**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Goldman**

**Date: 1/27/2022**

**Participant #: 607**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Dixon

Participant (Code in black): #607

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So I'm here with number 607, and we're gonna start the questions. Is it okay if I record?**

**607:**

**Yes, ma'am.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Great. So tell me a little bit, first of all, you said that you left on October 28th in the first phase. And tell me a little bit about your childhood. You know, were your parents, your brothers, etc.-**

**607:**

**I had three brothers. I have three brothers, and two parents. My mom and dad are still together. From Maryland, east coast. And I just grew up kind of outside, and skateboarding mostly.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**A lot of skateboarding, and surfing, and yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So- so it sounds like from what you said, you had a pretty good childhood?**

**607:**

**A great childhood, yes.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Great childhood, that's awesome. So if you had to describe your personality in three different traits, what would you say?**

**607:**

**Um-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Take your time.**

**607:**

**Quiet-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**I'm kind of quiet. Um, uh, I'm ambitious to, like, try new stuff.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And I'd say, uh, I don't know.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**What would someone else say about you if- if they were meeting you? Quiet, ambitious.**

**607:**

**I've been told I'm funny.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Funny? Okay.**

**607:**

**'Cause once I- I open up to people, I- I say some re- I don't know, I say a lot of dumb stuff, so.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah. Yeah, no that's a good sign.**

**607:**

**Once I do open up, you know, I- I get along with my- like, my friends, I like to crack jokes, and stuff like that.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**No, that's great. Okay. Perfect. And what have you done in the last five years of your life, prior to BUD/S tr- training. So-**

**607:**

**I worked on farms in Maryland.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**I l- life guarded on the beach-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**... in Maryland. I went to community college.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**For how many years?**

**607:**

**Three semesters. Only a year and a half.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Three semesters. Okay. No, that's good.**

**607:**

**Um, and just worked on [inaudible]-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So you were in high school, and then you went to community college-**

**607:**

**Yeah, I was in high school. Throughout high school I worked on different farms in Maryland, and I dug fence post holes mostly, put up barbed wire. Um, and in the summer I would lifeguard on the beach.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**'Cause it- it was a- it was fun.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Uh-huh (affirmative). Okay. Perfect. And then, um, if you think of your prior experiences, did you have any one or two things that you feel like really shaped your experience? Like before BUD/S, coming to- so, anything happen that kind of put you in one direction, or another, or had a big impact on you?**

**607:**

**Yeah, I did, uh, Civil Air Patrol when I was younger.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**I- when I was in middle school, and I knew I wanted to join the military then. And also I met a guy who was, um, he was, like, a- he was in, um, a Marine- reconnaissance Marine. And he was talking about the lifestyle, the like- like, you know, just that job. And it got me interested in SEALs, and other special ops, potential jobs, so.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**I really wanted- that's when I really decided I wanted to do something like that, so.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. And then how did those experiences impact your training, like deciding to join the Navy, 'cause that sounded like he was a Marine, like-**

**607:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). I had family in the Navy. Like, I- my grandfather, and my father, they're all- cousins are all naval officers.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**I decided to enlist because I wanted to become a SEAL, 'cause I thought that was the best route for myself.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Uh-huh (affirmative). Okay. Um, All right. Then how did the experiences that you told me about, like, you know, being a- working on a farm, and doing life guarding, did that impact your training as far as BUD/S go? Like- like, why did you pick BUD/S, when the other guy was a marine? You know wh- what- what drew you to be at BUD/S?**

**607:**

**I like the water. I like to swim. Um, I feel c- I feel comfortable in the water.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**And I feel like working on farms kind of helps because, I mean, it's just- sometimes it's just, like, long days, obviously, just manual labor.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And even though you're not, you know, you're- you're doing long days in BUD/S too. Um, you know, if you're healthy. I mean, yeah. So I guess that's why.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Okay. And then what do you- what motivates you on a daily basis? Like when you get up in the morning, what do you, like, tell yourself, or-**

**607:**

**Nowadays after BUD/S, or before BUD/S?**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Both.**

**607:**

**Before BUD/S it was all I thought about, like, was, like, making it through here. But now it's been actually a little more difficult.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**But recently I've been able to find a new, like, pass- I've been- I've- I'm able to possible go to, like, EOD or diver, so the new motivation now is to not fail a second time.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So I'm interested in that, 'cause that's really what we want to get at. So tell me a little bit about that. How did you find that? Refind that?**

**607:**

**It's, uh, (laughs) um-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Because that- that's a great thing that-**

**607:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**... if we could learn that, you know and help other people, uh, 'cause you s- you- you feel like- it seems like you've got your spark back, you know, you- you know what you want to do again. How do you- how did you do that?**

