

Interview of: Jeb Bush  
Interviewer: Diana Dombrowski  
Interview Date: August 5, 2021



**Jeb Bush**  
**912 Food Farmacy**  
**Savannah, GA**  
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Date: December 22, 2020  
Location: Remote Interview byway of Savannah, GA  
Interviewer: Diana Dombrowski  
Transcription: Sharp Copy Transcripts  
Length: Fifty-five minutes  
Project: COVID-19

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**Diana Dombrowski:** All right! This is Diana Dombrowski recording for the Southern Foodways Alliance on Thursday, August 5. I'm here with Jeb Bush. We're part of the COVID-19 Oral History Project, talking about how foodways in Georgia have been impacted.

Jeb, I wonder if you could tell us how you're doing today.

[00:00:21]

Jeb Bush: I'm great. Thank you so much. I'm so happy to be here with you, to kind of reflect upon the past eighteen months and particularly the past nine months.

[00:00:32]

Diana Dombrowski: Yes, yes. Thank you for making the time. We last spoke in December, and a lot has happened for everyone during that time. We've had the mask mandates lifted to an extent, vaccination's become available, and I wonder if you could tell us how work has changed for you between December and now, maybe the way you operate. What's different? What's the same?

[00:01:06]

Jeb Bush: So we're definitely back in the office more and doing more things together. I believe, like, back in December, it was kind of resurgence some of COVID, and we kind of—you know, when COVID first started, we all split up and worked from home and then kind of crept back together, then last fall when the numbers went back up, we went

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home again. So, really, starting in February, actually, we started kind of being back in the office and kind of just trying to kind of get back to a little bit of normal.

You know, things just been—we didn't get to have our big event that we have every spring. We generally have a big picnic in the last weekend of April, but we did it online this year. Well, excuse me. We did a kind of a hybrid event where people could come pick up their plates out of the office, and then we did [unclear] on auction, which actually ended up blowing our previous auction numbers through the roof, and so it was—you know, that's a positive lesson from COVID.

[00:02:47]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah! Wow! That's great. Do you have any—are you all issuing any guidance for your employees about getting vaccinated, or is that up to them personally?

[00:03:00]

Jeb Bush: Very much up to them. I mean, it's definitely encouraged, but I have a hard time being like, "You must do this." I think everybody—there's one staff member who might not be vaccinated.

[00:03:24]

Diana Dombrowski: Okay. Yeah. Are you still doing things like driving the farm truck?

[00:03:30]

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Jeb Bush: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, our programs have continued. We never stopped them.

We did our second cohort of Food Pharmacy this year. Unfortunately, we still didn't—we never made it back to kind of what we had planned on originally, had, like, in-person education classes and cooking classes together, but with that said, we learned a little bit about COVID. Last year we just kind of posted videos on YouTube for our participants. This year we actually did the cooking demos live on Zoom, and the participants got to actually ask questions and share stories, so that was definitely a benefit.

[00:04:31]

Diana Dombrowski: Wow! That's great! What kind of things were y'all cooking in the lessons?

[00:04:36]

Jeb Bush: Goodness gracious. I'm trying to remember what all of our—so okra is this month, and I think squash—so each month we have a kind of produce item of the month, and so we had squash and zucchini last month. Then we started off with cabbage and greens and stuff like that. So, generally, they're kind of like quick recipes, you know, quick and simple recipes, because we're trying to make this accessible to as many people as possible. You know, we understand the—especially low-income individuals have so many stressors on their life, and so being able to offer something quick and easy for them to then be able to repeat. So, like, one-time peaches was our fruit in June, so we did like peach smoothies, but then she also did like roasted peaches and stuff like that.

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[00:05:46]

Diana Dombrowski: That's good. Those are really good. [laughs] Those are one of my favorite things to do in the summer, so that sounds really nice.

[00:05:55]

Jeb Bush: Oh, god, peaches were so good this year.

[00:05:59]

Diana Dombrowski: [laughs] I am curious, because you talked about doing forms of outreach like that for folks who are on the lower end of an income scale, and the need for folks during this time in terms of food access and food security has gotten a lot of attention, but I wonder, have you continued to see a need increase over the summer, over the spring, or what's going on for the people that you serve?

