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**Participant #: 351**

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Interviewer (Code in Blue):

Participant (Code in black):

This is participant number 351. So I’ve just got a series of questions and... we should be able to get through all of them - we’ve got 15 minutes, um ya know give or take a minute or so. Um when did you start BUD/S?

Uh, I want to say June last year, uh June July area. Came in February.

Is this your first BUD/S experience?

Yep, yes.

How many siblings do you have?

One younger sister.

What is your uh, what was your parental situation growing up?

Uh my parental situation? Um, my parents were together until I was about 17 years old and then divorced. Um...Very civil. There was no uh big situation, not even child support or anything. Just parted ways.

So it was amicable?

Yes.

What’s your relationship like with your mom and dad?

Uh..like, like I said - very civil. I visit both of them regularly. They’ll be around each other regularly. So, it’s - they’re very good. Very, um, probably consider my relationship with my dad a little more like a buddy, but very respectable, at least I’d say normal.

What life-changing events um happened in your life prior to BUD/S?

Um.. yeah, nothing crazy. Especially involving me coming to BUD/S. No, nothing.

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

I’d say uh well I’ve always kindof considered myself a little bit of an agreeable person, so.

A what?

An Agreeable - person.

Agreeable?

Yeah, uh. I definitely uh. That kind of makes it really easy to get along with a lot of people. When you have a bunch of different personalities and you’re. But um, I’d say that’s been in my favor. No authority issues, have an easy time following orders. Take charge when I need to.

So, describe your background that led you to pursue becoming part of the SEAL community and in particular, the question is, do you have any SEALs as family or friends, do you have any military family or friends in general?

Okay Umm. I do have military family. Not immediate family, uh, my grand-dad was in the Marines, but that’s, that’s about it. No close relatives. No military. Uh, prior to going to BUD/S I did landscaping growing up and construction, and uh I found out that I didn’t really find, see myself pursuing anything like that. Looked around, didn’t know the military was an option, uh really, didn’t consider it until later. And uh, jumped on that pretty quick. Found out about the BUD/S pipeline, SEAL teams. Jumped on that about as fast as I could.

And how did you hear about their, how’d you find out about the SEALS?

Um I guess, movies. I mean they’re pretty popular. It’s kinda, it’s kinda easy to pick up the name. Um I went to talk to the recruiter - I was originally going to go Marines. But, the recruiter. I accidentally walked into a Navy command. He told me about the SEAL teams and everything. So, I liked the idea of that a lot more than the Marines.

So tell me a little bit about your uh childhood - so, in particular, how were you disciplined as a child? Were you spanked? Were you grounded?

Not nearly as much as I probably should have been. Um, yeah, I was - I was spanked. My dad had the sound of him opening his closet with the belt hanging. It always kinda, make a noise. The whip of the belt coming out. But probably didn’t get my butt beat nearly as much as I should have.

Did you move around uh as a child? Teenager?

No, no.

Did you in high school participate in team sports?

Uh, no, I played as a young kid - I got into music when I got in high school and I had to start working. So, no.

So, you did music in high school?

Yeah, yeah I didn’t play in the school band or anything. I got in a garage band with a bunch of my buddies. I played guitar since I was younger. But that was sort of where a lot of my interest went.

And then you started working?

Yeah, yessir - I worked since I was a little kid. Um I did landscaping with my dad; worked at the grocery store; went and did construction.

Framing?

Uh, it was more demolition. So I started with demolition and then I would help rebuild the house too.

So destruction?

Say again.

Destruction?

It was, it was a big mixture. So it was disaster restoration. We’d come in and mow the house out, and then rebuild it. So we did some framing, um I helped a lot with drywall, a lot of interior work.

So what have you done in the last five years before coming to BUD/S?

Uh construction area.

So did you, did you graduate high school and go?

Uh, yes. I graduated high school in 2014. And then I tried college, wasn’t much for it - couldn’t really find an interest of my own. I do plan on going. Um, yeah that was about it, working, gave the college route a shot, find my way in there.

So you, some college, you’re working, you joined the Navy?

Yes.

How long have you been in the Navy?

One year this year.

So you joined the Navy specifically to come to BUD/S?

Yeah, bootcamp straight to here.

Would you consider yourself impulsive?

...No.

We’ll be measuring the delay it takes for people to answer that question.

Okay, sorry.

No, I’m saying - the irony would be, if you took a long time to say yes.

Okay, right.

Do you have any tattoos?

No.

That’s an example of impulsivity, apparently.

Okay.

So, what was the most challenging component in BUD/S? Uh Either in a day or an event.

