

1 **TRANSCRIBER NAME: Nico Sbrocco**

2 **Date: 27 January 2020**

3 **Participant #: 65**

4 **Interviewer: Dr. Deirdre Dixon**

5 Interviewer (Code in Blue)

6 Participant (Code in black)

7 Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to this. What's your number and is ok if I record you?

8 #65: Uh, my number is 65 and yes.

9 Interviewer: Ok, awesome. So thanks for doing this and it's you know we've been employed by SOCOM to try to help just figure out what made you successful getting through uh BUD/S. So, first thing I want to ask is, start with something easy, how many siblings do you have, and like what are they?

10 #65: Five.

11 Interviewer: Wow. Ok, and what, girls? Boys?

12 #65: Uh, two girls, three boys.

13 Interviewer: So what's your birth order?

14 #65: Uhm, I'm the second youngest.

15 Interviewer: So, who's older and who's youngest? You know.

16 #65: Uh, I have an older sister, she's 37, and then a youngest brother is, youngest, he's 23.

17 Interviewer: And, so you're, and then what's your other older person?

18 #65: Uhm, the older brother behind, or the second oldest, he's 36. My older brother, then I have another older brother behind him, he's 33. Then an older sister behind him that's 26, then myself, then my younger brother.

19 Interviewer: Excellent. Thank you. So when you think of your life experiences, what do you think that was maybe a crucible event or a life shaping experience that you had?

20 #65: Uhm, I don't know, I've kinda bounced all over the place growing up. Uh, I lost both my parents at a young age, so maybe that ad a little bit to with like the mindset of going after a lot of things and trying things out. Uhm, other than that it's just trying things and if they didn't work, just trying to figure out a way to make it work.

21 Interviewer: Ok. So how did those experiences, help you, your experience at BUD/S.

22 #65: Uh, just to not, not get frustrated, or not really lose hope with the end goal. Just with the present situation and to just keep pushing on especially if there was some sort of a drawback or if there was a negative feedback, to know that that wasn't the end of my time here.

23 Interviewer: Ok. Uhm, and how do you think your personality contributed to your ability to get through BUD/S.

24 #65: Uh, I think just having a sense of humor when stuff is not so much fun, and uhm, the tasks, they just, they suck, and just trying to have a sense of humor that, uh, being able to joke about it.

25 Interviewer: Ok. And then describe your background that led you to wanting to become a SEAL in the first place.

26 #65: Uhm, I did not want to do this growing up. Uh, I had completely different plans. And, along the past two years prior to joining, I looked at long course plans, and other other forms of in the military, and this was the one that made the most sense to me.

27 Interviewer: Ok. Tell me about your parents, or just a little bit about your childhood, but what, how would you describe your parents' parenting style?

28 #65: Uhm.

29 Interviewer: Like did you get time outs, did you get spanked? Did you get.

30 #65: Uhm yeah. I definitely got disciplined, definitely got spanked, more than probably normal little kids, uhm and you know, like I said, I lost my parents at a young age, so uhm after losing them, I was adopted, or put under adoption by my older siblings, but still disciplined in the same way my parents disciplined me, so that really didn't change. But, it definitely helped in kinda raising me.

31 Interviewer: Do you mind my asking how old were you when you lost them?

32 #65: Uhm, I lost my dad when I was 6. My mom, I was a lot older, I was 19, but she uhm I was uh, taken under adoption at 13, just because her health conditions. She didn't end up passing away until I was 19.

33 Interviewer: Wow. Ok, so, your teenage years, did you move around a lot?

34 #65: Uhm, I did. Once uhm, so my dad passed away when I was 6 and when I was 8 years old we moved across the state uhm, with three younger siblings and my mom. We moved across the state to be next to her parents, and then her health got to be pretty bad. I was then moved in with one of my older siblings, uhm at 13, and then, we lived in the same area until I was 19, I moved to the West Coast, uhm then from the West Coast I moved to the Gulf of Mexico, and then from there I went back to the midwest and moved to the East Coast.

35 Interviewer: And what about when you were growing up, did you participate in a sports team? Or anything that was really tight knit?

36 #65: Uhm, not really, I uhm, I started working at a young age, around 13, and uhm, once I was 16 years old I was working two jobs, and I just, I loved working so much I didn't really want to play sports, so I would work before school and after school, and that was just kinda my thing to do.

37 Interviewer: Yeah. So what have you done in the last five years of your life uh, that got you here? And would you consider yourself impulsive? Binge drinking? Tattoos?

38 #65: Uhm, I wouldn't consider myself impulsive, but with bringing me here, I think it's more just a desire to do more than just going out to make money, uh, that was the sole reason for going into the military and wanting more of a challenge for going into this, trying to get into this process.

39 Interviewer: Ok. Uh, and then what motivates you on a daily basis?

40 #65: Oh man, just trying to better myself so I don't let the guys down that I'm working, working with, and trying to work with in the future.