[00:06:32]

Jeb Bush: So at the Saturday market, our SNAP numbers have pretty much been the same as last year. Our farm truck numbers have been down. I think a lot of that is our fault and the fact that we have a twenty-two-year-old truck that has spent from July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021, spent eighty-four days in the shop.

[00:07:08]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, wow. Oh, gosh.

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[00:07:10]

Jeb Bush: I'm sorry. We missed eighty-four stops.

[00:07:13]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, wow!

[00:07:15]

Jeb Bush: Because of the truck.

[00:07:17]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

[00:07:17]

Jeb Bush: So not being able to offer a consistent service, I think, really hurt us. You know, it made us less dependable, very unfortunate to say, but, I mean, it's just an honest thing. We didn't have the resources to be our best.

[00:07:45]

Diana Dombrowski: How do things look for that going forward for the next few months? Are you working with the same truck or have you figured [glitch in recording]? [laughs]

[00:07:53]

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Jeb Bush: Before we started recording this, we were talking about how busy I am. The one thing I didn't tell you was one of the things that's causing all this is we're starting a capital campaign—

[00:08:07]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh!

[00:08:07]

Jeb Bush: —for a new farm truck.

[00:08:09]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, good! Oh, wonderful!

[00:08:11]

Jeb Bush: So we're hoping—we're kind of still in the background section of it right now, but hoping to, between now and the end of the year, just kind of get some major donors lined up and get those pledges in, hopefully enough that we can put a deposit down on the truck that we want.

[00:08:36]

Diana Dombrowski: Great.

[00:08:36]

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Jeb Bush: And it'll take them about six months to retrofit it, and so hopefully by the time—and then we'll do a big public thing in the beginning of 2022, and the hope is that by July 1 of 2022, we'll have a new truck on the road.

[00:08:54]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, great. That's wonderful. I hope so too. I will share that fundraiser. I am glad to contribute. That sounds like such a worthy project. I'm sorry it's been in the shop so long. That sounds really frustrating for everybody involved. [laughs]

[00:09:11]

Jeb Bush: It really is, but, I mean, you know, I give kudos to the staff for coming up with ways—you know, once we kind of realized, all right, this truck is beginning to cause significant issues, the staff started loading product up in the back of their own vehicles—

[00:09:33]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, wow.

[00:09:33]

Jeb Bush: —and setting up tents and tables at our normal stops. So I think, you know, our farm truck is a big lime green truck, the old Wonder Bread truck, and so it's huge, and I think a lot of times people look for that, and when they don't see it, they immediately pass on by. But we were still able to serve a lot of people just out of the back of trucks and with tents.

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[00:10:04]

Diana Dombrowski: That's great. That's good. That's good. It sounds like you guys are being as creative as you possibly can when it comes to that. I'm curious, too, how things have been for the producers that you work with as well.

[00:10:21]

Jeb Bush: Who?

[00:10:21]

Diana Dombrowski: The producers, the farmers.

[00:10:23]

Jeb Bush: Oh, farmers! Yes. So, you know, I think one thing that we can brag on is that not a single one of our vendors went out of business last year.

[00:10:36]

Diana Dombrowski: Wow!

[00:10:37]

Jeb Bush: And a lot of them give us a lot of that credit for staying open and being able to have such a busy market throughout the year.

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[00:10:53]

Jeb Bush: Congratulations! Yeah.

[00:10:55]

Jeb Bush: I can't remember what—yeah, I intentionally did not read the transcript again closer to the last few weeks, because I didn't want it to influence my thoughts and everything. So, I don't remember what all I shared, but one of the things, last year we did almost a million—we estimated that we did almost a million dollars in sales at the Saturday market.

[00:11:22]

Diana Dombrowski: Wow. No, you did not. That is a new fact. Yeah, that's a great fact. That's wonderful. Yeah, I know—I've spoken—I've talked to the folks who work at the market in Athens, and a lot—and heard that it was the best year on record for them, actually, in terms of sales, and I know as we're starting—a lot of that business was driven by folks who wanted to tap into a secure food system and feel safe about where their food was coming from in the midst of all this uncertainty, and, you know, they're looking at now to try to retain that business. So, would you say that things have stayed steady as well over the summer?

