**TRANSCRIBER NAME: Wyatt Long**

**Date: 1/31/2022**

**Participant #: 631**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr Deirdre Dixon

Participant (Code in black): #631

**Interview Guide**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. We're going. So, do you mind if I record this?**

**631:**

**Not at all.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**And what's your number?**

**631:**

**Uh, 631.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**631. Okay. So, uh, what phase did you leave in BUD/S?**

**631:**

**First phase.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**First phase. And how many weeks ago did you leave?**

**631:**

**Oh, probably like, eight weeks ago at this point.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Eight weeks ago?**

**631:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**631:**

**And nine.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Great. So, if you don't mind, could you tell me a little bit about your childhood? Like, did you move a lot? How many siblings did you have? Are your parents still together? Just basic stuff like that.**

**631:**

**Yeah. So, we moved once and we just literally moved down I-95. Grew up in Northern Virginia. I am the oldest of six siblings. I've got-**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Wow.**

**631:**

**Yeah. Three younger sisters, two younger brothers, and there's two sets of twins in there. Um, my parents are still together. I mean, growing up, I was, uh, my dad was in the Navy. Did pretty much his whole career at the Navy Yard in DC. Um, grew up in, uh, Roman Catholic household. So, my mom was a stay at home mom for most of it. Once my youngest brothers were born she wasn't a nurse before that in the PICU, but then, you know, five kids all six and under, she kinda stayed home with us.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Oh, yeah. I get that. Totally. Okay. Um, if you had to describe your personality in three traits, what would you say?**

**631:**

**Uh, humorous, um, hard working, and, third trait, um, light hearted.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**631:**

**Not taking anything too seriously.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**631:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Great. And then, what have you done in the last five years prior to this? So, like, high school, college, working, you know, what?**

**631:**

**Yeah, so I graduated college and then I was working a sales desk job after that.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay, so what college did you go to?**

**631:**

**Greensboro College.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**In North Carolina?**

**631:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. And what, did you play any sports or anything?**

**631:**

**Yep. I played football and lacrosse. Played football for two years, lacrosse for all four years.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Wow. Okay.**

**631:**

**Yep.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**And, um, so you played, so you went to high s, you were in high school and then you went to college and then you were a salesman, you said?**

**631:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yep. I did IT staffing and services. So, I started as a recruiter and then I moved into the account management side. I worked with various, you know, like fortune 500 and local companies, uh, in Greensboro North Carolina and further, like, IT staffing needs.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. Interesting. Okay. And then, if you think about all the time that's been up to now, um, do you have anything, any incidences in your life that you think were, like, really shaping, like, crucible events or things that really affected you and changed the way you thought?**

**631:**

**Um, when my brothers graduated bootcamp I was sitting in the stands there and I was literally like, that's what I wanna be a part of. So, I started this whole journey towards getting to where I'm at now.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. So, that definitely had an impact on you it sounds like?**

**631:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. Awesome. So, what was in your background that led you to join the Navy. You said your dad was in, and then your brothers. Would, would that, were they the twins?**

**631:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**And they graduated from, uh, Navy bootcamp?**

**631:**

**Yep. Yeah, they graduated from Navy bootcamp in 2018.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**So, what'd you do? Just go to your job and say, "I quit." Or.**

**631:**

**Well, I was probably about 300 pounds at the time, so I had some work to do. So, I had to lose a ton of weight, get in shape, and like, I was looking at jobs in the Navy. My dad did his career as an officer so it always, like, pushed officer before. Um, but I was looking at the officer jobs 'cause I was like, what do I wanna do? And, uh, none of them appealed to me, so I started looking at the enlisted jobs, looked at Corpsman, looked at SARC, and I was like, um, kinda always grew up when I was really young wanted to be a SEAL.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**631:**

**And those dreams kinda faded out, um, and then I was like, I'm just gonna go for it.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Good for you.**

**631:**

**Yep.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. Um, what keeps you motivated on a daily basis?**

**631:**

**Um, I mean just gotta keep moving forward. Um, I mean, I still wanna stay in the Navy, so I wanna serve my country. Also got a wife so I can't just, you know, give up on everything and go be a homeless bum, so.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**631:**

**I gotta pr- you know, I gotta provide for her and then still feel like I gotta set a good example for my younger brothers and sisters even though most of them are doing pretty well.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Well, good for you. Okay. Uh, can you describe your experience at BUD/S? Like, what would you say happened?**

**631:**

**Um, I would say overall, I mean, it was probably the toughest thing I had to do. And then the running, I wasn't a very good runner, so the running was probably the hardest thing for me.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**But even as a lacrosse player? I mean-**

