

## **2020 Wuhan COVID-19 Lockdown Oral Histories**

### **Jesse Sands Interview**

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Virtual Meeting

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## Jesse Sands Interview

**ROBERT BROWNING:** So my name is Robert Browning working in conjunction with the Reuther Library at Wayne State University. Today's date is August 25, 2021. This interview is with Jesse Sands and it is about his experience living through the COVID lockdown in Wuhan, China in early 2020. At the moment, Jesse is located in New Zealand, I will say—

**JESSE SANDS:** You got it? (both laugh)

**BROWNING:** This interview is being recorded remotely and will be housed at the Reuther Library, which is part of Wayne State University.

The Reuther Library will keep administrative information about this oral history project, such as interview releases and deeds of gift in its case files. Case files are in a locked nonpublic area of the building accessible only to the Reuther Library staff. [00:01:00] In the event of a criminal investigation or legal discovery proceedings, the Reuther Library will be compelled to turn over holdings in its case files that are otherwise closed to the public, including the case files for this oral history project.

All right, so to begin, are you connected to Wayne State University in any way?

**SANDS:** No.

**BROWNING:** Okay. All right.

**SANDS:** I don't believe so.

**BROWNING:** It's just a standard question that they asked me to ask in the very beginning. Again, just to be clear. And are you originally from New Zealand?

**SANDS:** Yes.

**BROWNING:** Okay, and you are now located there?

**SANDS:** Yes, yeah. [00:02:00] Are these simple yes or no questions?

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**BROWNING:** Yeah, basically.

**SANDS:** Okay.

**BROWNING:** And so I know you lived in Wuhan for quite some time. Could you tell me how long you lived in Wuhan?

**SANDS:** Sure. Um, I think all up it was about fifteen years.

**BROWNING:** Fifteen years?

**SANDS:** Yep. I originally moved to Wuhan in, I think, it was about August 2006. And lived and work there full time until July of 2021.

**BROWNING:** Okay, just recently.

**SANDS:** It was about fifteen years. Yep, yep.

**BROWNING:** So during the lockdown which district were you located in? [00:03:01]

**SANDS:** I was living in Wuchang. In Hongshan District, I guess, technically. Just behind Wuhan Normal University on Xiongchu Dadao, Xiongchu Avenue.

**BROWNING:** Right. So what did you do for a living at that time?

**SANDS:** Well, at the time, I was working at an English training center for young learners, for primary school kids. And yep, I'd been working there for a couple years. I think, by the end, it was, like, five years. It would have been about four years at that time, three or four years.  
[00:04:00]

**BROWNING:** Okay, so did you do anything else apart from teaching?

**SANDS:** Uh, in general?

**BROWNING:** Yeah, in general.

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**SANDS:** Well, I mean, not really. I used to DJ back in the day, but I kind of stopped for the last couple of years. And I'm kind of done [with that] and maybe just occasionally [do it], whenever something happens. Just a couple of times a year. And apart from that, no, nothing. Nothing in particular.

**BROWNING:** Okay. No problem. So that's just some very basic bio information that I ask. [00:05:02] So now what I usually do is I go into when everything kind of started or just before everything kind of blew up. And I just wanted to begin by asking, when did you first hear about the Coronavirus? Do you remember?

**SANDS:** Yeah. So me and my wife (name redacted), we got married in New Zealand, originally, [in] September 2019, so it's just before COVID hit. And we had a wedding in China, in Wuhan, on the fifth of January 2020.

**BROWNING:** Oh wow.

**SANDS:** Yeah, we had it just when it was all starting to go down and I think the first time I heard it mentioned was from (name redacted), our mutual friend (name redacted). [00:06:04] He had mentioned worries that there was some disease going around or something and he wasn't quite sure if he could make it to the wedding. Though he did in the end, which was great. I kind of heard rumblings, around then, but nothing really [serious]. It wasn't until a couple of weeks later, when it all really started happening, then—

**BROWNING:** —right—

**SANDS:** —I kind of noticed.

**BROWNING:** Right. Maybe you just heard or saw some things online, some news items or something?

**SANDS:** Ah, no, no, no. I've been offline from that kind of stuff for a while, actually. [00:07:02] There would have been just friends kind of mentioning things offhand or something.