41 Interviewer: So what was the most challenging component of BUD/S, like think about your hardest day, what was that?

42 #65: Uhm, being hurt, uhm, one time, uh just getting hurt, and not being able to get uh and talk about it and more so just having to keep pushing through and now way to let instructors

know that I was hurt and being singled out for falling behind and having to go through the motions of not losing control mentally and just finishing out the day.

43 Interviewer: Ok. Ok. That works. So what about, so what motivated you to push through? And not just say this is too hard, I quit.

44 #65: That was, that was, besides, uh quitting, there was like well you could quit or you could just go as far as they let you go. And my opinions were, I'm just gonna push until they pull me out because it feel like they're gonna pull me out and maybe, slight chance they don't pull me out. So this is just I guess trying to see how far they would let me push.

45 Interviewer: Ok. And then, did you feel like you were supported by the group, your class?

46 #65: Yes. Yes. Absolutely.

47 Interviewer: And then, what practices did you use to help push you through the challenges, like uh mental, spiritual, physical, things that you did?

48 #65: Uh, definitely Christian, uhm, I definitely prayed uhm before I'd go to bed and when I'd wake up in the morning. Also, just with like a lot of obstacles, just breathing. Maybe you wouldn't have a lot of time to just kinda take them at one breath, but hey, take a step back, this is a very controlled environment, even though they can make it very hectic. Take a deep breath, you know, and just do it.

49 Interviewer: Ok, that's helpful. Think about when you had to make a difficult decision during training. What went through your mind as you made that decision? Do you have an example of something?

50 #65: Uhm...

51 Interviewer: And some people don't it's ok.

52 #65: Uhm, yeah I'd say I can't really think of an example.

53 Interviewer: And then, why do you think, what made you successful in completing BUD/S?

54 #65: Uh, this is probably gonna mess up the survey, honestly, but uh I feel like there's a lot of luck involved, and that's not to say I was unprepared coming in here. I felt like I was just as prepared as anyone else, if not maybe a little bit better, just with the steps I took before coming in the Navy. But, a lot of luck with not getting hurt, and even when I did get hurt, the guys that were around me put their necks on the line for me, uhm and I think one of the biggest things is that you can come in here so prepared and life hits, to where you get hurt and something tragic happens you're not in it anymore. So there is a lot of luck involved to continue.

55 Interviewer: No, you're not the only one to say that.

56 #65: It's crazy haha.

57 Interviewer: Did you notice any differences with those who didn't make it. Uhm, if so, can you describe the differences, like were they, were you in better shape than they were? Or whatever, what made you succeed and them not, and them decide not, do you think?

58 #65: Uhm, I think it was just not wanting to put up with uh the everyday grind. Uhm, and it wasn't like a uh physical fitness thing, maybe stronger or faster, I think it was just uh, just not wanting to deal with the annoying pain of that day. Uhm. Yeah.

59 Interviewer: So it was more mentally strong?

60 #65: I don't even know, I don't even know that, it's just blocking out the, cause I mean you could use any form of distraction you want, whether it's humor or just focusing on someone

else other than what kind of pain you're going through. I don't, I don't know.

61 Interviewer: And then, how did this experience change you as a person?

62 #65: Uhm, I guess it opened my eyes. I wasn't doubting myself coming into this, but it definitely opened my eyes. Like man I'm here, now I, now there's something more. You know, selections was such a bug, big goal and now it's over and it's like holy cow now, you know. So it's 100% doable even for the guys that didn't make it. Uhm, it's just pushing past the barriers you thought you had for yourself and uhm as soon as you finish that remembering there is a master goal at the end of that, and not getting complacent now that selection is over.

63 Interviewer: Ok. So we're doing this for SOCOM as I said. They wanted us to try to interview the people who made it and what made them successful. What question should I have asked you that I didn't that you think is important for us to know?

64 #65: Uhm, honestly, I mean I guess I have a few friends that are here that just got her to Basic Orientation, uhm and they're asking me this that and the other about the course, and remembering, you know not trying to sound generic, but remembering your why of coming into the military and coming into this program specifically. Uhm, you know, I know there's a lot of books out there, a lot of videos, a lot of public speakers that talk about this, but not just getting so wrapped up over I got to just, I got to do these logs, and I got to do these boats, and remembering that there's a bigger goal than just trying to be a SEAL and just trying to go to BUD/S, uhm. Like I said, I did not grow up wanting to do this, I kinda, I wanted to this job two years before coming into the military, and I was like I'm gonna go here and if it doesn't work out, then I'm gonna be in the military doing something else. But, try not to get wrapped up with all the little stuff along the way and remembering why you signed up to join the Navy as a whole, uhm and that even though you're a seal you're still a sailor, so uh.

65 Interviewer: Ok. Thank you, I so appreciate you doing this. That's, that was awesome. This is exactly what I was looking for, thanks.