**631:**

**Well, I mean, I got out of shape. So I graduated college in 2014.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Oh, okay.**

**631:**

**I'm 29.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**631:**

**Yeah. So, got, got way out of shape. I didn't run for like four years 'cause I was like, I hated running to begin with so I was like, I don't have to run anymore and then I just blew up, got real heavy, and then lost the weight and, um, yeah, just was never really a good runner. So, that was rough for me. But, um, but overall it was, it was a positive experience.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**631:**

**It was tough. But it was like, you can push through a lot of things if you really want to.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**631:**

**But yeah, it was, I failed the first four mile, and I failed two of the four miles at bow. And then running with the boats on heads was really, it was just a huge shock. It was way harder than I thought it would be and-**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**631:**

**... couldn't really keep up, so I was like, I'm gonna get performance dropped, might as well not risk injury and just go bite the bullet now.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. That's fair enough. Um, was there any time where you had to make a difficult decision during training at BUD/S and what went through your mind during that time and can you give me an example?**

**631:**

**Um, I mean, making the decision to quit was-**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Oh, so that was-**

**631:**

**Yeah. That was difficult.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**631:**

**It was, 'cause I mean, I finished the day, and I f, I failed the four mile and I was like, they're only gonna get harder 'cause we're gonna be more tired. They'll probably give us worse beach to run on and if they make it longer just play with us, I'll, I'm barely passing the perfect four miles as it was, and failed that one. And I was like, this is gonna take a level of effort that I may or may not even have and running under boats is also like, that's just gonna take every single ounce so. It was like, I've quit my job for this. I put a ton of effort into getting to this point. You know? A lot of people, made a lot of changes that affected like, my wife, a lot of other people for this, so it was like, do I really wanna do this? Why am I doing this? And I think I convinced myself that this wasn't really something I wanted to do, wanted to be a part of. But I still wanna, you know, serve my country so I can still find a meaningful career doing other things. And that's kinda what-**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Yeah. For sure. Yeah.**

**631:**

**... what went through my mind.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**No. Thank you. Is there anything that you would have done differently coming in to BUD/S?**

**631:**

**Would have ran more. Would have done longer runs. And, I think my thing was I was so worried about being able to get a contract in the first place, that I prepared more for the mile and a half on the PST than I did for the four mile, you know, runs in BUD/S and six miles under the boat, that type of stuff.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). That makes sense. Okay. So, a lot of people that I interviewed who have graduated, tried one time and then they left.**

**631:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Went in the fleet for a year or two and then came back. I know you're pushing the age. Would you ever consider coming back?**

**631:**

**Yeah. I wanna try.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Yeah. Okay. Well good for you. Now you know a little bit more about it. Okay. And then what practices do you have, do you use to push through any challenges you have? Like, physical, mental, spiritual. Did you use anything while you were at BUD/S?**

**631:**

**Yep. I struggled. So, we had to do the underwater swims.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**631:**

**And those were really tough for me. I had to, took me all three tries for that. But it was, um, just focusing, like, you're in control, and like, these training scenar-ar-scenarios it's like, it's not real world, like, you're not gonna die.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Right.**

**631:**

**You feel like your life's in danger and you like just gotta remind myself, calm down, focus on, you know, the swim. Focus, you know, on the bottom of the pool. Don't focus on the fact that, you know, you can't breathe, that you're running out of air. Um, sometimes I would say a prayer. Sometimes it get a little dark and I'd be like, look, if you don't make it to that wall, your wife's gonna die. Like, things like that and so. And I made it.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Good for you. Okay. Um, what class were you in?**

**631:**

**3-5-1.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**3-5-1. Okay.**

**631:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**And so we're writing these articles for people who might be interested in going to BUD/S. Um, is there anything I didn't ask you, or I should have asked you, that you would have wanted to know before you came?**

**631:**

**Um, a lot of the stuff that I read, it talked about doing a lot of events like once a week. You have that boat on your head every day, all day. You're not necessarily doing land portage, running like a, doing a six mile run with it on your head, but you got it on your head all the time. And that thing, that, that sucks a lot more than you think it would.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**631:**

**But yeah, that was the biggest thing.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**But you played lacrosse, right?**

**631:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**I think that's a pretty rough sport.**

**631:**

**Yeah. It's, it's physical, but it's, you're not carrying, like a 200 pound boat on your head-**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Yeah.**

**631:**

**... while you're doing it.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. Interesting. Okay. Is there anything else that you think I should have asked you?**

**631:**

**Um, not that I can think of.**

**Dr Deirdre Dixon:**

**Okay. Thank you. I'll stop these.**