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**BROWNING:** Okay. So what did you think when you first heard about COVID?

**SANDS:** Well, I was in China when SARS happened. Whenever that was—2003 or something? And that wasn't anything. What I mean by it wasn't anything was nothing really came of it. Nothing really affected me or anything I could see in China at that time. And so I kind of expected, well, COVID, it's just going to be another SARS. It's going to be in the news for a couple of weeks and it's just going to blow over. [00:08:01] It wasn't going to be anything. And so yeah, I was not worried. I was just completely expecting all things to just continue on as normal.

**BROWNING:** All right, so you had the wedding ceremony in Wuhan on January fifth, correct?

**SANDS:** Yeah, yes.

**BROWNING:** Okay. So that was really just before, maybe about a few weeks before the lockdown began. So, basically, do you remember what was going on, what you experienced between your wedding ceremony and the actual lockdown? I mean, obviously, you don't have to talk about private stuff here. [00:09:02] But, you know, like—

**SANDS:** Oh yeah, yeah. Of course. Well, what started to happen I guess the rumblings grew louder and stuff actually started to close down. I forget exactly what day it was, but it would have been just a couple of days before the lockdown, which was I think on the twentieth, right?

**BROWNING:** The lockdown was the twenty-third.

**SANDS:** Okay, yep, yep. So it would have been right around the twentieth or a little bit earlier, maybe. Um, our cat got sick and we had to take her to the vet. And so, yeah, we got up in the morning, me and my wife, went downstairs. [00:10:05] Called the cab, jumped in the cab and that was probably around ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. Um, [we were] talking to the taxi driver and he was saying, Yeah, well, once twelve o'clock hits all the taxi services are all closing down. And we're, like, Ah, okay. We took to the cat to vet. Got that issue solved and we couldn't taxi home. We had to scan a little e-bike. And it was freezing, and it was raining. It was

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a rather miserable ride home. [00:11:00] Then it was on that day that stuff really, really closed down. And, for the next week at least, there was just no cars on the street at all. Like, there's just no traffic. Everyone was staying home. I think our community went into the quarantine a little bit later than a lot of other communities. So it would have been—I'm just going to say the twenty-sixth, seventh or eighth.

**BROWNING:** It does seem a little later.

**SANDS:** Yeah, yeah. It was just a couple days later. My brother had come to the wedding and, unfortunately, decided to just spend some time with his big brother for a couple of months. [00:12:11] Well, we went out to Hanyang and it was gorgeous. I had a push scooter, like a kick scooter, which I took and an e-bike and we went for a ride all the way to Hanyang because there were no buses or anything. We're just in the middle of Xiongchu Avenue, under the big, elevated road, just the entire way the entire road was ours and there was no one walking around. Just didn't see anyone. Well, a couple people. [00:13:00] And that was really nice. It was a wonderful day. Very peaceful.

**BROWNING:** I can imagine.

**SANDS:** My friend, (name redacted), his place hadn't shut down yet either, so we managed to meet up. We were just hanging out in the park. It was very peaceful. I think at that time the bridges were shut down. And they had a, well, not blockades, but they had checkpoints on the bridges for cars at least. For pedestrian traffic, they didn't care because there wasn't there wasn't any and so we got through just fine. Then a couple of days later our community got locked down and then the quarantine began.

**BROWNING:** Right? [00:14:00] Okay, can I just stop you for a moment and ask you a couple follow up questions about what you just said.

**SANDS:** Yeah.

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**BROWNING:** So basically the night that you learned about the lockdown, you could not take a taxi home and you said you had to grab an e-bike?