[00:12:10]

Jeb Bush: Well, I would say that our number of customers have stayed the same. I think sales are down from last year. You know, last year we didn't have the tourists and all that

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stuff going through the market, whereas this year the feels busier because there's so many tourists walking through it, but tourists don't buy produce, and so I think that kind of skews things a little bit.

And I don't know if a lot more of our vendors have started taking their own forms of electronic payment, you know, other processors, or Venmo and stuff like that. So there's been less reliance on the wooden tokens that we provide, but that's how we base our formula on how much money's being spent at the market.

[00:13:29]

Diana Dombrowski: Gotcha.

[00:13:30]

Jeb Bush: One of the things I hope to do in the next few weeks is to do some sort of survey where we kind of figure out from the vendors if their ratios have changed or things like that.

[00:13:48]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. Have there been any changes in terms of like mask guidance for customers or for farmers at the market?

[00:13:58]

Jeb Bush: Yeah, so I guess the mayor lifted the mask mandate maybe in March.

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[00:14:11]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, wow!

[00:14:12]

Jeb Bush: I mean, is when the mask mandate came down. Yeah, I think it was maybe the end of March or something like that. And we just took ‘em off, you know. You know, all of us who are vaccinated, you know—what we told our vendors was, “If you’re vaccinated, you don’t have to wear a mask.” And then, unfortunately, we’re kind of in this new Delta variant, and so we are back to—our official statement is we are encouraging our visitors and vendors to wear a mask, and we are trying to model that behavior by wearing masks ourselves.

[00:15:08]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. Yeah, I was curious about that, especially because wearing masks, and the vaccine as well, have become such polarized behaviors—

[00:15:23]

Jeb Bush: Crazy!

[00:15:23]

Diana Dombrowski: What was that?

[00:15:24]

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Jeb Bush: Crazy!

[00:15:27]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. I was curious how you, in leading, as you do, negotiate those issues in a public setting, you know, or negotiate other people's boundaries or just being aware of that. Maybe no one's brought it up as, like, a contentious issue, but—

[00:15:51]

Jeb Bush: Oh, my lord. Of course they've brought it up as a contentious issue.

[00:15:53]

Diana Dombrowski: Okay. All right. Okay. [laughs]

[00:15:59]

Jeb Bush: And so we had signs all over the market starting whenever, last April or so, when we realized how the COVID was being spread, and saying masks are required, and required it of all of our vendors, that they be masked. We stayed masked. And then it was really hard, especially kind of as the tourists began to kind of come back into Savannah, especially the tourists. Our regulars were fine with wearing a mask, but the tourists did not like being told to put a mask on. We wouldn't swipe their credit cards without them having a mask.

[00:16:50]

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Diana Dombrowski: Good for you!

[00:16:53]

Jeb Bush: And then I would just walk around the market with a box full of masks and just walk up to people, “Would you like one?” you know. [laughs] A little passive-aggressive, but—

[00:17:07]

Diana Dombrowski: [laughs] You’re trying to keep people safe. Yeah, yeah. [laughs]

[00:17:11]

Jeb Bush: And then one thing I’m super excited about is that the Saturday in next Saturday and then again in the first Saturday of September is that we’re actually a site to get your vaccine.

[00:17:32]

Diana Dombrowski: Wow!

[00:17:33]

Jeb Bush: So we’re working with the local Health Department and their marketing team.

[00:17:41]

Diana Dombrowski: That’s wonderful.

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[00:17:42]

Jeb Bush: You know, kind of preparing for, like, you know, staff's like, "How do we respond to people who are like, 'You shouldn't be doing this?'"

I'm like, "Ignore them." Follow the science. I don't care.

Like, we had another little contentious issue back in the spring. We let Planned Parenthood be our community spotlight—

[00:18:10]

Diana Dombrowski: Cool!

[00:18:10]

Jeb Bush: —and so we got a little flak from that. Again, I can understand that argument against. I mean, I don't agree with it, but I can at least understand how people could be upset by that. I'm not entertaining people who are upset about us offering vaccines at the market. Like, if that's how far you are down the wagon, you know—

[00:18:40]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

[00:18:39]

Jeb Bush: —I'm not going to engage.

