

Lockdown Diaries: Travis opens up about being quarantined with his ex

Not everyone has the good fortune to be in lockdown alone or with friendly faces. Travis Diamandis had a volatile breakup with his husband in the weeks preceding the lockdown, and now they're awkwardly trapped together along with innocent bystanders in the form of their roommate, dog, and cat.

Travis has been living in Madrid for four years and teaches English to young children while trying to see the best in people. He is often weighed down by nihilistic existentialism which he combats by partying, traveling, and forming meaningful connections with others.

What was your life like before the lockdown vs. today?

My life consisted of walking to school and teaching kids ranging from infants to 12-year-olds. I'm newly single so I was starting to enjoy that by connecting with guys and hanging out with them occasionally. Now all of that has changed.

A month ago, I split up with my Argentinian/Italian husband with whom I currently cohabitate and share the co-parenting duties of our dog and cat. Our breakup was volatile as our relationship had become toxic and our differences irreconcilable. I had intended to move out in April but now

that is no longer feasible due to the lockdown. The circumstances are as nightmarish as one would imagine.



Can you elaborate on what it's like to be in quarantine with an ex? Any advice for others with comparable circumstances?

I share this flat with my soon-to-be-ex-husband and another roommate from the UK who has been living with us since August. He is an innocent bystander and mediator. I try not to involve him in the petty conflicts with my ex, but at times it's unavoidable due to the small space and thin walls of the flat. I appreciate that our roommate is with us because it gives me a much-needed confidant and allows me to distance myself from my ex.

My advice for anyone living with an ex is to avoid

confrontation and deescalate arguments as they arise in order to maintain peace. It doesn't serve anyone to bicker or add additional tension during this indefinite quarantine. I'd advise others who can relate to my circumstances to breathe, go to another room of the house/apartment and take any measures needed to get through this in one piece.

For an even more tense period, we were five people confined to the apartment as my ex's mother and half-sister were staying in the flat as they were visiting from Argentina. Fortunately, they left yesterday and I'm relieved. The rental contract is in my ex's name so I didn't have a say in whether or not they stayed with us, and I was worried that they would be trapped here. They were incredibly stressed, and understandably so. They were civil and cordial towards me for the most part. However, I was extremely embarrassed when my ex initiated a loud fight with me while they were within earshot. Fortunately, Argentina repatriated all 23,000 Argentinians who were seeking to escape Spain over the course of a three-day period and now we're three in the apartment once again.

Have there been any comical moments in this unprecedented time?

The thin walls of the apartment cause my ex and I to overhear snippets of each other's video calls with friends, family and our respective romantic interests. Often, I catch him badmouthing me to his friends who we used to share and it's awkward to inadvertently overhear his skewed perspective of events. I take comfort in knowing that this chapter of my life will be a riveting story to tell my future grandkids, and more imminently on first dates after things go back to normal.

Do you have any tips for those in need?

Trying to keep distance within social distancing is not easy. I try to read, I walk my dog to get some fresh air, and I watch educational videos on YouTube so I don't feel worthless for wasting my time.

My tips for others would be to reconnect with family, old friends, coworkers, or romantic interests. Just because we're shut-in doesn't mean we have to be isolated from the world. It's important to safeguard mental health in times like this. In an attempt to lean less heavily on my roommate for emotional labor, I turned to the online community of the [Depression and Anxiety Support Group \(Madrid\)](#) to share my feelings in a safe space.

Those of us who are healthy but suffer from mental health issues or anxiety need understanding and compassion during these times rather than the go-to "suck it up" advice.

Do a few pushups, sit-ups, and stretch. Read a good book. Watch a movie that lets you feel what you need to feel. For me, that is *The Wizard of Oz*. It has been my favorite movie since I was young and it never fails to put me at ease.

What is the first thing you'll do once the lockdown is over?

I want to keep this PG but I'll definitely see some of the romantic interests I have been corresponding with in these

trying times. I'll have a belated birthday party or dinner because I celebrated my birthday alone in quarantine.

What's going on in your hometown? Would you like to send the people there a message?

My suburban Texas hometown is just now coming to terms with the gravity of the situation and I hope that they follow the measures that health experts are proposing. I want to beg the people of my predominantly Republican southern town, a place where the open carrying of firearms is prevalent, not to be paranoid and racist towards Asian-Americans and distrustful of health experts. The world is in a precarious state and being careless or vindictive will only exacerbate problems.

If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

I've seen a lot of older people still out and about like nothing is happening and that infuriates me because we're in quarantine with our lives effectively paused for their well-being. It is such a slap in the face. I'd want the authorities to focus more heavily on restricting their movements as opposed to what they're doing now: entering the personal space of dog walkers and grocery shoppers to gauge how far they are from their registered addresses.

Check out all [Madrid lockdown diaries](#)

If you'd like to get involved and share a compelling story from this ongoing chapter of history, reach out to Daphne Binioris (daphne@veracontent.com) and Daniel Catalan (a96039@aup.edu)