**SANDS:** Oh yeah. Yeah, not that night. It was in the morning, like, the taxi there and then on the way back we had to—what are they called? Not ride sharing, but those public bikes that you can scan. The bicycles and they also had e-bike versions of those, which we got and we rode home on. [00:15:00]

**BROWNING:** Okay. And your trip Hanyang and you and your brother and your friend were kind of motoring around the empty streets, right? This was before the lockdown in your community began, right?

**SANDS:** Yes. Yes, I'm pretty sure at that time I would say at least half of the communities in Wuhan would have been quarantined.

**BROWNING:** Okay, so I get your situation is a little unusual in the fact that the lockdown started a little later it seems than other parts of the city.

**SANDS:** Yes.

**BROWNING:** So when the lockdown in your community began, or the quarantine whatever you wish to call it, what did you do? [00:16:05] What were the immediate challenges?

**SANDS:** Um, well, I think we knew the lockdowns were happening. We knew it was going to happen to us, so we managed to make one supermarket run two days before the lockdown happened. We bought a whole bunch of food and supplies and everything. I managed to snag some coffee, which was my primary concern throughout this entire experience, whether or not I was going to run out of coffee. [00:17:03] I remember my wife's parents they were, like, Yeah, well, you're going to have to prepare. You're going to have to make sure you get enough food and everything. I was never particularly worried about it. I didn't think that anyone would start starving. There'd be a way to be get food somehow or another. I wasn't really worried or concerned about anything, except whether or not I had coffee. It was certainly an

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inconvenience being locked indoors and not being able to go out, but I mean, we had the internet and I had all my toys at home, so well, it was all right. [00:18:15]

**BROWNING:** So your wife, (name redacted), is she from Wuhan?

**SANDS:** Yes, yes, she's from Wuhan, pretty much all of her family is in Wuhan—the other end of town though, like, Qingshan District. Yeah, we didn't see them for a while, I guess. We didn't see them for a half a year, at least. I kept in touch with them through WeChat groups, right?

**BROWNING:** So what about your work situation? [00:19:04]

**SANDS:** Well, so my school, my training center, like most others they were obviously not going to have classes. Nothing could happen. And so I guess we had an extra month holiday. That was already—what happened? Yeah, so I remember now. We had a winter camp until the twentieth. So I was working up until the twentieth, actually.

**BROWNING:** Of January?

**SANDS:** Yeah, the twentieth of January. Just after my wedding, so two weeks of classes. [00:20:00] I was still always going out and it was still fairly business as normal. Um, and then we had a two week holiday lined up before the new semester happened. And then, well, no one knew what the situation really was and so the new semester didn't start, obviously. I think a lot of the teachers and the Chinese staff at the center they kind of kept in touch with the students. That kind of thing, something like just video chats with the kids, chatting with them and everything. And it wasn't until maybe a month, or two, after that. [00:21:00] So it would have been six weeks after the quarantines started that our school made the switch to online classes.

**BROWNING:** Okay.

**SANDS:** Which, well, was not quite as fun as teaching in person.

**BROWNING:** Of course, of course.



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**SANDS:** Yeah, yeah. We got by.

**BROWNING:** So the online classes went on for how long? Do you remember?

**SANDS:** Until the end. Until the end of quarantine, I think. It would have been about—I'm going to say all through June, probably. Probably ending the beginning of July. It might have ended soon after we could actually start leaving the community. [00:22:01] So I had a couple of weeks of classes after that.

**BROWNING:** So were you the only foreign teacher at this training center or your company?

**SANDS:** No, no, we had two other foreign teachers with us at the time. And yep, everyone—

**BROWNING:** And they stayed in Wuhan and what have you?

**SANDS:** Yeah, yeah. None of them had gone home for the holidays, which, well, turned out to be a very lucky thing later on, considering both were American. So many foreign teachers left China to go home for a while for Christmas, right? [00:23:05] Then the Spring Festival holiday and then we never saw them again. They got stuck back home. They couldn't come back to China.