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[00:18:43]

Diana Dombrowski: It's not mandatory to get it. It's not mandatory to get your food. It's just there if you want it. That seems like the most reasonable possible behavior you can try to be in terms of attempting something proactive, especially as Delta is increasingly termed, you know, as being a bigger concern or a huge concern for the unvaccinated. It's just seems very common sense. I bet—I'm guessing that your approach when you deal with people, it's more like you catch more flies with honey, you know. There's not a point to really try to pick apart somebody's facts. You're just trying to model behavior. You're just trying to make this accessible if people think it's the best option for them. Would you say that that's your approach?

[00:19:42]

Jeb Bush: Yeah, I think so. I mean, I really do think so. At least that's my public approach. In my role as executive director, that's my approach. Maybe personally, you know, it's a little harder.

[00:19:59]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Yeah, interesting. I can only imagine. Could you share with us a little bit about your vaccine story and what it was like scheduling or how you got yours and what that was like?

[00:20:12]

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Jeb Bush: So Dave, my husband, actually got his vaccine. He was—as the employee health manager, the vaccines came through his office, and so he was actually the first person to get the vaccine at his hospital.

[00:20:35]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, wow!

[00:20:36]

Jeb Bush: I mean, that was, like, back in December. The week they came out, he had his first Pfizer shot. Mine came a little later, and that was due to the fact that, as I shared before we were recording, that we brought Daddy home from the nursing home and I was going to be the caretaker of somebody who was over sixty-five, so, therefore, I qualified early, so I got vaccinated close to the end of January. So I was super early, too, with my first shot, so that was exciting. I got my second shot, like, right before Daddy got discharged from the nursing home.

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Diana Dombrowski: Great. And how was the scheduling process like? Was it very—was it pretty easy? Did you need to schedule one for your dad? How did—

[00:21:40]

Jeb Bush: So because the nursing home really took care of everything, we started working with the nursing home like in November to kind of prepare for the transition to

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move Daddy home, so they understood, you know, that he needed to get his vaccine first, so they provided it to all the patients, and then I was able to get one as well. So I want to say I got mine the same week that Daddy got his, you know. I don't remember exactly the details about—

[00:22:20]

Diana Dombrowski: I'm so glad, because I know up here we were—I was scheduling for my folks, I was scheduling for their friends on the online portal because there's no way that they could have ever negotiated refreshing the page and checking different locations the way you needed to. So I'm so glad, especially in that situation, that they just handled those details of the nursing home, yeah.

[00:22:43]

Jeb Bush: Dave tried to help my aunt, because she was on Hilton Head, and tried to help her get scheduled, and he finally was able to kind of pull some strings and get her an appointment, and then she went somewhere else and got the vaccine. [laughter]

[00:23:04]

Diana Dombrowski: Cool.

[00:23:06]

Jeb Bush: [glitch in recording].

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[00:23:07]

Diana Dombrowski: Would you mind sharing a little bit—you did mention about your husband, how busy things have been at his work and how hard things have been for the team and for employees and retention there. Due to the pandemic, you would say?

[00:23:25]

Jeb Bush: Yeah. It's kind of like, as I was sharing before the recording started, yeah, he does the employee health, so all the new employees have to come through his office and for all their drug screening and blood pressure and make sure all their vitals are all good and stuff like that, and he's just overloaded because nurses are just jumping all over the place. Some are jumping out of the business. But there are hospitals, like, in big cities where COVID's been a big deal, they offer them like \$100 an hour to work the COVID floors.

[00:24:21]

Diana Dombrowski: Really? Wow!

[00:24:22]

Jeb Bush: And then on top of that, you can get overtime. So he was actually saying that one of the nurses from Hilton Head went out to Los Angeles, and California's overtime rules state that you can't work more than eight hours a day. The hospitals run on twelve-hour shifts. She was making \$100 an hour flat, and then turned around and she works six days a week, did that for ten weeks, and all in all, it was like \$130,000 in, like, ten weeks.

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[00:25:11]

Jeb Bush: [glitch in recording]

[00:25:12]

Jeb Bush: So she took the rest of the year off.

