**Mentions of Suicide

Interview keywords/topics: Ireland and Appalachia, Community

Interviewer: AY
Interviewee: EH

AY (00:00):

No. Is it? Okay. This interview conducted in Belk Library on Monday, November 4th is part of an oral history project for WRC 2202 a fall 2024 history course. This semester we discussed different ways of using and understanding historical information and we are creating our own historical documents in this project. Please state your name, your year, and your major.

EH (00:33):

My name is EH. What was the second?

AY (00:38)

Your year.

EH (00:39)

Sorry. Uh, year, I am a sophomore and my major is finance and banking and I'm double minoring in Watauga Recreational College I think this is what this is called and, uh, accounting.

AY (00:51):

Perfect. Um, how did you choose finance and banking and what do you feel is valuable about it?

EH (01:00):

Um, well, it's not a surprise. I'm really autistic, so my brain works differently with numbers. It makes more sense to me. Like if it's normal math, like algebra, it makes no sense to me. But when it's money, math, it's like a second language for some reason. And I realized that if I was a CFO or somebody that was in finance, I would make a lot more money than being like, I don't know, a RNA nurse or something like that because I just wanna make a lot of money.

AY (01:31):

Yeah, fair enough. Um, okay, so where are you from?

EH (01:37):

I am from Georgia. And in the city Atlanta.

AY (01:41):

Oh, Atlanta, okay.

EH (01:43)

Yeah.

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AY (01:44)

Um, what is Atlanta like for you? How did it shape you?

EH (01:47):

It's horrible <laugh>. Um, the traffic, like if you wanna go two miles, it takes like five hours. Um, and there's always shootings, there's always a lot of construction, but people love it because, you know, it's a big city. It's like the, I think it's like the home of rap now because like, there's like a lot of famous people that go there. There's a lot of movies that get done, but it shaped me into realizing how much I was not only not technically an introvert, but I did not like the amount of people I hated the suburban life. I hated the normalcy is the best way to put it. Like everybody, every house looked the exact same. Every day was the exact same and Atlanta was just all the hustle and bustle and it never stopped. And I just, I realized that I hated it.

AY (02:33)

Is that why you chose App?

EH (02:36):

Kind of, um, ooh, okay, slight trauma dump. I tried to kill myself two years ago and I didn't think I'd get to college, but when I came outta the hospital I had, it was like three months I was in there, so it was late into my junior year and I realized that I needed to find like a college. And I visited Asheville's, like art college. I visited Western North Carolina and I was like, all of these schools are not me. Like I don't like it here. Um, and then App State had one last student tour in September when everybody was off campus, so we went and I just thought the leaves were pretty and I knew I had to choose a school, so I just chose it 'cause of the leaves. And apparently they also have a good finance program. So that was pretty baller.

AY (03:22)

Yeah. Works out perfectly.

EH (03:24)

Yeah.

AY (03:25):

Okay. Um, what do you think are the broad social perceptions of your generation? Gen Z, obviously. Are you aware of any stereotypes or assumptions of your generation? Ones perhaps assigned by older generations?

EH (03:44)

What? <laugh>.

AY (03:46)

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Okay.

EH (03:47)

Can you dumb that down? <laugh>

AY (03:49)

Sorry. Okay. What do you think are the broad social perceptions of Gen Z?

EH (03:53):

Like how we're seen?

AY (03:54):

Yeah.

EH (03:56):

Not good <laugh>. We're seen for our very simplistic and often offensive humor. Um, we're seen for our inability to function without phones or wifi. What else we're seen for not having as much social anxiety as younger generations. So a lot of us will just do dumb things in public and film it. And we're also seen for live streaming our lives, like our lives are always online.

AY (04:30)

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

EH (04:31)

Whether that's through Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, everybody knows just everything about everybody.

AY (04:36):

Yep. Yep. Okay. Are you aware of any stereotypes or assumptions of Gen Z assigned by older Generations?

EH (04:46):

Um, I mean, one of 'em is the, they can't function without their cell phones and that kind of stuff, or-

AY (04:56)

It's that damn phone.