**BROWNING:** Right, yeah, I knew foreign teachers who went on holiday after that semester. They traveled to Malaysia or Thailand, or something and then they couldn't get back into China.

**SANDS:** Yeah, yeah. I knew teachers who were stuck in Hong Kong for weeks or a month, or more. Like paying outrageous rates, well, Hong Kong rates, right? Because they just couldn't get back in.

**BROWNING:** All right. [00:24:00] So anyways, it seems you were fairly relaxed during the lockdown. Did you ever have other feelings? Were you bored? (both laugh)

**SANDS:** Oh yeah. Okay, well, going into the lockdown, we're all good. We're all fine. Eventually, of course, the lockdown state did start to wear us down. I mean, I had my first mental

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breakdown. Well, no, I mean emotional breakdown. Maybe a month in. [00:25:00] That was only—I don't know—COVID was only partly to blame for that. It was mostly just other ignored stress and stuff, which kind of built up. But yeah, to be honest, during the lockdown, day to day was fine. We had the Internet, right? And we binged computer games, binged TV series. I just kind of distracted myself. Yeah, I don't know. What did I do? I did a bunch of yoga. [00:26:00]

During the lockdown, because it was me, (name redacted), and my brother, (name redacted), we were all stuck in the house together and we each had our own areas basically. I was in the living room. I was near the router. I moved near the router because I needed the internet and, also, for teaching. Well, the internet in China has just always been patchy and so teaching online was very inconvenient to have the internet slow down or drop out. [00:27:08] I kind of moved over there and I got my desk there and I had kind of set up myself there. (name redacted), my wife, she was in the dining area. She had her own desk, or a table. She would actually be doing whatever. She'd be doing her drawing or painting or art or watching TV. Anything, yeah. And then my brother would be in the spare room, in the second bedroom. Yeah, we just be in our own little areas, like, all day.

I made a meal every day. [00:28:04] I'd make a meal for everybody every day. Because pretty much for the entire time all we could get was Chinese vegetables. Because—I'm sorry, (name redacted) is distracting me. Yeah, because what happened was everyone in the community started, basically, group buys to buy vegetables from different sources. Like someone knew sources of vegetables or meat or fish would come up and then everyone would get together and order, I don't know, thousands of *kuai* of vegetables and then they all get split up amongst the community. [00:29:10] Because there would be obviously food coming in from somewhere. And (name redacted) was pretty active in those groups to be organizing big vegetable buys or big fish buys, or whatever.

**BROWNING:** Like in bulk?

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**SANDS:** It was all just very basic stuff, right? It was all the regular vegetables and stuff that Chinese people cook and so I'd started cooking. Just stir frying vegetables and stuff. So yeah, once a day I'd fry a couple of dishes. [00:30:02] We'd get together, eat, maybe watch a movie and disappear back to our own little areas. That was it. We didn't really hang out that much. (laughs) I think we were all dealing with being stuck in the same area or stuck in the same house in our own little ways.

**BROWNING:** Sounds like you kind of developed a system of giving each other some space to an extent?

**SANDS:** Yeah, yeah. That's basically what it was. We couldn't go downstairs, but we had the roof, actually. We were on the top floor, the seventh floor and so we could actually go up on the rooftop. [00:31:02] And there's kind of a little area there, which was nice.

**BROWNING:** Did other people go up there in the building?

**SANDS:** Yeah, occasionally. We didn't see too many people. I think, actually, in our unit I'm pretty sure half the people, at least half the apartments—I think everybody on the right side for some reason had all gone home and gone somewhere for Spring Festival. And so there weren't actually that many people in our unit. Some people started a little garden up on the roof. They kind of they grew, like, shallots. [00:32:00] Nothing too serious.

**BROWNING:** Let me see here. Was there anything that you missed during the lockdown?

**SANDS:** Consciously?

**BROWNING:** Yeah.

**SANDS:** No, I mean, not really. But I remember our first outing and, I mean, me and (name redacted) went out. My brother couldn't, but that's another story. We went out—did you ever go to Devil's? [00:33:00]

**BROWNING:** Me?

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**SANDS:** Yeah. Was Devil's there after you left?

