**TRANSCRIBER NAME: Robert Finch**

**Date: 12 AUG 2020**

**Participant #: 257**

**Length of the Interview: 12:53**

Interviewer (Code in Blue): Dixon

Participant (Code in black): 257 (Name not given)

**Interview Guide**

1. **Standard Interviewer Question (SIO): Is this your first BUD/S experience and when did you start?**

**This is my first BUD/S experience and I started with this class 339 and uhh…**

* 1. **SIO: Congrats, that’s not… you’re one of the few that started with this class… wow… I’m going to ask you some background information now.**

1. **SIO: How many siblings did you have? Were they older, younger, girls, boys?**

**Umm I am the number 3 out of 4. I have two older sisters and a younger brother.**

* 1. **SIO: And then are your parents married, separated, divorced?**

**They’re married.**

* 1. **SIO: And what was… what’s your relationship with them?**

**Uhh I’m pretty close with them… I call them, more than once a week I’d say, on average. A little more than once a week. Both of them.**

1. **SIO: Do you have any life changing experience that before you came to BUD/S? And whatever that means to you is what I mean… some people say “no I didn’t have anything”, some people give me 5 things.**

**Uhh I wouldn’t say there’s anything in particular. Nothing that really changed or rocked my world or anything.**

* 1. **SIO: Do you think… how do you think your personality contributed to your progression through BUD/S?**

**Um I think, I’d say I’m more laid back and I don’t really stress about things too much. That’s what others have pointed out to me. I really don’t get stressed about things, and uh, just take things as they come.**

1. **SIO: And tell me about your background that lead you to SEALs. Do you know anyone who was a SEAL? Is your family military? Did you watch a movie?**

**Um so my… (pause) lets see… I don’t know, I didn’t know anybody in this community coming in at all. Both my parents are military. They’re both Navy. My mom was a nurse and my dad was a pilot. Um. And… And then just getting exposed to this I don’t know. It was kind of popular especially in just movies and stuff like that. It wasn’t like one particular movie or something like that. I just slowly became exposed to it. It was always in the back of my head. Thought about it through college. And then uh yeah… and worked some jobs… And I was like definitely don’t want to work those jobs.**

* 1. **SIO: I’m gonna ask you about that stuff. But let me ask you a little about your childhood first. When your parents disciplined you did they give you a timeout, spank you, did they make you do pushups? Did they take things away? What was their main…**

**Uhhh a good mix of that. So I did get the belt growing up. Umm… They… I would have to… This one I learned in the navy. Uh my dad probably got it from the Navy. He would have me write papers, sentences over and over again. Umm yeah they would like ground me, nose in the corner, they tried a lot of different techniques for disciplining.**

* 1. **SIO: Yeah. Parents do. Um did you move around a lot when you were in your teenage years or childhood?**

**Not so much teenage but childhood. So I lived in… I was born in Maryland, don’t remember that at all. Then lived in Spain for 3 years. Then went to Newport for a year. Pensacola for 4 years, then finally moved to Ohio. And that was when I was 11. And I was there since.**

* 1. **SIO: Tell me about your teenage years? Did you participate in a team sport? Did you have a community? Any community that made you close like boy scouts, or church, or…?**

**Um I played a lot of soccer, I played baseball and basketball too but soccer was the main sport I played. Uh throughout high school that’s what I did. I played year round as I got more into that. And yeah that’s like more the…**

* 1. **SIO: Did you play on a competitive league, or just your high school or both?**

**High school and club. And the high school team we were pretty close. I guess that’s part of, uhh, I guess why I wanted to do something like this too. Kinda like the camaraderie of it.**

* 1. **SIQ: I’m amazed at how many soccer players we have. I mean I’ve interviewed 12 people and probably 5 of have been soccer players. I don’t know if there’s a correlation, we’ll find out. Um so what did you do in the last 5 years of your life prior to BUD/S? You went to high school and then you went…**

**So I’m 24 now. I went to college it was a 5-year program uhhh.**

* 1. **SIO: What was the name of it?**

**University of Cincinnati and uhh got a… Their engineering degree program is 5 years. So did that. And then I knew I was gonna come here at that point. Had some extra money because I worked co-ops. Um and decided with that I was just gonna go backpacking in Europe for a bit so I did that for a few months.**

* 1. **SIO: How did you know you were gonna come here? Did you have a contract? An enlistment contract?**

**Umm well I just knew I was, this was what I was going to do as a job. That I was going to join the Navy. And I initially was going to try to go officer route, researched it, everything more, talked to recruiters, and then decided to go enlisted and I was like well enlisted I can do at any time. So that’s why, and I always wanted to do backpacking too so I decided to do that.**