EH (04:57)

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It's that damn phone <laugh>. Um, and like, what is it? We're very soft compared to people back then because they had to deal with a lot more. But if you look at like suicide rates now, difficulties in life now, the average income household, like the household income, it's way harder now. And especially mentally, because before they didn't have the internet. They didn't have cell phones, which they're right about. However, they could go home from the bullying and sleep it off. They could have their own lives and have privacy. We don't, everything just continues. Even when we're sleeping, our phones are next to us. People can still talk to us even when we're not even awake. Yep. No breaks.

AY (05:41):

Okay. Oh, this is a good one. What are the main current events or political topics of 2024 that you're interested in?

EH (05:56):

Um, I don't have a popular political party. I am an anarchist. Um, but it's a very small section of anarchy, which is the, the best way to explain it is I want to have a plot of land. I'm gonna go live on that land. I don't want anyone to come near me. I don't want the government to mess with my stuff. I'm gonna make my own food. I'm gonna do my own thing. That's what I am.

AY (06:20):

Perfect.

EH (06:20):

Clearly. Um, and the only events that I'm kind of interested in right now are the fact that I have to choose between a, a felon and convicted rapist or, um, the other one. <laugh>. The other one that literally lies about half of the things she says. And I have to choose between having rights or maybe have, or no, not having rights or maybe having rights over my own body.

AY (06:52):

Yeah. There you go.

EH (06:53):

So

AY (06:54):

Yeah. That basically sums up our election this year.

EH (06:58)

Yippee!

AY (07:00)

Which is tomorrow actually for-

EH (07:02)

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At least we don't got Sleepy Joe <laugh>. <laugh>. It doesn't get better. It just keeps getting worse.

AY (07:09):

Yep. I thought it, you know, after the 2020 election, I really thought that we had a shot because I thought that was the worst it could've gotten.

EH (07:16):

I thought that was a wake up call. <laugh>. I thought that was a wake up call,

AY (07:18):

But yeah. Yeah. Here we are again. Um,

EH (07:21):

I'm surprised, like nothing more serious than storming the Capitol has happened because technically all of like the Trump supporters, they are very towards the Constitution and it, the Constitution does say we should have done an uprising by now.

AY (07:37):

Yeah.

EH (07:37):

So I'm, it's really weird that we're still just like, all right, take my rights. It's fine.

AY (07:45):

Yeah seriously. Whatever. I'm gonna move to Canada. But are there any clubs, organizations, communities with which you've connected?

EH (07:54):

Uh, there's a few. Um, I'm in the Geek Guild 'cause I'm a nerd. I'm in the horror club 'cause we just got one of those. Uh, 'cause I'm Goth and I feel like that's like on brand. 'cause I love horror movies.

AY (08:08):

I love horror movies.

EH (08:10):

Um, I'm in the finance association club. I was in the gardening and the Beekeeping Club, but I haven't gone to any of those meetings in a while. Um, and I, I don't know if it counts, but I, my friend group has our own little club called the Movie Marathon Club, where we only watch horror movies every like other week.

AY (08:33):

Yeah. That for sure counts.

EH (08:35):

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<laugh>. It's like a group of us.

AY (08:36):

Yeah.

EH (08:36):

And we'll just basically tell one of our roommates that somebody's coming over and we just binge 'em until like 4:00 AM

AY (08:45)

Oh my God.

EH (08:47)

And then we either A pass out or B go get cookout.

AY (08:49):

Oh, I love cookout. <laugh>, my gosh. Cookout's the best invention ever.

EH (08:53):

Yeah.

AY (08:54):

Would you recommend any of those to other students?

EH (08:59):

Definitely like if you are somebody that is considered a nerd or, you know, likes nerdy things like, Lord of the Rings, Game of Thrones, Star Wars, D and D, any, anything like that. Pokemon, join the Geek Guild because it is the amount of people in it. It doesn't matter what like subcategory of nerd you are, you will find somebody in it, guarantee we're all a little weird, but who isn't.

AY (09:27)

Exactly.

EH (09:28)

And they have, in my opinion, they have the best like activities. Like there's a thing called Humans versus Zombies where the club rents out the entire library, all five floors of it gives half of us Nerf guns and the other half are zombies. And you have to survive with your Nerf gun. And every time you hit a zombie they have to go back to home base. And whoever has the most amount of people at the end wins.