Um, well one of the biggest things that was a shock to me was like the kind of people here. Not even so much an event, but really just trying to keep with these guys. Like, like I said, I didn’t play sports in high school. So I might have been a little bit on the lesser spectrum of godly athlete. But um, trying to keep up with them was fairly difficult. And the mind and physical. Yeah, you got the hard chargers. That definitely. Super professional, everyone shows up on time. That wasn’t something I was used to. But um, yeah. I was going to say a specific evolution, but can’t think of anything else.

So what motivated you to push through?

Um same thing, um you kind of look around while you’re getting cold and wet, and running with that boat on your head. You look around and kinda see everyone else suffering too, it takes you out of your own head kinda.

Did you feel like group support was important?

For sure.

So what practices: physical, mental, spiritual, did you use to push through?

Well I don’t know if you know about our Masterchief Magorachi, with his stuff, the visualization, and the um, that was probably a big thing when it came to doing stuff like OC8. Kinda going and getting the mental reps in your head before you go something definitely helped a lot, that for sure a big thing. Um, following the breathing they gave us. Really everything he briefed us on - I don’t know if you’re familiar with it. It’s very uh, it’s - I definitely encourage it.

What is it in particular? I mean, what kind of..

So, he gives these - it’s based off of say uh three of four little principles - visualization, arousal control, um it just involves controlling your breathing, how excited you’re getting, stuff like that. To be honest, I can’t bring up in my head right now. But, he kind of precedes all of BUD/S with this big brief; he talks about everything, it’s pretty interesting. Just stuff along that matter, I can’t remember the rest of the acronym. I’d say the visualization and everything.

What’s the, what is the acronym?

V-A-G-S. Vags. But it’s, it’s very good stuff - very intelligent.

So when you made a difficult decision during BUD/S, what went through your mind as you made the decision? So what decision did you really struggle with and in particular, the examples that are listed here are: running classmates out or turning in someone who’s cheating, anything like that.

Well, you absolutely don’t want to do that. But at the same time, you don’t want to do that at the beginning. Now, you’re looking around the room and like realizing you’re going to work with these guys, I realized that kind of early on, run out of boat in BUD/S, unfortunately now you got out. Um, I don’t know if that answers the question much, but.

Well, so I guess the question is really about - did you have to make such a decision, and when you made that decision what went through your mind?

Uh, yes. Just we all signed up for it. It’s part of the process. Um, they used to say, ya know not everyone is a good team guy, some people are just good neighbors.

Good what?

Good neighbors. They’re better neighbors than they are team guys. That’s kind of what I always thought about - if you’re meant to make it through the program, you’ll find a way through it.

Do you have a specific example?

Uh, being underneath the boat is a pretty good example. Um again, I don’t, I don’t know what’s your extent of knowledge is on what we’re doing, but in first phase we run with the boat on our head, and that’s when you run people out, because if you fall out then that’s technically a DOR or a quit. So yeah, multiple times it stinks, because everyone is passionate about it.

So, that’s when the boat is upside down on your head and you’re?

The inflatable boat. There’s seven of us in a boat crew. And uh, you’re running to and from whatever evolution or for the evolution you’re running with the boat on your head. And if you don’t keep up with your classmates, then you get exhausted and fall out, or they pull you out, just depending. Um, yeah I mean I’m not going to stop to let him catch up - that makes the rest of the boat get dropped. I’m trying to say that without sounding extremely arrogant. But, no no you don’t want them to see everybody stopping.

Why do you think you were successful in completing BUD/S?

I would say um… definitely the mental game. Um a lot of time, we really think, think things suck, but you take a look around and see everyone else succeeding. Definitely helps. Same thing as earlier. It’s a group mentality. That would probably be my biggest one. Like I said, I did do construction and landscaping, that was good, fun, tough work - probably made me a little bit more used to the grind if...

Did you notice anything different about the people who didn’t make it? Any specific characteristics?

A lot less confidence in themselves. Um, yeah, yeah for sure. They uh - we always kind of joked around that you could see it on people, but um it’s really hard to call someone on whether they’re going to make it, because they may surprise you. Um, but yeah, confidence was a big thing. Especially when you’re about to quit. Um, nothing else.

How did this experience change you as a person, if it did?

Definitely more mature, and definitely know a lot more about myself. I look for kind of professional little traits that I didn’t look at before. Maybe a little bit more judgemental - the standards are a little bit different here than other places. But, definitely my confidence is through the roof now.

Is there anything else that uh, I should have asked you that I didn’t, or that helped or hurt you in BUD/S?

I just hope they keep it the way it should be, the standards shouldn’t be lowered. It should stay the way it is, if not keep getting harder.