

# Demond Thompson

Sun, Nov 27, 2022 4:03PM • 16:15

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

pandemic, work, mask, home, massage therapist, Jeffersonville, movie, holes, people, wear, lockdown, podcast, respiratory therapist, business, called, watched, massage, part, america, talking

## SPEAKERS

Demond Thompson, Jen Weidner

**Jen Weidner 00:15** Today is October 18 2022. I'm Jen Weidner with the Jeffersonville Township Public Library conducting interviews for Pandemic Perspectives Jeffersonville Residents Recount their lives during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. This project was made possible with a grant from the Indiana Genealogical Society. I am here today with demand Thompson, thank you for being here today.

**Demond Thompson 0:30** Well, thank you for having me.

**Jen Weidner 00:41** Demond what is it that you do for a living?

**Demond Thompson 00:43** I am a licensed massage therapist. So I rub on people (laughing)

**Jen Weidner 00:50** Okay, do you remember when you first heard about COVID And what was your reaction to it?

**Demond Thompson 00:57** I think at first I heard about it at work and kind of like the Ebola outbreak and some of the other things that we had had years previously. I was like, Okay, well, you know, it's okay another thing Okay, cool. You know, we'll deal with it. However we got to deal with it? And, and for the most part, I was kind of like that. It'd be fine.

**Jen Weidner 01:20** I think a lot of us had that same reaction at first. So did you believe that it would get to the United States let alone to Southern Indiana?

**Demond Thompson 01:31** I honestly wasn't sure because I did not have what I wasn't really well informed until it got to America. So. So no not really.

**Jen Weidner 01:40** So as a massage therapist, how did your job change and in the heart of the pandemic before there was vaccines before there was, you know, all the precautions we've been taking?

**Demond Thompson 01:51** Well (laughing) I'm not sure how much of the story you want. Um, so when everything shut down, I was, you know, I was at home like everybody else and I was

really kind of worried about my job because you know, being a massage therapist, you have to be really close to people. And you know, talking about mask mandates and all that of course, I'm I was masking up my my, parents are both in the medical field and my mother is a retired respiratory therapist. Like I could say respiratory therapists before I could spell my own name. And so when this when it became a bigger deal, and they started talking about lockdowns and the possibility of a lockdown like , this was February 2020. I had called my mom about it, because like, if anybody was going to know, she was gonna know and I was like, so is it is this COVID thing like, like, is that or is this gonna be a big deal. She goes yes it's very serious they tried to call her back to work

**Jen Weidner 02:49** Oh WOW, she was retired

**Demond Thompson 02:51** She Yeah, she had been retired a year. Maybe two. Sorry, mom I forgot ,but so when she when she told me that she was getting called back, I was like, Oh, this is this is serious because my mom my parents have never really been one to sugarcoat stuff when I asked a straight question. So ,So that's, that's when I started to take it seriously. It was the question

**Jen Weidner 03:17** How did your job change?

**Demond Thompson 03:19** I did my job change. Okay. My job changed in that the cleaning protocol changed, it became more thorough. And you know, we had to buy more blankets and yeah, we had to do we just, we just had to clean more what was kind of funny the reason I laughed at first is because before we came back the Kentucky massage board had decided on what we should wear and it was it look like have you seen the movie Outbreak?

**Jen Weidner 03:54** Yep.

**Demond Thompson 03:55** That it was similar to that. It was like this full body suit, rubber gloves a whole deal a big ol man. Like almost like a helmet almost for a mask. I'm exaggerating the helmet part but it was it was literally we were going to be covered from head to toe

**Jen Weidner 04:12** So they want you to massage people pretty much in a hazmat suit.

**Demond Thompson 04:15** Basically. Yeah. And we all of us when we came back and we saw pictures of this I'm like this is never going to work. This is going to kill business because you come to a massage therapist. Most of the time to relax and seeing somebody in a hazmat suit then you know you're worried about a monkey jumping out of the jumpig out and infecting everybody that's it, does it? It doesn't induce calm, it doesn't induce peace. Luckily, the voice voices of reason were prevailed voices of reasons prevailed. So where we had to wear masks and stuff and you know, again, the cleaning protocols were very, very were a lot more in depth.

**Jen Weidner 04:55** So did business go down or did it stay the same? People scared to come get massaged?

**Demond Thompson 05:03** Um, no, actually business? Well. I don't want to tell too much of what's going on proprietary business. Business didn't increase, business didn't actual business. We start over doo doo doo doo doo doo. Business was pretty good after we opened back up for a variety of reasons. Part of it was because, you know, some people didn't believe it, didn't believe in it. And also like let's be clear, 2020 was stressful as hell on top of COVID and everything else so there were a lot of people coming in and just to get out of the house or just to

get some relief. So get some relief. So the business business business stay pretty good and honestly, even up until now, it's been. It's been it's been really steady.

**Jen Weidner 06:02** Well, that's good. So the mind is also a podcaster. So were you podcasting during that part of the pandemic?

**Demond Thompson 06:11** The funny part is I bought the equipment. I think in February of 2020. And it wasn't a month later that everything shut down. So I had plenty of time to podcast, so I did. Yeah, so yeah, the first I started publishing, I started publishing my first podcast in March of 2020. So like I, which was just a coincidence more than anything else. Of course, a lot of podcasts started because nobody was going anywhere.

**Jen Weidner 06:45** We had nothing else to do. So, you're married. You have two kids. Were you worried about bringing COVID home and how did your home life change your wife she works for the school system as well.

**Demond Thompson 06:57** Yeah, During, during the are you talking about during lockdown or just since the pandemic started about?