AY (09:53):

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There you go. That actually sounds like a lot of fun,

EH (09:56)
It's really fun.

AY (09:56)
I'm not gonna lie. Do they do that every year?

EH (09:59):
Yeah. It, to be honest, it was supposed to be closer to Halloween, but, you know, hurricane and whatnot.

AY:
Yeah. Classic.

EH:
Classic.

AY (10:05):
Okay. Could you describe the first few weeks of your undergraduate experience?

EH (10:14):
I had never moved in my entire life. I've lived-

AY:
Oh, shoot.

EH:
Yeah. I've lived in the same house my entire life. I was born in that house literally. And I chose a college that is six hours away in a different state where I don't know anybody. Why? I don't know. I was feeling silly I guess. And I moved in my first day and it was the weirdest experience. 'cause not only was it quiet, like, you know, in Atlanta there's always like,

AY (10:41):
Yeah that's-

EH (10:42):
Traffic noise, there's people shouting, people talking. There's just always noises.

AY:
Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

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EH:

It's the city that never sleeps along beside New York.

AY:

Yeah. Yeah.

EH:

And it was just quiet. I mean, guaranteed there were like people talking in the hallway, but it was nowhere near as loud. And then like, when it was nighttime, I, I moved in without a roommate or I think I had a roommate, but she like moved out last second with a friend.

AY (11:02):

Mm-Hmm.

EH (11:03):

So I had the whole dorm room to myself and I had one of the suites. So, you know, it wasn't like a bad experience.

AY:

Oh perfect.

EH:

Yeah I know right. And it was just the weirdest thing. 'cause I just sat there by myself for the first time in my entire life. And it wasn't, I wasn't scared, but it was like a weird content feeling like the, for the first time in my life I felt safe because, you know, no noises. I'm by myself. I'm in my little area, I have everything decorated. And then when I went to my first few classes, I realized college is where people that actually want to learn can learn. I love learning. It's like my favorite thing to do. I've learned how to do random art stuff, random computer stuff, random everything. Um, I've even written a book stuff like random stuff like that.

EH (11:48):

And I took a bunch of different classes to figure out what I wanted to do at first. 'cause I knew I was good at finance, but I didn't know if that's what I wanted to do. Um, I did a psychology class where the professor, his name is, his name was Dr. Ludwig. Interesting man. I came to class in a dino costume, like the inflatable one.

AY:

Yes.

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EH:

He gave me extra credit 'cause he said I made him laugh.

AY:

There you go.

EH:

But it's the fact that he also was so passionate about what he was learning- or teaching. Like if you had a question, he would love to answer it. If you didn't understand something, he'd love to walk you through it. And everything that he was teaching is something he knew. He wasn't just talking out of a textbook. And that was the same with all my other classes.

EH (12:28):

I'd took, like my finance class was from somebody that loves finance and was teaching us about how to budget, how to do all these things. And if you asked her even about random stuff, like the stock market, she'd love to tell you 'cause finance was her thing. All of it. Not just budgeting. And it's just, it was a really nice warm feeling. A lot of people are afraid to start and you will get homesick a little bit. But it's worth it because once you start to grow up and you live on your own or with your roommate and you realize you have all that freedom.

AY (12:59):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

EH (13:00):

Life gets easier.

AY (13:02):

Yeah. 100% agree.

EH:

Yeah.

AY:

Um, was the transition, I know you literally just said that you were feeling content, feeling great, but was, were there any low points? Like were you regretting your decision of moving to, to do a oh my gosh. To <laugh> a different state?

EH (13:21):

Um, the only time I ever regretted it was when I realized I was so sick and I was like practically dying. I had no one.

AY (13:33):

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Yeah.

EH (13:34):

It was really weird because, you know, I mean I had friends but they were new and I, my family was six hours away. They couldn't drive to help me and I was alone in my dorm room realizing I had to go to the hospital. But realizing I couldn't call anybody. I didn't know anybody. And I was like, oh my gosh, I'm not at home.

AY:

Yeah.