**BROWNING:** Uh, yeah, yeah. [I went] a few times.

**SANDS:** Okay, yeah, a few times. So, yeah, a whole bunch of people from the Devil's Brewery, like, the customers and staff. There was (names redacted) and a whole bunch of people, (name redacted). We all went to the East Lake and it was gorgeous just being out and out with people. It just felt like a burst of joy whenever we saw friends. We used to see them every week, right? [00:34:00] And it just was overwhelming happiness to be out and talking to people. So, I think I definitely unconsciously missed going out and talking to people and just hanging out.

**BROWNING:** Right, so when did this outing occur? Do you remember? You said it was like the first time you went out, right?

**SANDS:** I really should have looked up this date. But no, I don't remember.

**BROWNING:** Was it after the lockdown or?

**SANDS:** Oh yeah, yeah. Well, for us, so eventually what started to happen, I can't give any dates, but Chinese people started to get green codes. [00:35:12] So, basically, it was just a kind of thing that was always connected to their WeChat, connected to their, *shenfenzheng*, to their ID card, right? Which said they hadn't been sick and haven't had any symptoms for the last two weeks. So then they could start going out an hour a day. They'd show that to the security guards of the community and then they could go out. And for foreigners, for us, it was at least two or three weeks after the Chinese people started getting their green cards that we could actually get a green card. [00:36:07] We couldn't actually get a green card, because, well, we all had passports and passports didn't work with that. But eventually, the Chinese government provided a way to do that. So I don't know. I would say probably mid-June.

**BROWNING:** Okay.

**SANDS:** Yeah. It was very nice summer day.

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**BROWNING:** So, actually, for foreigners, getting out after the lockdown came a little later, I guess, right?

**SANDS:** Yeah, it was very frustrating. It was very annoying. This is kind of unrelated, but I remember wanting to get out in the beginning. [00:37:03] I mean, Chinese people could kind of sweet talk the security guards early on, but I couldn't. I always wanted to go to the supermarket because I wanted food. So [one time] I just kind of jumped the fence and went to the supermarket and snuck around the corner.

**BROWNING:** Right. So you snuck out basically?

**SANDS:** Yeah, yeah, but that was earlier on. They kind of got a bit more serious after that, so I didn't attempt it a second time.

**BROWNING:** Okay. I want to ask a little bit about your brother. How did he handle the lockdown? [00:38:02]

**SANDS:** Well, I think he was fine. To be honest, he spends most of his time at home playing on his computer anyway. And, so yeah, he was perfectly fine. He had his computer. He just got on the internet the entire time. I don't think he barely made a peep the entire time. And even between me and (name redacted) there were very few conflicts. [00:39:06] We kind of kept mostly kept to ourselves.

**BROWNING:** Okay, but earlier you also talked about—maybe you're being dramatic about it, I don't know, but I just wanted to follow up on it. Earlier you were talking about having kind of an emotional breakdown.

**SANDS:** Yeah, that was fun.

**BROWNING:** Could you tell me more about that? Unless it's personal or something.

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**SANDS:** Yeah, it is personal. But I guess that's what this whole interview is about really. I don't remember what was the straw that made it happen. [00:40:11] I don't know.

**BROWNING:** Like what happened?

**SANDS:** Okay, all right, well, the first one—I had a major one and a minor one. [00:41:00] All I remember, looking back on it now, is just feeling completely overwhelmed. Not by anything in particular. I've been probably processing it a lot since then because obviously something was up. All I remember is just being overwhelmed. Just kind of, like, I can't handle this. Basically just going and hiding in bed and fucking having a very torturous crying. It was my first time crying, since I was a kid, basically.