**607:**

**It took a- it's kind of like a soul search, because when I got- first got out of BUD/S, it was kind of, like, shock. 'Cause I, uh, sort of- if you want to know, like, what happened, I started, like, falling behind in the third week, and I could make all the excuses that I want, but at the end of the day, I still quit. You know, 'cause I was- I mean, I- I couldn't- I just couldn't keep up my boat crew anymore, and I thought I was, like, hurting my boat crew.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah. Yeah.**

**607:**

**I was sick too. So, um, when I quit, I was- it was kind of, like, hit me like a rock. It hit me really hard because, like, this thing that I've worked up to for so long, it was just suddenly gone. There was, like, this void-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And, like, I didn't know what to do with it. I'm like, "Well what do I do now?" So I resorted to just heavy drinking for, like, about a couple- probably a- a month. But that-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**And I'll tell you that's normal.**

**607:**

**Yeah. So I drank a lot of alcohol, and then, like, eventually I kind of, um, just decided this isn't- this is terrible. This isn't what I'm supposed to be doing with my life. And I'm also- I- I'm- I believe in God, I'm a Christian, so I knew there was another plan.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah.**

**607:**

**So I had to get that over with. And then I got that over with. And I started working out again slowly, and then I knew I- I could, uh, possibly get picked up for another special warfare rate in the Navy. And I didn't want to piss away that opportunity.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**You know, so I started just getting back into it, and now I feel great. And I'm [crosstalk]-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So do you remember, like, what kind of clicked for you when you said, "Okay, this is stupid. This isn't me. You know, I'm doing all this drinking, or whatever. I need to-" Just you- sounds like something just, for some reason, you realized, "Okay, this isn't me."**

**607:**

**Yeah. I remember I was on the beach with my friend on our base, which is the North Island base. And we were- we were, um, we were drinking, and- and I- you- you can see, like, BUD/S from that distance. And I'm like, man- Now I'm, like, all the way over here. It just-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**It was just kind of, like, I remember that day. I just kind of felt, like, that this isn't where my life should be doing. If I don't want to just settle for- I'm not saying that there's other rates in the Navy, or I'm not looking down on them, I'm just saying I want to do something, like, still special warfare. And I didn't want to settle for- for, like, a job that I knew I wouldn't be happy with.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**That would be easier. You know, because, like, going to another special warfare rate, that would be a- a new challenge. And even though I'm kind of nervous, and I, you know, I'm- I don't even know for sure if that's, like, what I want to do but I know it's gonna be a challenge. So that's the only way I can, like, keep life interesting. But, uh-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So like you said, one of your traits was ambition. You know, you have things that you want to set out for yourself to do.**

**607:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**It sounds like. Okay. All right. Well, great. Um, so describe your experience at BUD/S. You said the third week you were falling back, and what was your- what was your mindset? Like, what were you thinking?**

**607:**

**Um, so third week I started having, uh, I was focusing a lot of on, uh, like every time I'd eat, I would- I would have, like, diarrhea, and stuff like that. And I just started ha- having diarrhea all day. So I started focusing on hiding it because obviously you spend a lot of time in the water, and you're- you're in close proximity of your classmates-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And it's- VGE is a big problem. Like, the sickness you get there.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Right. Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And I knew I had it, but I tried to hide it, and eventually I just couldn't because, like, you know, so. The third week I was really just trying to, like, keep up. Um, I just couldn't hold food in-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**Just double dragon, you know th-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**It's when you, like, it comes out-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah.**

**607:**

**... like, one way or the other, you know, But the third- but, uh, I started, uh, getting just, like, um, and people started noticing, like, oh, like- like Bunky shit himself again.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And it's actually pretty funny, but at the time it was, you know, it was just, like, it sucks. But, uh, and I obviously- I just started falling behind, and during our, uh, log PT on week three, day three, which is Wednesday. I, uh, we were doing lunges- like the continuous lunges you do with the logs. And I just, um, I- I kind of more self defeated myself. Physically I probably could have kept going. But I felt like I was holding down my boat crew. And, like, so we were walking up the berm, and I just let out, and I shook the instructor's hand, and that was it.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And at first I was kind of mad at myself because at the time, you know, you're so delirious, and you know, you're on not a lot of sleep obviously, and haven't really eaten much. I was just tired, and a part of me was almost, like, whoa, I'm- after I quit, you know, you ring the bell, and like, what did I just do? You know, sort of- it wasn't- it wasn't, like, instant regret, but it was just, um, I don't know.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**No, thank you so much for sharing.**

**607:**

**[crosstalk] yeah-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Because those are the kind of stories we're looking for, again, to help other people.**