**Jen Weidner 07:05** Uhh both

**Demond Thompson 07:07** Okay during lockdown? Honestly during lockdown COVID was one of the best things to happen to my family because we were all home together. I don't have a huge house. So we're all on top of each other. And so we really, I became closer to my family during this time period. Because we're together all the time and we did cute little things. We're big movie watchers, movie watchers, almost movie buffs, I don't know anything about movies. I know what I like. I know what I don't like. But we you know, we did things like Harry Potter marathons, we watched all seven movies. We watched the whole MCU (Marvel Universe) all the way up until that point like you know in like a couple of weeks and you know, little things like my son had had, you know, had seen the later movies but he had never seen the original Iron Man. I don't know why I'm telling this part. But anyway, whatever. We were watching the very first Ironman and he's going you know, he hasn't built a suit yet and all that stuff and he goes, Hey, let's turn it to Iron Man. It was it was so cute. But I, I would we really bonded over that period. There was like a couple of months that I was home and also realized that I have ADHD and I am, I am a busy body. So like as soon as everybody was awake and squared away for whatever the next phase of the morning was going to be. My wife's like, throw up the deuces and I go walk for an hour because I had to get out of the house. And we really and now even when even when I get when I get agitated at home, whether it's the children or it's just me, just just life or you can see me fidgeting now. She you know, she now knows like, go, go, go walk see you when you get back and I'm usually calmer and everything is just chill like I'm way better and easier to deal with. (laughing)

**Jen Weidner 09:05** So something good came out of your all's quarantine.

**Demond Thompson 09:08** A lot of a lot of good came out, honestly a lot of good came out and made some new friends you know, through podcasting and stuff like that too. And he's just it was you know, I got to meet some, some people that I'd never thought I talked to, people I admired authors and things like that fellow podcasters I thought were cool. And you know, it was it was it was a really, weirdly enough it was a really good experience.

**Jen Weidner 09:30** So, besides what you just talked about, what else have you learned from the pandemic? Good, bad, otherwise.

**Demond Thompson 09:43** I'm a, I'm a firm believer that people are generally good. Unfortunately, I think I don't know if this is going to be I don't know whatever. It showed me the culture of America, culture of America that I really don't like the individualism is not the not the word I'm looking for. I'm not really sure exactly the word I'm looking for. But selfishness. I don't want to say that what are they called rugged individualism. That's the one I was looking for. That is it's not sustainable. It's not I mean, what we have going on in this country as the way it's set up now is not sustainable. For the bulk of us, because we had a shutdown for two or three months, and everything almost went to a, came to a screeching halt and almost fell apart. And instead of looking at and saying, oh my goodness, we've got holes to fill. We've got weaknesses, which is fine, because this is supposed to be a developing thing. It's like but this is the way we've always done it. This, this of courses it works. This is the way we've always done it. If if there was if there are mistakes being made, or if there are holes in there's holes in your game plan, you fix you fix the holes. You know, it'd be like, I don't know if there's football, it's football season right now. It would be like the first half your coaches, your football coach, your coach is what you're trying to pass, you're trying to pass you're trying to pass it's not working. And you don't try to run the next the second half if you just keep passing of course I'm very I'm making it very simplistic here. And it's still not working well and then you wonder why isn't it working? That's not how it works. And you know, just seeing that and then seeing how little sometimes people care for each other. Like wearing a mask is not that big. I have to wear a mask every day and I don't want to. I'm not not required to now at work, but I wear a mask every day. Because I don't know who I'm coming in contact with.

**Jen Weidner 12:08** Exactly.

**Demond Thompson 12:09** You know, my wife is a cancer survivor. You know, and she's still healing. Like, I don't want to bring it home. And I wouldn't want somebody to bring something home because I messed up

**Jen Weidner 12:22** Right! You don't want to, like knowingly give one of your clients it or vice versa, right. It's the simplest thing we could do to wear a mask.

**Demond Thompson 12:30** Yeah, I didn't you know, when people got upset about wearing masks, I just I still don't get it like that. But those types of things. And if you if you can't wear a mask because of medical reasons, I'm not heartless, then, you know, then don't go out or we have plenty of services to help with that. You know what I'm saying? So it just and just the cavalier and the callousness. Cavalier is not I don't think that's the right word, but the callousness of some people about this really rubbed me the wrong way.

**Jen Weidner 13:02** So what would you like people to remember about the pandemic? Maybe listening to this in the future, let's let's say like 20-30 years from now what do you want somebody who wasn't around or wasn't old enough to remember the pandemic?

**Demond Thompson 13:28** It was a bigger deal than people made it out to me. I didn't lose anybody. Thankfully not to. Not to. Not to COVID but I know people who did, like in quick fashion. I know a friend, friend of mine, she lost like five within like a couple months. And they were somebody's mom or dad or brother or sister, cousin, friend. And it's we need to take care of each other. And if anybody listening to this down the road is like we need to take, to take care

of us, to take care of each other the you know the quote unquote least of us the people who don't who are who are working homeless. I can't believe that is a phrase.

**Jen Weidner** 14:21 Right?

**Demond Thompson** 14:21 But people who don't have homes, people who you know, don't have resources, medical attention. You know, those people, though, they are people to they're just as important as you are to see they're important to somebody. And we all we all need to band together or it's not going to work. It is never going to work. America has has worked kind of only in hindsight. You know what I mean? Like and even history, you know, when we read history now there are tons of stories that are going to be left out because you know, to book you can only tell so much. You know what I mean? And we need to worry about we need to worry about all of us. That's yeah, that's, that's really the lesson I got from this like people can be really, really terrible to each other but also people can be really good. And I just want to say that I say this, I say this to people all the time. It's like I just want everybody to be okay. So whatever, whatever we need to learn from this or any other lessons with whether it's COVID or any other kind of catastrophe, we need to take care of each other. Just want everybody to be okay.

**Jen Weidner** 16:03 Well, thanks for coming in today.