[00:25:13]

Diana Dombrowski: Well, good for her. [laughs]

[00:25:18]

Jeb Bush: I say that just to kind of show that, like, there's so many opportunities for nurses that if they can be flexible, they can go somewhere and make some serious money. Then you've got a trickle-down effect of, well, then those open and then so all the nurses are working so much and, you know, being overwhelmed, people caring for too many patients, and just exhausted, I mean, it's just been a hell of an eighteen months, and they're just resigning or moving on. And all these hospitals are offering—every hospital in this area is offering like a \$20,000 sign-on bonus. So you can make more money by just switching from Hilton Head to Savannah, you know, than staying put. So it's a lot of rotation.

[00:26:27]

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Jeb Bush: Yeah. I can imagine the fatigue, too, now that vaccines have been available for a while, and Delta is gaining strength and spreading so quickly. Stories of nurses and doctors sharing with the news what it's like to treat patients who didn't get the vaccine and wish that they had, you know, and how much—how exhausting mentally that is just to watch and to serve and to try to help those people through that. What's it been like for you and for your husband to watch how this has played out since the vaccines became available?

[00:27:10]

Jeb Bush: Well, I mean, I think you're right there. Let's kind of back up here just a second about what you said about the frustration of those who didn't get vaccinated now being in the ICU and in the hospital beds, adding to the stress and exhaustion that nurses are already facing, I think it's kind of discouraging, you know. I mean, obviously they're patients, so you're going to give them your best care, but not being able to, you know, also want to be like, "You had the chance to prevent this from happening. For your crazy political beliefs, you didn't believe in science."

[00:28:08]

Jeb Bush: Yeah. I've watched members of my own family, you know, decide not to do that, and have been really torn in trying to understand if it's really a decision or if it's kind of brainwashing or it's kind of both, you know? Because there just came a point in how different the messaging was, that it seemed like you just couldn't—no one could break through it, you know?

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[00:28:40]

Jeb Bush: Yeah. But for us, you know, as a couple, I mean, of course, we brought Daddy home in February, so that's been a huge stressor, and part of that was because of COVID and not being able to visit him, and then just now we've got twenty-four-hour care, caregivers, and having to manage those and fill in when people call in sick. I mean, it's lucky that Dave's a nurse, because it's prevented us from having to do, like, emergency room visits and stuff like that, because there's things that Dave can—Daddy has a suprapubic catheter. That's one that goes right underneath your bellybutton directly into your bladder, and he has, like, constant **infections** and they clog up his catheter, and so, luckily, Dave can do that—

[00:29:47]

Diana Dombrowski: Wow.

[00:29:48]

Jeb Bush: —change those catheters out, because otherwise we'd have to get Daddy into the wheelchair and then take him out, put him in Dave's car because I drive a pickup truck that's high, and slide him into the seat, then drive him to the hospital and so forth. I don't even know where I was going with that. I'm sorry. [laughs]

[00:30:12]

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, gosh. [glitch in recording]

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[00:30:13]

Jeb Bush: But just to say thank God Dave's a nurse, because it's prevented on that, but it has added a lot of stress. I mean, to be honest with you, it's been super stressful. I guess probably late March, early May, it just—I mean, and we'd only had Daddy home for like six weeks, and I was like, "What have we done?" You know, I mean, pretty much like it didn't feel like I was getting support from my sisters and, you know, just things got—caretakers kept calling out, and it was just like—it just felt like too much. I think I actually said something to my friends, and they started one of the meal trains where people started bringing supper over every night. I'm like, well, that's one less thing we have to worry about.

[00:31:08]

Diana Dombrowski: That's amazing. Wow. That's really, really nice. That's so kind. And I can imagine, like, just one thing off your plate really frees you up to care more and to rest and to do more of those basic things for yourself, yeah, yeah. That's good to have friends like that.

[00:31:31]

Jeb Bush: We took a little vacation at the end of January. Dave was fully vaccinated by this point in time and I'd had my first shot. But we went to Key West for, like, six days. I had a lot of fun. Mainly we ate at, like, outside restaurants and stuff like that, still trying to be careful, but it was at least nice to get away—

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[00:32:01]

Diana Dombrowski: Yes, definitely.