**607:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). And honestly, a part of me was kind of relieved. Like, well, I don't have to do this. But then right after I'd think about that, I'd be like- I'd be, like, envious, like, man, what if I- I could- still could have stayed in. But maybe, like, at the end of the day, it wasn't exactly for me, 'cause I felt that way a little bit.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**Like, relief that I didn't have to go do another day of laying in the surf, or- but then, like, again, like, right after that thought, I would get envious of the guys still in there, like, oh man, I wish I was still there. Maybe I could have done it. But I don't know, it's just kind of, like, a- I- I really don't know. Just a state of confusion.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Well tell me at a time- was there any time during BUD/S where you had a difficult decision during training, uh, and then what went through your mind as you made that decision, if you have an example?**

**607:**

**Uh, yes. Uh, one example is when you do land portage, when you're running the- the boats on your head. And I don't- I think it was the week three land portage, um, on Monday or Tuesday, and I actually had other similar experiences to this. And you're- when you're l- running land portage, you're just- you got the weight on your head, and it just feels like- it's just hard to keep up obviously, and, um, and it- a part of me was like, I don't know if I can do this, but the only way- the only thing that kept in it is just the fact that I didn't want to hurt my boat crew, 'cause that's one less person pulling weight. And I was like, "Oh, I need to get through this evolution, and then I'll f- and then I'll analyze myself."**

**607:**

**I feel like- like 90% of the time, whenever I had doubt- unless- whenever, like, during, like, uh, land portage, or log PT, or surf passage, like, whenever I kind of had a feeling, like, I really don't want to do this right now, it's like, well obviously no one wants to do it right now, but if I quit now, then I screw over my boat crew. So I had a lot of times where I thought about quitting, but the only reason why I didn't was 'cause I didn't want to hurt my boat crew, because that would be one less, um, body to pull weight.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And at a certain point when I started adding weight, (laughs) and slowing everyone down, and making people trip, and stuff, and falling out, that's when I decided it wasn't- I needed to go.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. All right. Is there anything that you would have done differently during BUD/S knowing what you know now?**

**607:**

**I'd- probably would have tried to communicate with people more. Um, I got along with everyone in my class. There was an- an officer who I didn't get along with, and there were multiple times where, like, he was usually in my boat crew, and I'd see him doing stuff that just isn't what they're looking for obviously there, and he was, you know, a good candidate. I guess a good athlete, or whatever. But I just saw him do a lot of stuff that really, um, pissed me off.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**It really, uh, and some stuff, 'cause he was in my boat crew, like, one example, we were climbing- well, I'm gonna tell you this, 'cause I don't really care now, 'cause I'm not in the pipeline, and this is anonymous. But we were climbing ropes. We were doing, like, rope PT-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**It's- it's very anonymous. Believe me.**

**607:**

**Yeah, we were doing rope PT, and how it worked is you would have to, uh, climb up the ropes, and long story short, you climb- there's, like, groups, and there's a team of five people. One person climbs a rope, they get down, and then they go do something else. And the other person climbs the rope. And then they go relieve them, and that just circulates. You know what I'm saying?**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And, like, he- I guess he got tired, and he wouldn't want to climb the rope again. So he made- he made me go in his place. Just stuff like that. And that guy made it through hell week.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Oh.**

**607:**

**And it's just people- and he did other stuff like that, where he'd kind of gun decked stuff. And I remember one night I actually got into it with him late at night. And, uh, we were yelling at each other, and I should have con- controlled my emotions better.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**But all the officers in my class, I really- I really liked. It's just, uh, I wish I would have spoke up for myself a little more, and just said no to some stuff that I didn't feel- that wasn't right.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So we've interviewed a lot of people on the other side who made it, um, several of them, more than you might think, didn't make it their first time, and then went back to the fleet, and then came again, like, two or three years later. Would you ever consider that?**

**607:**

**Yes. I would. Um, 100%. Because I'm starting to, like, get the itch again, like, this- it's like a unfinished quest.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**You know, so.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. No, that- that's helpful. Um, what practices do you have to push through challenges? I know you said you're a Christian, and that's- that's common. Uh, would you say physical, mental, or spiritual, did you use any of those during BUD/S?**

**607:**

**Um, yeah, Sometimes I would just, um, be like, "God, just help me get through this." evo, this evolution. I would just talk to myself sometimes.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And I'd try to stay close to people who I- who I knew, like, through, like, the prep training, and basic rotation, and boot camp, and all that. So, my friends. I would try to stay close to people who I could talk to.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**I think the worst thing is trying to, uh, not- not talk to people, like, at lunch just [inaudible] sitting with your friends, and just joking around is probably the best thing.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**Just com- talking to other people helps the most, I think. Especially during an evolution. And during surf torture Me and my friend would be next to each other, and talk to each other. Surf torture is terrible. I'd rather do a lot of other stuff that that, but-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. And then how do you think this experience changed you as a person?**