**BROWNING:** Right. [00:42:00]

**SANDS:** Yeah, I think my body it almost forgotten how to cry it was so hard. I just kind of hid in my bed for a couple of hours. I think then a few weeks later I had something similar. I think a one hour or less. I think me and (name redacted) were arguing about something miniscule. She went up to the roof to get some space. I was doing the dishes and I was like, Fuck, I can't do this and I smashed a cup. And yeah, went and hid in bed again. (laughs)

**BROWNING:** So basically, you just reached a point where you just kind of went and had a good cry by yourself or something like that. [00:43:05]

**SANDS:** Well, I wouldn't want to say a good cry. But, yeah, ugh, just went ahead and waited for it to pass, basically. To be honest, I think that it was a lot of mostly unresolved stress that I hadn't been dealing with. I guess I hadn't been looking after myself for a little while.

**BROWNING:** Just stress in general?

**SANDS:** Yeah, yeah. And kind of not looking after myself and just sitting at home. [00:44:02] Because I mean being able to go out whenever you want during the week and socialize and get

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drunk and high and whatever. It just made me things easier whereas when all can do is sit and stew, it kind of crept up on me.

**BROWNING:** Yeah. Understandable. Completely understandable. All right, so when did you return to work in person?

**SANDS:** It would have been in—sorry, I remember now actually. [00:45:03] Online teaching, the actual online classes I remember now continued until August. The online class actually continued all the way until August because we obviously still couldn't have any classes, even though the quarantine ended. Well, eased up at least in July. So class actually began again in September. Like, in person classes.

**BROWNING:** Okay, and what was that process like? What was that like for you going back to work in person?

**SANDS:** Ah, just back to work. (both laugh) Just back to work. [00:46:00] I mean it was certainly better than teaching online, but I was already a bit tired of teaching kids by then. And so, just back to work, to the grindstone, whatever.

**BROWNING:** Right. Okay, so that was kind of a big jump from your emotional breakdown back to work, but I'm just kind of working through these questions as I can. You know, with some of these interviews, it's just natural to kind of jump around a bit. [00:47:00]

**SANDS:** Yeah.

**BROWNING:** So in your community, or your circle of friends or family, maybe even your wife's family, was there anybody that you knew that got sick?

**SANDS:** No, no one at all. Even till now. No one I know has actually gotten COVID. Well, that we know of any way. A bunch of friends are saying they got, like, a serious cold back in late 2019. It would have been around December when the virus would have been spreading. They said, well,

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that might have been it. They didn't get sick enough to go to the hospital in the past, so I guess [they were] kind of lucky in that regard. [00:48:09]

**BROWNING:** Very good. Okay. So there's another question about the lockdown that I needed to ask you and that is all throughout the lockdown, from what I've read, there was this feeling where I guess it felt that it would never end, right? Or the end date was always changing, right? Being pushed further back. [00:49:00]

**SANDS:** I don't know. I didn't really worry about that and stress about that. We never really thought, yeah, never really put too much [on that]. Sorry—

**BROWNING:** It's okay.

**SANDS:** (name redacted) is distracting me again. Yeah, no, I never kind of put any thought into that. I always thought it was going to end at some point. I was annoyed and, you know, I got very annoyed by all the Chinese people being allowed out of the community, but foreigners not being able to. But yeah, I always kind of assumed it was going to end at some point, so I kind of never stressed about that. [00:50:01]

**BROWNING:** Okay. All right. So you kind of talked about, this is kind of jumping ahead forward in time, I guess, about how you felt when the lockdown ended. Like, the first thing that you did.

**SANDS:** Yeah, the first outing.

**BROWNING:** And so let's see what else here. I think I only have a few questions to ask, really. So yeah, I have just a few, maybe less than a handful of questions to ask. Since the lockdown ended, how have things changed for you personally? [00:51:05] Even in China? I know that you're now in New Zealand and you're not in China anymore. But, basically, since the since the lockdown ended and when you returned to New Zealand, what changed in your opinion?