[00:32:02]

Jeb Bush: —to get away and have fun. And then we've been doing the—trying to do four-day weekends since March. We started that in March and still doing it.

[00:32:16]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, that's very wise. I really commend you for everything that you've been doing for your family. Yeah, that takes a lot of strength and resilience.

[00:32:30]

Jeb Bush: Also causes a lot of bags underneath the eyes.

[00:32:33]

Diana Dombrowski: [laughs] I can only imagine. I wonder, if we think back to maybe early March of last year when we found out this was happening and then started to realize it was going to bleed into the summer, how does what's going on today match up with maybe what you expected or hoped for at the start of all of this? Are you surprised or did things kind of, you know—or maybe not by anything in particular?

[00:33:08]

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Jeb Bush: You know, if we back up even just a few weeks earlier into February of last year, Dave and I were on a cruise with a big group of guys, having lots of fun, and I remember taking a picture of somebody and then holding two Coronas in their hand, being like, “I got the Corona!” and thinking that it was all a joke. So, like, as it started, I had a hard time—like, I couldn’t wrap my head around what was going on, because it just seemed for so long like—it felt like somebody else’s problem, that this was happening somewhere else in the world. This was not something that really pertained to us.

Then the shutdown started happening, and, like, my natural tendency—I can’t believe I’m actually going to admit this on something that’s going to be public—my natural tendency is to, like, put my head in the sand or, like, curl up in a ball and to be in the corner, you know. Like, I don’t—you know, something like this, something of this magnitude, I just don’t handle, you know. I am so conflict-avoidant on a good day [Dombrowski laughs], you know, it’s really, really hard. So I think, looking back now, I mean, it doesn’t even feel like it was me going through the process. Like, I kind of like—it was like stick figures, like the way I kind of imagine them, these little characters making these decisions and saying these words and trying to figure out what was going on, and, like, I know I was part of those decisions and I know I was part of those conversations. I mean, I made the decisions, but, like, sometimes it just doesn’t even seem real that that was me.

I *never* in a million years believed that eighteen months later we’d still be here. Like, I really thought it was one of those things of let’s wear masks for a month and let’s everybody take them off off of work, and then we’ll go back to our normal lives as planned. You know, I really thought in the summertime of last year it’d all be over with.

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And then by the summer, I was like, “Oh, by the end of the year.” By that point in time, they had started work on the vaccine. But, you know, last summer, the numbers went down because a lot of people were doing their social distancing and mask wearing and stuff like that. I’m like, “We’ve got this under control.” Then the numbers spiked back up again. Yeah, I always kept thinking, like, “We’re almost there. It’s almost over.” And I *really* thought that, like, as the vaccines came out and the numbers started going down. “Okay, here we are. We really are going to finish this.”

And then when they became available to everyone and all of a sudden, these vaccine clinics that could serve up to 1,000 people a day were only serving a couple hundred people a day, “What’s going on?” Then kind of like start tuning in to—listening to what a lot of folks are hearing, the news and theories and propaganda that, you know, is coming out of the right, and this thing’s not ever going to go away. Even with that, I still felt if enough people get vaccinated, this thing will come to an end. But I really don’t know now. It’s kind of sad, like, how, honestly, like I think I’m a—maybe just because everyone is absolutely exhausted, but I think I’m less hopeful now than I was a few months ago.

[00:38:07]

Diana Dombrowski: I understand.

[00:38:07]

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Jeb Bush: I know that's not exactly—you know, you and I talked in December. I pictured in my head, when we had this conversation, it would be like the celebration of the pandemic being over, you know. I really did think that.