* 1. **SIO: Cool. Would you consider yourself impulsive? Like do you have any tattoos or do you like to binge drink?**

**No, I don’t have any tattoos. Or I’m not a big drinker (unintelligible).**

1. **SIO: Think about your hardest day that you had here. What was it, and what motivated you to push through that?**

**Ummmm I’m kind of split between two.**

* 1. **Okay give me both.**

**One of them I remember. I think it was the first logs of first phase. And our boat crew struggled pretty bad and I thought that I was… I didn’t think that I was the cause of us being pretty weak that day but I definitely struggled pretty hard and I was not helping by any means and that was… uhhh… I don’t know. I talked to the guys about it and they said they thought I did fine and then I just kept going.**

* 1. **And then what was your second?**

**Second was uh… In Hell Week I remember waking up from the naps on Wednesday night and hitting the surf there. That was extremely painful. The last place I wanted to be. And that was like... I remember my head was so messed up that I was like falling… I fell like 5 times, my sense of balance was completely gone. I couldn’t stand up. My legs were all swollen and I was like what is happening to my body since that nap. But yeah you just think of that its eventually going to get better and um that just what we’re going through is temporary.**

* 1. **Did you feel like you were supported by the team?**

**Yeah, yeah. People… I was particularly one of the more messed up guys by the end. And I had people who were like… Like I couldn’t really even stand up on my own so my so much when we would hit the surf and stuff like that people would come in and were picking me up. Uh, yeah.**

* 1. **Did you have any practices, like spiritual, mental, meditating, praying, that helped you push through the challenges?**

**Surprisingly… I go to church… But surprisingly I wouldn’t really say that was like in my thoughts while I was going through. Like in the moment, that was never really a driving factor. Even though I am somewhat religious I… Nah during the moment it wasn’t really playing a big role.**

1. **SIO: Is there a decision that you really struggled with at BUD/S? Like, turning in a classmate, for cheating or not doing what they said they were gonna do? What went through your mind as you made that decision?**

**Hmm… I don’t know, nothing really comes to mind.**

1. **SIO: Why do you think you were successful in BUD/S?**

**Hmmm… Uhh.. Just taking things as they come. I don’t know. I don’t really get shocked by any of the stuff they throw at us.**

* 1. **SIO: Well let me ask you in a different way. Did you notice anything different about the soldiers… or sailors… who didn’t make it? Can you describe the differences? Like if you knew somebody wasn’t going to make it, like what made them stand apart.**

**Oh yeah. Umm… For people that I knew that would think they’re not gonna make it a lot of the times it was little events. Like you would see them really struggle with something or you would see it in their eyes. A lot of the times.**

* 1. **SIO: So you’re not the first person to say you could see that. What could you see in their eyes?**

**Just kinda like… just like blank stares… just kinda thousand yard stare sometimes, or avoiding eye contact. Um.**

* 1. **SIO: Avoiding eye contact?**

**Yeah. Just kinda looking at the ground. You could just tell they’re in some deep thought. I mean the people that were really like, “Oh I’m never gonna quit” from day one, they were like trying to put up this front to everybody. Like they’re cruising through. Like nothing’s affecting them. I think a lot of those people went away. I mean I’m sure you guys all know who Stroke is over there. He points that out too. He was one of the guys straight up saying to everybody, “I don’t want to be doing this right now, but I’m just gonna do it anyway.” The guys that quit wouldn’t say stuff like that. Like “I really don’t want to be here”.**

1. **SIO: BONUS QUESTION - How do you think this experience has changed you as a person?**

**Um it’s made me super confident for sure. I think taking those surveys, I was definitely more confident in my answers.**

* 1. **SIO: So you’ve noticed a change as you go on?**

**Yeah, I would say so. That for this this was one huge unknown to me. I really didn’t know, coming in, if I’d be able to do it or not. Uh and then yeah. Just how fast you learn things here. Just whatever they throw at you you’ll be able to learn.**

* 1. **SIO: So the navy is asking us to do this to try to figure out what makes people successful before they start BUD/S. Is there anything that I should have asked you? That helped or hurt you in BUD/S, that I didn’t ask you about?**

**Um I guess the approach I kind of took coming here, I remember just people coming in… I think people get way too into the weeds of like what they should necessarily prepare for. Like people do cold water things to themselves coming in. Do ridiculous workouts. And, I remember reading online that don’t worry about any of that just show up in good shape and ready to take what they throw at you. That’s all you really need to do I think. People just get way too worried about “Oh I’ve got to work on my underwater swimming, or my breath hold”. Like everything has to be perfect. Eventually there’s something that you’re not good at. Everybody runs into something they’re not good at.**