

When I first heard that we were all getting two weeks off from school because of some weird virus, I was really excited. I didn't know the severity of it until two weeks turned into three weeks, and three turned into six, and then we were out for the rest of the school year. I didn't get Covid until the very end of it. I was in Europe on Vacation with my family and I was on a cruise. Everyone had to get tested for covid before entering the United States, and since we were leaving the next day, my dad thought it would be good to get tested on the ship. My sister and I were out partying the night before, and I wasn't aware that anyone on the ship had Covid. Some people had already tested positive at that point and no one thought that it would be a good idea to let all the other passengers know so that we could be more careful. The next morning, we got up to go get tested, and then a few hours later, they called me and told me that I tested positive for covid. At that point, I was not allowed to leave my room until someone in a hazmat suit came to bring me to a special covid patient room, while they fumigated the hallway behind me as I walked. I thought that being on the ship was a nightmare until we had to get off the next day. My sister flew back home with my dad's girlfriend, and my dad stayed with me. They let all the other passengers off first and then everyone with covid got off the ship and onto a bus with plastic wrapped around the windows. I was in the last group to get off the ship, so while the people before me got to stay in a hotel in Rome (which is where we got let off), I was put in a van with several other covid patients and drove three hours to Florence. They took us to this hotel that was strictly for covid patients. No one who worked at the hotel spoke English, so we communicated with hand signs, and I did my best to remember what I could from my high school Italian class. My dad had to convince them to let him stay at the hotel, even though he didn't have covid, because he didn't want to be at a different hotel than me in a foreign country. They let him stay, but they locked him out of his room several times.

When I got up to my room, there was a twin bed in the middle of the room with white sheets and no blanket. There was a desk, a window (that I wasn't allowed to open), a bathroom, and that's it. There was nothing on the walls and the pillows they gave me were

wrapped in plastic. It looked like I was in a mental institution. The food they served was disgusting. They would give me one egg, a half a piece of bacon and a stale piece of bread for breakfast every morning. They would knock on my door for every meal and sit there and wait for me to come out to make sure I was still there and that I didn't leave in the middle of the night. My aunt, who speaks fluent Italian, called the hotel to see what would happen if I left to stay somewhere else, and they said that I would be arrested. So, there was nowhere else I could stay. I was there for 8 days total. During that time, my dog of 15 years passed away. I found that out the first day I was in that hotel, so the only thing I had to do was sit in my room alone, and think about my dog.

My dad was allowed to leave the hotel, so he went out to different stores and tried to find different things for me to do. He bought me a journal, a rubix cube, and anything else he could find that would fill my time. I was having panic attacks everyday. My mom, who was back in the U.S, was having panic attacks every day as well. I was testing myself everyday to see if I could get a negative test. After seven days, they came to test everyone. It was a very thorough test. They swabbed all the way up my nose and swabbed the back of my throat as well. After the test was administered, they put it on the chairs that were outside each of our rooms to wait for the test results to come in. I made the mistake of closing the door and leaving the test put there with the doctor who administered them. When I opened the door back up, he had everyone's covid tests in his hand and he was randomly putting them back. He didn't know which test belonged to which person. My test came back positive, but somehow the lady next door to me, who got there 5 days after me, was negative. After I got the positive covid test back, I had to beg them on the phone to come and give me another one because I was convinced that my test was switched, and I had six negative at-home covid tests to prove it. After much convincing, I got them to come back the next day and give me a test. This test was even more thorough than the last. Almost as if they wanted the test to come back positive. This time, I watched the doctor perform the test and I waited with them for the results. They kept telling me that I could go back

inside my room, but I said no and I stayed out there and watched. After 20 minutes of them shining their flashlights on the test trying to find a second line that was never going to show up, they told me I could leave. I had never packed up faster in my entire life. I was ready to go in 10 minutes. We still had to stay another night in Italy because we couldn't get flights for that night, but we took the train to Milan and stayed at a different Hotel where they spoke English, and then we were out by 6am the next morning. We had a 9 hour flight ahead of us, and I don't really like flying, But, I was never more happy to be on a plane in my entire life. Needless to say, my experience with covid wasn't all that great.

What I want future generations to know about covid is that it is a horrible disease that took hundreds of thousands of lives. I was asymptomatic and ended up being okay, but many people were not as lucky. I didn't realize the severity of what was going on until I got the disease. While being in quarantine, I felt like I had no basic human rights. Especially being in another country during that time. I just don't think that anyone should take their freedom for granted. The government regulated our time outside, and regulated how many people were allowed in our house. There were people in my family that I hadn't seen for two years. Things have gotten back to normal, but for a while, I thought that the world would never be the same. It's still not totally back to normal, but I'm hoping that it will be soon.