[00:38:23]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, me too. I thought certainly six months later, you know? And it's eight months later. [laughs] I mean, it's really—it's hard to believe, and I really thank you for your openness in answering that question, because I relate so much to it as well and really felt like a bit of a robot, you know, like, "Okay, I'll get the groceries and then I'll sanitize them. We'll do what we need to do." And it's just pointless to worry, because this is just what we have to do. We have to just make decisions, we have to work, and, you know, I feel like—just recently I found out that some friends of mine haven't become vaccinated. That really surprised me, and it makes me really sad. It makes me really sad because of the risk and it's really confusing—it's confusing, honestly. It's confusing to watch. And I just can't understand, because I really want to meet people where they are, you know, and want us all to be on the same team in approaching this, right? And keeping each other safe, and it's so—yeah, I feel that my mood really matches yours, and I understand very much the feelings you remember from that time too. We've come up against different potential, you know, new diseases, in, I guess, the last ten years that people have just kind of handled and squashed in different ways or maybe abroad, and it never really—it just didn't touch us here in this country. All of this has been a surprise to me, to be honest with you, yeah. And I don't know when would be a good time at this point to even check in again, where we would think that now that something we might

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hopefully be beyond it, at what point, I truly don't know. Yeah, yeah. Sorry. I got on my soapbox [glitch in recording] just trying to, you know—I would have loved to do this in person, too, you know what I mean, and connect.

And so, a lot of things are different now, and I wonder if there is anything—when you look to the future and not knowing when this will be over, whatever that means, do you see any permanent changes in your life that the last eighteen months have brought? Or maybe any adaptations you've taken on during the pandemic that might stay with you?

[00:41:18]

Jeb Bush: Yeah, it's funny. One thing that I hoped was going to change was that I would work from home more, that I would be intentional about scheduling myself a work-from-home day. I have an hour-and-fifteen-minute commute each way, and so, yeah, that was something that I'd hoped was a permanent change. And, unfortunately, I just kind of fell back into bad habits and old habits and so forth. I've got to pick that up sometime soon. That's a conversation for the therapist.

What are some permanent—I don't know. I mean, to be honest with you, Diana, yeah, it's just like there's so many—there's a lot of things professionally that have shown themselves over the course of the pandemic that are good things. You know, Zoom, for one thing, you know. God, I'm tired of this [unclear]. And then so it has allowed us to meet and do things without having to go to the office and go to different places, but one thing that I've noticed with Zoom is that—I guess on the Myers-Briggs I am introverted extrovert, and so I need, like, once I've had, like, this—been in public, I need a little bit

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of calm-down time, and our office is in Thunderbolt, which is like ten minutes from downtown, and so a lot of times I have a market and then just have the drive by myself to relax and just kind of get back. And one thing with Zoom is you have a market from 2:00 o'clock to 3:00 o'clock, then you schedule a 3:00 o'clock to 4:00 o'clock, and there's no break in between.

I've totally not answered this question.

[00:43:58]

Diana Dombrowski: No, yes, you have. You totally have. Yeah, I think that makes plenty of sense, and it's so—I'm curious when you think, like, about the markets, is that, like, more your extroverted time versus introverted, even though you're, like, maybe in the office by yourself or at home by yourself? How does it—does it feel more extroverted still?

[00:44:25]

Jeb Bush: Yeah, I mean, it's not that that extrovert feel, but I think part of it is just that you're just on. You're on. Your brain just doesn't turn off for that ten minutes or whatever. You know, you just stay up here the whole time, whereas, you know—  
[unclear]. I think that's something that I need to do a better job of, is setting some breaks, and Lord knows one of the things I definitely need to do is set some boundaries. But I don't know where I was going. I'm sorry.

[00:45:23]

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Diana Dombrowski: That's fine. I think the breaks that you and your husband have given yourself with those four-day weekends are so wise, and I can only imagine how difficult those are to actually stick to sometimes. And I think that that's very—it's just such a good idea.

[00:45:48]

Jeb Bush: I was going to say, yeah, in a way, and I don't know if this is just like working my way through therapy and everything else going on, like, my marriage is in a really good place right now, you know, and I think when COVID started and we did the massive shutdown and I was like, "Wow! I'm spending way too much time with the same person," and I can get like that. I hate it, because I, like, throw a temper tantrum and stuff like that around Dave, so unfair to him. But we're doing really good, like being there for one another and just kind of marching through this whole process.

[00:46:47]

Diana Dombrowski: That's wonderful. It's so funny you mention that, because that was actually going to be my question, is what kind of impact the pandemic's had on your relationships. That's so funny. We were both going to the same place. [laughs] That's so wonderful. I really think for people reflecting now, the bonds that you still have and the people that are still close to you, those relationships are a lot stronger than they were, yeah, yeah. I mean, and that's been true, like, talking to someone in a nonprofit I worked with, with their community partners, and then also in your personal life, too, figuring that out, figuring life out together, yeah. And I guess that probably answers the last question I

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had for you, which is, are there any obstacles, you know, or problems that you've confronted as a result of this pandemic being in our lives, that you're especially proud of the way that that went?