EH:

Like I, there's no one I can rely on here. I don't have a safety system.

AY (13:54):

Yeah.

EH (13:54):

And I have one now 'cause you know, I've been here long enough.

AY (13:57):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

EH (13:57):

But I think that was the first time I was like, what did I do?

AY (14:00):

Yeah, shoot. Yeah. I'm sure that was scary. Why'd you go to the hospital? Like what were you sick with?

EH (14:06):

Uh, they never found out.

AY (14:07):

Oh my gosh.

EH:

Yeah.

AY:

Dang.

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EH:

Yeah.

AY:

That's kind of crazy.

EH:

Yeah. <laugh>

AY:

<laugh>. I don't know if I could live with the uh, um, the mystery.

EH (14:22):

It happens like every other year at this point.

AY:

Oh my gosh.

EH:

It actually happened in September. That's why I wasn't here for like two weeks because I was in the hospital.

AY:

Oh my gosh.

EH:

And they were like, Hmm, so are you normally this like fatally sick? And I was like, Hmm. Sometimes. And then I threw up on the doctor and then passed out.

AY:

Oh my gosh.

EH:

She was like, okay. <laugh>. They gave me a bandaid after with like transformers on it. I was fine.

AY:

Okay. Okay. I love transformers.

EH:

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Slaying the day away, you know?

AY: (14:49):

Exactly. Okay.

EH:

Yes sir. <laugh>

AY:

How did Hurricane Helene impact you?

EH (14:55):

Oh,

AY (14:56):

Oh-

EH:

my gosh.

AY:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

EH (14:57):

I kid you not, oh, I'm at my friend's house. I have my alarm set to leave. 'cause you know, it's the day before everything went to shit.

AY:

Yeah.

EH:

Uh, pardon my French and I have my alarm set so I can get back to my dog.

AY:

Oh.

EH:

I love my dog. He's my ESA.

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AY:

Okay.

EH:

And I had my alarm set so I could go back to him to feed him and all of that before the storm hit. And to be with him. My phone had died.

AY:

Oh no.

EH:

And I woke up and all of our cars were trapped. We didn't have water, we didn't have electricity and I didn't have my dog. I kid you not, I made my friends get dressed. There's three of 'em. They're all men. I got dressed, I made them walk with me four miles to go save my dog <laugh>. And we got there and I was so afraid this little guy would be like scared. He was sitting on the couch.

AY:

Yeah.

EH:

He was sleeping. I was like, are you kidding me? Like I walked all his way. 'cause I thought you would be like freaking out. Nope. So we packed all of our stuff. 'cause even my apartment didn't have electricity anymore.

AY (15:59):

Mm-Hmm.<affirmative>.

EH (16:00):

And we went to my mom's house. It was really interesting having three 20-year-old guys. Me a 19-year-old girl, my sister, 21-year-old. 'cause she wanted to visit. And her boyfriend who's, and they're all like all the men act like toddlers.

AY (16:15):

I mean, yeah.

EH (16:16):

Because you know, they're men.

AY (16:17):

Yep. Yep.

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EH:

All in one suburban house. And I had to stay there a week 'cause it took that long for the power to come back on. And I think my brain chemistry has changed to the fact that I'm so glad I didn't have brothers.

AY:

Oh, there you go.

EH:

Just one sister.

AY (16:31):

Yeah. I have two brothers and a sister. It's not.

EH (16:32):

That is a such a fun combo.

AY:

Yeah. Yeah.

EH:

<laugh> I lived with three 20-year-old men that acted younger than I do. I was like, never again.

AY (16:44):

Yeah.

EH (16:44):

Never again.

AY (16:45):

No. That sounds horrible.

EH:

I- I didn't sign up to be a mother.

AY:

<laugh> I didn't sign up to be a mother. Uh, okay. Why do you think it's important for people of the future to hear about your experiences of the events of 2024?

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EH (17:01):

It's very important to realize the changes, the differences. To see the, how we've either progressed or how we've gone back. It's important to learn from the mistakes or the successes and to see what we can use to achieve success in the future.

AY (17:18):

Yeah. There you go. Well, those are all of my questions, so I think we can wrap it up. But thank you for your time.