**TRANSCRIBER NAME: Dan McDonald**

**Date: 16 August 2020**

**Participant #: 378**

**Length of the Interview: 9:47**

Interviewer (Code in Blue): Dixon

Participant (Code in black):

**What’s your participant ID?**

**378**

**And then, do you mind if I record you?**

**No.**

**Okay great. So when did you start BUDS and is this your first BUDS experience?**

**So, showed up last April. Started with class 337 and uh yeah this is my first BUDS experience.**

**And how many, just a little bit of background, how many siblings do you have and what’s the birth order?**

**I’ve got two younger siblings. I’m the oldest.**

**And are they girls, boys?**

**Girls. 21 and 18. And I am 24.**

**And were your parents married, separated, divorced?**

**They’re married.**

**And what was your relationship to them?**

**I’m super close with my parents. I’d say more so now than when I was younger, but um yeah just have a really good relationship with them.**

**Good. Did you have any life changing experiences prior to BUDS? What you consider life changing is whatever I mean by life changing. Like some people say no and other people say like five things.**

**I don’t really know if one thing per say was life changing. I think a lot of things culminated in smaller changes that happened over time. But it wasn’t any one thing specifically.**

**How do you think your personality contributed to your progression through BUD/S?**

**I think that I’ve wanted to do this my entire life so its like a little bit easier to look at this whole experience and uh I think in terms of my personality in terms of who I am and who I know myself to be I am very confident. I was confident that I wasn’t going to have too many problems coming through this program. Um yeah.**

**What made you even want to be a SEAL like do you have military in your family or SEALs that you know?**

**So my grandfather was in the Navy. He was a corpsman during WWII. But that was about it uh. I think what led me to this was, uh took a, uh, a Noviance test we took in high school to see what worked best for us, and I got law enforcement. My uncle was a federal marshall and was talking to him about it, and he said it's really hard to come from. I’m from Massachusetts and the way the policing works there in the city is that all the veterans priority for those who want to go to the Academy. I could go be in the military for a little bit. And from there I decided if I was going to join, I was going to do something that had a big impact on the world, so.**

**Tell me about your childhood. How were you disciplined as a child? Would you say your parents spanked you, timeouts, withheld toys, physical stuff?**

**Definitely, timeouts. Go to your room and you’ll be in there for a bit. Nothing physical ever really. It was just kind of things being withheld and being alone it wasn't anything super crazy.**

**Did you move around a lot?**

**No.**

**Tell me about your teenage years? Did you do any sports? Anything individually? What specifically did you do?**

**I was big into playing football when I was younger. Um, when I was real little, but didn’t play in high school. I did wrestling and Jiu-Jitsu in high school. Played baseball in high school.**

**So were uh either of those a particularly tight knit group?**

**Not so much with those teams no. Like we were all close with each other but not in the same manner as like it is here I guess.**

**What have you done in the last 5 years of your life prior to BUD/S training?**

**Uh, went to college. Went to Boston University. Um and a student and graduated in December of. I guess January of 2018.**

**Were you ROTC or anything?**

**I was in a fraternity, but that was it. I played on the rugby team for a year and that group was really close. But**

**Would you consider yourself impulsive? For example, some people get tattoos impulsively?**

**No, I don’t think I am impulsive. Maybe like a little bit but nothing like big decisions and what not just kind of smaller stuff.**

**What was the most challenging component of BUD/S? Think about your hardest day or event at BUD/S. What motivated to push through? Did you feel like you were supported by the group?**

**Getting rolled out of 338 was probably the hardest probably because it wasn’t anything that I did or the other six guys. It was that they didn’t have enough equipment for us to continue with the class. So they just kind of pulled seven guys and told us to take a seat. So that was really hard. I think the guys that I got rolled with I’m now super close with which is awesome but definitely the guys I was around helped out a lot and I guess the other part of that was talking to my parents, talking to my mom. She said you know everything happens for a reason. That’s the deal. I kind of just looked at it as an opportunity to heal up and rest and get ready to keep on going but that was definitely probably the hardest.**

**Did you have any practices that helped you get through like physical, mental, spiritual stuff? Routines that you did.**

**Um, I think just having like time to myself to sort of think and kind of meditate I guess on everything. There were certain weekends here on 618 I would go to Coronado and get a cup of coffee on Saturday or Sunday morning and facetime my parents. I think that was also something that helped. Definitely something that I have done ever since I got here. Outside of that nothing.**

**You must have some very supportive parents. That’s all I’m saying as a parent. Yeah, that’s hard. When you made a difficult decision during training at BUD/S, what went through your mind as you made that decision? Some people said they haven’t made a difficult decision and if you haven’t that’s fine too.**

**Yeah, I haven’t really had any difficult decisions.**

**Why do you think made you completing successful in completing BUD/S? If I am trying to interview people trying to go into BUDs, what should I look for? What made you successful?**

**I think, uh, the level of seriousness they are about this program and how committed they are to it I think if people are… If people like the idea of being a SEAL or going through this program, they like that, they don’t necessarily understand what the training is going to be. They don’t understand how stressing it is and how taxing it is on yourself physically and mentally. Um, yeah.**

**So, did you notice the people who didn’t make it, looking around this room, anything different about those that did not make it? If you could say oh yeah they’re this, they aren’t going to make it through?**

**Ah, I don’t know if anything definitively could. I think there are, there was uh, guys you talk to them that they didn’t seem as committed. Talking about during first phase on the weekend, could see some guys just really inside themselves thinking about what was going on and then later on that next week, they would quit. So I think uh, definitely.**

**So do you mean they were going out and partying and not taking it seriously or they were psyching themselves out?**

**They were psyching themselves out. Just really second guessing what the program was.**

**How did do you think this whole experience changed you as a person?**

**I am definitely more confident in myself and my abilities. Um, that’s definitely the big one. Uh, I think I have always been decent at communicating and this program made me even better at communicating. Um, dealing with all sorts of people is another big thing that I’ve learned a lot and grown. Um yeah.**

**And anything else I should have asked you to help us get, so the Navy is having us do this so that they can pick better of the people who are coming into BUDs? Is there anything I should have asked you? Of course it takes this**

**I dont really think so**

**No worries. We just finish up with that just in case. That was perfect. Thank you.**