

My typical senior year of high school experiences, watching my best friends win the girl's hockey state championship, training for my senior season of lacrosse, and attending school in person came to an abrupt halt on March 13. There was a cascade of events, emails, and announcements that started with school being online for two weeks, the state of Vermont going on lockdown, school being online for the rest of the year, and eventually, spring sports being canceled. The fun associated with being home and having nothing to do was short-lived. For six weeks I only saw my friends over facetime, and I was starting to become sick of the constant family time. The family walks and large number of board games played were only enjoyable for a couple of months. But as the weather got warmer cases and deaths lowered and we were able to hang out with people outside with a mask on. My friends and I spent the summer hiking, kayaking, and enjoying outdoor dining, so we could safely spend time together. But around late October cases started to rise, and deaths followed. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's led to larger indoor gatherings and therefore about 3,000 people were dying a day in the US for parts of January and February; in late February more than 500,000 Americans' lives had been taken by Covid-19.ⁱ

While it was incredibly frustrating to not get a real senior year of high school, to not see my friends for weeks on end and to be quarantined in my dorm room for six days, it was much more frustrating to watch how the pandemic was handled across the US. In some parts of the country, mask mandates were created and followed, yet elsewhere people were packed on beaches without a mask in sight. While poor people suffered at a disproportionate level, the rich were able to live as nothing happened. They still traveled and gathered together with their friends; then, proceeded to post it on

social media. Watching the news and keeping up with social media I found it aggravating to see some people and places act like the pandemic was not happening, while the only people I was allowed to be around without a mask on were my two roommates. Covid-19 did not economically or medically affect my life, it was an eye-opening experience watching the disparities in the country unfold before me.