. And then like a very certain time every week, while like before, there was a lot more open, and I think like, you don't get to, cause like many people live in different time zones, so especially for like team papers and stuff, like coordinating that is also so much harder, because like everyone has to get on at the same time, but people have different things going on at their homes, so that's a lot harder.

Clara: Yeah, how has it been just doing classes, even though like, you're still on campus, you're still in the original room that you were in, but like, as you can see your roommate's stuff's not there, so how has it been like just doing this term kind of on, like not an empty campus, but just with less people around and just not the normal like Carleton life?

Sachit: I mean, I miss my friends, but the campus life itself is actually not that bad. Like most of it's still okay, and like, it's quite convenient to have like a whole, two-person room to yourself as well. It's like having a single but a double at the same time. And then like, um, there's a lot more, like, there's a lot less congestion, like there's not a lot of people here so when you walk it's like, quite peaceful compared to like previous terms, but I do also miss that aspect of, like excitement where there's a lot of people gathering around. So there's nothing like, outstanding here, like there's no activities planned because like, obviously social distancing is a big thing. And even, they enforce this even in the cafeteria where like, even if your standing in line for the food like you have to stand like six feet apart, which is like, really mind blowing, so.

Clara: What have the cafeterias been like? I was just curious about that.

Sachit: Oh, the cafeteria food is actually really good these days, surprisingly.

Clara: Wait, what? (laughs)

Sachit: Yesterday they had like this Vietnamese chicken, like, that's probably the best thing they've made in the cafeteria, like the whole time I've been here.

Clara: Okay, yeah, well jealous of that but, whatever. Um, so what are some new habits and practices that you have developed to make this transition more comfortable.

Sachit: Um, so something, so like, I've tried cooking stuff on my own here, because like, now the kitchen is also a lot more available since there's a lot less people using it. And I feel like, that's been, that's like a good life skill to lean anyways, and to like use the free time I have now that I otherwise wouldn't have, like I've been trying to learn new skills and stuff. So, like music and things like that. But I feel like that's a good way to at least spend time.

Clara: Do you know, like a group of people staying on campus, and like have had time to like, spend time with them, or yeah?

Sachit: Yeah, I mean like, yeah there's like, a specific group of friends here that I still talk to like every day and I think it's very important to still have that social connection and we're like fortunate enough to be able to have that social connection, because like, this's still like an isolated campus technically, like no one is allowed to go in and outside like Northfield, so the chances of it like getting contracted here are less, so we're still able to talk with our friends.

Clara: Okay, cool. Um, so like, a bit of a longer question, but the key theme for this set of interviews is the feeling of displacement among Carleton students. So, this is very general, but like, in what ways do you feel displaced right now, this can be physical to like emotional separation, just like, anything you can think of?

Sachit: Oh yeah, of course, so like, I mean one thing is like it, it's not so dim that like, I don't miss my family as much yet, because like, I would still be here if this term was like a normal term anyways, right, but the displacement starts settling in when I start realizing that I might not even be able to go home for my Summer, because like, we don't even know if the flights will open by that time. So like, I might have to petition to stay on campus, which is kind of suck, cause like, a whole Summer here would like, again like be even less people. And, like another thing is like, there's a lot of restriction here, there's not that much you can do like otherwise, for example like otherwise like, I would go back home, I would meet like, my friends I haven't seen for a long time, but like by staying here I'm not able to do that and, there's, there's still nothing else to do.

Clara: Yep, (laughs) sorry.

Sachit: Oh my god we were doing so well.

Clara: (still laughing) We were, it's you made a face, I'm sorry. Okay whatever, we're gonna, just like cover, there we go, (laughing) ahh, that was also such a bad time to laugh. Okay, hmm. So,

what is something positive that you think has come out of this whole experience, and this can be personal, this can be just like for the world in general, it can, whatever you want to say?

Sachit: So like, as I was saying before, like the new skills I was trying to learn, I think those'll be useful at some point or other in the future. And like, it's quite peaceful here so like, I've had a lot of time to like, think for myself and just relax after like last term which was like very hectic in comparison. And like, you know like the silver lining of all this is like, since like all these cars and things like that are not actually like going around as much, like pollution has decreased significantly in all, like, places around the world and like airs starting to get breathable again in like cities like for example like New Delhi in India, like it was like dangerously, like polluted but now it's like, getting better so like, things like that I think are the few positives we can see out of this situation.

Clara: Nice. Okay, so this is the last question, and I think some of the stuff you said before might play into it, but um, what is something you think that should be preserved in public memory about this time?

Sachit: Um, I think that there should be like a memorial for like all the nurses and like the doctors that like risked their lives in order to like um, prevent the disease from spreading, and like help people who already have it. I think that's very important.

Clara: Well awesome. Thank you so much for talking to me. Um, I'm gonna just sign off and stop recording so I am here with Sachit and thank you again.