**607:**

**I think, uh, I- I didn't make it obviously through hell week. I didn't make it to hell week even, but I made it through, like, a little bit of phase- and I did some stuff. I mean, all that physical exertion, physical activity all day, it kind of reshapes, like, what I'm capable of. Like, you know, maybe, you know, like, I did all that running that one day, and there's one day where it was really cold, or you know, it kind of- I'm kind of less, um, intimidated by other things now. Like there's- when I got out of BUD/S, I didn't really care actually, like-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**Actually, (laughs) I almost, uh, I went up to, uh, the college, SDSU, me and my friends for Halloween, and actually almost got into a f- it was me, and a couple friends of mine. And we almost got into a fight, uh, near frat.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**'Cause we were obviously looking for girls, and the girls are at frats-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**The frat guys don't want guys who aren't in there. And it was, like, they're all screaming at us, and kicking us out of their house. And they let us in, it was just the funny part, but, um, my- my friend actually hit on the president's, uh, fiance, or something like that.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**(laughs)**

**607:**

**That's what caused it. And it was, like, three of us, and, like, 20 of them. And I- I'm like- I- for- I didn't care. Like, before that I was kind of, like, "Oh, I don't want to fight anybody." But I just didn't care. I probably would have gotten, like, stoned, I would have gotten beat, 'cause obviously there were so many of them. But I just didn't care for a second, and, like, that's kind of weird.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**It's- it's just, like, going through, like, a little bit of BUD/S, like, I don't know. It just kind of made me not, like, really- I mean, I'm scared of stuff still, but it's- maybe just not care for my own sa- like, physical well being at a certain point, 'cause I was, like, upset at the fact that I quit.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**And also, like, I had gone through, like, far enough. You know, it's just, like-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**It was kind of whatever, but especially, like, besides, like, physical confrontations like that, I didn't even know if that has anything to do with this. I'm sorry if I [crosstalk]-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**No, no. That's exactly what I'm looking for, yeah.**

**607:**

**But, um-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**It- I'm just looking for how you think the experience changed you.**

**607:**

**Yeah. I'm not, like, as timid, and stuff.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**Especially doing some of, like, the- the water competency skills. Like, before I got to BUD/S, like, there's- like, there's no way way you could swim a 50 underwater- a 50 meter underwater, like, that's- you're gonna pass out. But I did it, and it wasn't that bad, so it's, like, I may- if I get selected for EOD, or diver, maybe I can make it through that, because they have a lot of water skills.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**I'm not as nervous for stuff as I used to be. Especially, like- like a test, or physical exertion. Like, I'll run this much, like, okay, whatever. That's kind of how I feel.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah.**

**607:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Oh, well that's great. So we're doing this research, and is there anything you think I should have asked you, um, that would help people, like, before they go to BUD/S? That I could tell them? Because people read these articles, and- and maybe they're students that want to go to BUD/S, you know, what would you say, or what- is there anything I should have asked you that you wish you would have known before you came here?**

**607:**

**Um, that's a great question. I wish I would have known to, like, avoid toxic people, 'cause sometimes, like, there's people in your class, and to not- not get comfortable with people, 'cause people can turn into different people during, like, BUD/S obviously, it's all heat of the moment. But there's some people there that just- their goal is just to kind of push people out. And, like, that's not really the mindset. But honestly, I feel like the instructors know that, but they- they know that- that's what happens, but I mean, people let it happen just because, like, they- like, less people make it through obviously.**

**607:**

**I mean, if people put pressure on each other- a lot of people quit because there's pressure on them from other people, and their boat crew. If you're not holding your weight, even when they may be holding their weight, but there was just, like, someone saw them slip, and an instructor says, "Oh, you're- you're- you're ducking boat, or you're doing this," and then everyone thinks that that guy's ducking boat, and there's, like, there's just this, like, fictional, like, you know, it's like- it's like pressure that doesn't have to be there on someone. A good candidate may quit because of that.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**607:**

**So they just avoid, like, people trying- there's gonna be people that are gonna go at your throats. Not every- don't- don't expect your class to- everyone to be there for each other, 'cause it's not how it works.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**But were they there for you sometimes?**

**607:**

**Yeah. There's a lot of really good people there.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**607:**

**And then there's- there's always gonna be some people- that's just the way it is. I'm not complaining. I'm not [inaudible].**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Sure. No, no, I'm not taking it that way.**

**607:**

**Oh, that's why I quit. But it's just that's the way it is. So just expect there to be people, you know, that aren't your friends, because it's the way it is. And then some of those people make it through, and that's the way it is. You just gotta mind your own business, and just try to stay close to your friends.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. That sounds very helpful. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you so much.**

**607:**

**Thanks.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**I'm gonna stop-**