

OPINION EDITORIAL

THE MANY FACES OF A PANDEMIC

June 3, 2021, by Lindsay Wincherauk

(1087 Words - Dark. Upsetting Subject Matter)



The finish line is coming into view.

I think.

So, we've been told.

Humanity versus virus. Humanity has prevailed. For most. Not all.

What does this mean?

For many, life will spring back to normalcy.

For others, those less fortunate, next will only be what they can afford?

Broke means borrowed time. Broke might mean already dead – living stops – even if you survive ten more years.

Dark?

Yes.

Reality?

For countless people, unfortunately, yes.

Lost in the shuffle. Lost in survival.

BABY THROUGH GRADE SCHOOL

For the most part, unscathed. Memories to be forgotten. A little more than a year at home, listening to mom + dad fight over the remote. Listening to mom and dad either come together in love or realize long before retirement, relationship fracturing, a romance, ending. A story not worthy of becoming a memoir.

HIGH SCHOOL + UNIVERSITY

Sad.

Many firsts lost to the pandemic.

Billy puking his guts out at graduation would not be a memory worthy of reminiscing about unless you chosen to race through life devolving. Don't worry; if you stay friends with Billy, you'll have many opportunities to see him puke until a doctor tells him to keep puking or die.

Sad.

Because student-athletes have been conditioned to believe, they will miss their chance for the big leagues, buying into their hype. Not understanding only one of them will ever make it—and that one will still make it when the world hits play again.

Why?

Because every other gifted athlete he/she is competing with, well, they too have been put on pause—the playing field is level.

The pandemic for them is nothing more than a blip. An inconvenience. An annoyance.

REAL LIFE (20-40) LIFE PUT ON HOLD?

Depending on birthright, here is where the pandemic gets dicey.

If you are a child of means, unscathed is a possibility. Your safety net is massive.

If you are a child from a fractured upbringing, or divorce, or poverty, life's challenges begin to rest on your shoulders. You may be blessed with amazing stories of overcoming the odds—but like the athletes pursuing their passion—you are not the only one, and finding an audience who will buy: you, well, hopefully, you're the discovered one.

If not?

Keep trying. Your life will gift you with richness as long as you avoid bitterness. Your life will laud you with empathy and compassion, something those locked onto chasing the dangling carrot may never comprehend.

The pandemic might break you. Take away your income. Leave you stranded on the outside looking in, don't fret too much; you are in control of scripting what's next.

Keep trying.

If you do, you still have time to carve out a future, a nest egg, a means to keep living once your career days pass away, leaving a rich golden life ahead. Allowing you to move through life slightly broken but not financially broke.

Freedom 55 is nothing more than an equation for how much time you have left to live.

REAL LIFE (45...50...55...60...65...70+) CAREER INTERRUPTED.

Living cut short.

This is where birthright and being dealt a lousy hand become terrifying.

This is where the pandemic may leave a lost demographic in its wake.

Many people have thrived during the pandemic (so we are told - good for them): increased wealth, working at home significantly reduced expenses – it allowed many to prosper, to become awash in the possibility of homeownership, of flourishing, of building a future that will enable their golden years to swim in riches. Allowing them to leave family they leave behind when their time comes to leave this earth – a head start. An upper hand. An advantage.

This is where some business owners have forgotten who provided them with what they have, and cut, chopped, set on a downward spiral, to protect their lifestyles, those who've raised them up – into a swirl of unrecoverable realities.

People will die broke. Being a casualty of the pandemic will see to that.

The cards have been dealt. If you happen to be in this lost grouping, at the end of the pandemic, your only chance to keep living a fulfilling life is if you've been dealt a wild card – and there are only a few of those to go around.

What will happen to these lost people, the ones where life didn't come from the advantages of birthright or being dealt a fortunate hand. The one's where Billy puking is worth reminiscing about.

If you're from a wealthy upbringing, and you are Billy, you may be okay.

If you come from a broken existence and you are Billy, good luck. Unless, of course, you are one of the fortunate ones whose life story will resonate with others, allowing you to sneak through a tiny crack in the door and not die broke.

We all can't reinvent ourselves.

Popular restaurants don't want 60+-year-old-servers.

Most 60+-year-old-servers don't want to be serving us.

I feel for the people teetering on the edge of demise because of the pandemic, those who've had a large part of who they are, stripped away: their income, future, and hope.

If you find yourself outside of a career with few options for new, there is absolutely no solace in hearing you are not alone.

Suppose you've hit the age where you should be relaxing and winding down, and you no longer have a way to support a way of life. In that case, you may survive another ten years, but the day the money runs dry (or CERB), darkness may have the propensity to swallow you, and even though your heart may keep beating, you will have ceased living long ago.

Why write this?

Because it is a looming reality for many.

Because life isn't always easy.

Because society needs to hear about the needless suffering rising on the horizon.

If you don't think this is reality, open your eyes.

What do you think is going to happen to an ageing person who can no longer support living?

Do you, whomever you may be, feel any responsibility in protecting your lifestyle, and not; the heartbeats of those who provided it for you?

The question is rhetorical.

Money often justifies action.

For those who are scared of what's next, all I can offer is: keep trying. Your stories are rich in valuable lessons – unfortunately, few of them will ever be heard.

For many people who survived the pandemic unscathed, the pandemic may have even been a financial blessing.

For others, surviving the pandemic just might be the launching point of their suffering.