**SANDS:** Well, during the lockdown, there was suddenly an uptick in, like, what do they call it? Nationalist propaganda in the Chinese media. [00:52:00] And I remember, for the first time in



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the longest time, during the lockdown I encountered—just toward towards the end when I could actually leave the community—some random dude from my community he said [to me], basically, the equivalent of, “fucking foreigner”. Which was surprising. That's not something I had encountered in many, many years in China. I mean, it's been going on in the background. There's definitely been kind of an anti-foreign sentiment. It's kind of definitely picked up in China. [00:53:04] I didn't really directly encounter any more people being blatantly racist, apart from that one time. But that's definitely the kind of the way people view things.

I mean Wuhan changed. Without a doubt. I'd say half the small businesses in Wuhan they all shut down. A lot of the shop owners said, Well, this, this quarantine is going to be going on for a while and so they just closed up shop. They just kind of gave up. [00:54:04] They kind of gave up on their rents. Gave up on their spaces. And since then, in the last year, there have been a lot of small new businesses appearing. A lot of the old ones they're either gone or moved. And so that's kind of neat. I think as long as the economy holds up, it's a whole brand new day for a lot of young entrepreneurs.

What else? [00:55:00] Face masks are obviously a thing. Wuhan was especially vigilant when it came to COVID, even once quarantine opened up and everything. People were still wearing masks. I mean, I'd say even at the lowest point, I'd still say 50 percent of people were still wearing face masks. [00:56:00] Whereas in other places, I'm not going to say all other cities in China, but pretty much most other cities in China, they kind of they kind of eased up quarantine and face masks and everything. So even just a month or a couple of weeks into the whole thing. I mean, because Wuhan was locked down for three months. I know, Beijing, Shanghai, were only a couple of weeks. Of course, they had their own problems because of that. But, even now, well, especially now, because of Delta kind of reemerging and everything, everyone was wearing face masks for a long time. I went out maybe twice since the lockdown without a face mask. [00:57:04] Everyone was wearing face masks and everyone still does.

**BROWNING:** Quite different from over here. (both laugh)

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**SANDS:** Well, that's another issue, isn't it? (laughs)

**BROWNING:** Yeah. That's another little story. All right, so I guess I should ask you what made you go back to New Zealand?

**SANDS:** Well, several things. I got tired of teaching. I mean I did the math and figured I've been working full time for about fifteen years. It was about time to take a break. [00:58:00] And yeah, I mean, I guess, not the anti-foreign, but the nationalistic idiocy. I kind of got tired of that particular Chinese version. So I said, you know, it's time to get out and I was finishing up my contract. We either had to stay here for another five years, get into something new or get out and try something new. And yeah, we decided to get out. [00:59:02]

**BROWNING:** Okay, that's completely understandable. I think I can totally relate to that. All right, so I think that's about it, but just one last question though. And that is, is there anything else that you wish to share? Maybe something that I maybe missed, maybe something that you want to add?

**SANDS:** I think I had a couple of anecdotes. I remember me and a bunch of other—I suppose (name redacted) and the other Devil's crew—whatever, let's say the regular drinkers, we did online drinking one time, which was a bad idea because I didn't have any alcohol except absinthe and cheap wine. [01:00:12] I got terribly sick the next day. Yeah, that was unpleasant.

**BROWNING:** Had to be worth it though.

**SANDS:** Oh yeah, it was a good night. It was good. It was good hanging out with people. Um, yeah, I know one big thing everyone started growing vegetables at home. Like, (name redacted), my wife—what did we grow? She said she tried growing potatoes and stuff and planting them. [01:01:00] And yeah, it's one thing that worked. She tried to grow a whole bunch of other stuff. But yeah, I remember across the way you could see everyone else's balconies, they'd be growing peppers and stuff. Growing all sorts of nonsense. There were people on the first floor of our community that had that kind of already established vegetable

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gardens. I'm sure now they got fresh veggies every day. Yeah, anything else? I think I got most of the exciting things covered. [01:02:00]

**BROWNING:** Right. Okay. Well, thank you for doing this. I greatly appreciate it.

End of interview