[00:48:07]

Jeb Bush: Good question. I think professionally, I think there are a couple of things that I'm super proud of here at work. One is that we never closed a market. I know I shared this with you in December, but the first week of the shutdown, the mayor kicked us out of the park, then we were going to move to where our office is here at Thunderbolt, and then the Thunderbolt mayor said, "You can't do this," and then last-minute decision, our founder called the mayor herself, and then we were back in the park, you know, fourteen hours before the market, and I thought we were going to be canceling it, and we made it back.

[glitch in recording] Food Pharmacy, you know, I think one of the decisions that we had to make was do we do this program, do we wait and do this program as we planned or, or do we scrap the plan and come up with something different? And we didn't scrap the plan, but this does not look like the grant that I applied for, you know. But we also realized that we had an opportunity to provide excess fruit and—because of the prescription program, we had an opportunity to provide access to fruits and vegetables to people who otherwise wouldn't, and I think being able to do that was, you know, a really good thing.

Yeah, I'm just so proud of my staff. You know, Ashley really led that. Mark led **912 COVID Food Fund**. We raised about \$10,000 that we used directly to purchase

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\$10,000 worth of produce from local farmers and then distributed \$10,000 worth of produce to low-income folks. [unclear] asking me questions and the stress that I faced, I can't imagine people who lost their job or lost source of income. You know, so many people lost their income, and because everything was so backed up, they had no money. It was just they had no way of feeding their families. I'm glad that we were able to help assuage that a little bit.

[00:51:14]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

[00:51:16]

Jeb Bush: Personally, I don't know. I really can't—I can't really figure out, like, what's the—especially something we hadn't talked about that is new or—you know. Part of it, I swear, is just surviving, you know, being proud that you survived, and just—you know, I hope to keep on goin'.

[00:51:54]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. I'm sure that you will, yeah. Thank you. Thanks for your time. Is there anything else you'd like to share with people [unclear]?

[00:52:01]

Jeb Bush: I think we've kind of covered everything. In an hour and ten minutes, we had a lot [unclear].

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[00:52:07]

Diana Dombrowski: [laughs] Okay.

[00:52:10]

Jeb Bush: We covered a lot of stuff. I really can't think of anything else. Going back to the original transcript, was there anything you could think of that you wanted to point out, like maybe I said something that's massively changed or anything?

[00:52:33]

Jeb Bush: No, no. I was just struck, reading it, about how much y'all had been in triage at that time, you know, like as a group, and bringing up how you were taking on different roles you didn't usually play and so were other members of staff, just to keep everything going, and now it looks like—I don't know if y'all would say that you came out on the other side of that, but you've decided to build through it at the same time, you know. Where it comes to the truck and that sort of thing, you know, you're like, "Well, we've got to get something longer-term figured out here." Right? And even though things haven't gone back to the way they used to be, you figured out how to make—how to keep a day-to-day routine going, yeah, yeah.

And with that commute, too, that was the other thing I was struck by in the first interview that we did together, about the length of the commute, but I feel like I understand it more now as being such a benefit to you to have some time to yourself.

[laughs]

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[00:53:54]

Jeb Bush: Lord knows, like every day I call Dave as soon as I leave work, just to check in, you know. “I’ll see you in an hour.” And then I really don’t like to talk on the phone during that drive. I want to listen to music, and I’ve even quit listening to podcasts. It just got to be too much last year. I need just like an hour of chill.

[00:54:30]

Jeb Bush: Uh-huh, uh-huh, yeah. I find driving very relaxing also, yeah. I like to watch how things change, you know, with the light and through the day. Yeah, I’m totally there with you. I’m totally there with you. Yeah, I’m glad that you have that right now.

So thank you again for your time.

[00:54:52]

Jeb Bush: Thank *you*.

[00:54:53]

Diana Dombrowski: I’ll stop the recording now.

[End of interview]