**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Boskov**

**Date: 1/30/2022**

**Participant #: 644**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Dixon

Participant (Code in black): #644

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Can you give me your number, please?**

**644:**

**644.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**And are you okay with my recording it?**

**644:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Great. So we're gonna just start off with some basic questions, like what phase did you leave?**

**644:**

**It was First Phase.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**And how many weeks ago was that?**

**644:**

**Um, I think it was like two and a half months ago.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Two and a half months ago? Okay.**

**644:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Great. Um, so can you tell me a minute, uh, take a minute and tell me a little bit about your childhood, like how many kids were in your family, are your parents still together, did you move around a lot? I know you said you did, but-**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**... if we could get it on the recorder?**

**644:**

**Okay. Um, so I did move around a lot because my dad was in the Navy. He was stationed there. He was stationed in Hawaii for 17 years where he met my mom, and then his... He had his son and my mom had her two children when they got married and then they had the last three, so there was five, or six kids in the family and I'm the youngest.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**And, um, they are still together. But, yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Is your mom Hawaiian?**

**644:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Oh, okay. So you're really Hawaiian.**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**That's pretty cool. Yeah. That's something not everyone can say.**

**644:**

**(laughs)**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. And then if you had your, to describe your personality in three traits, what would you say?**

**644:**

**[inaudible 00:01:21]. Um, I don't know. I guess I'd just say like hardworking, um, I'd like to say determined and then, um, I don't know. Just like fun.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**That, that's great. And what did you do in the last five years prior to BUD/S?**

**644:**

**I was just in school.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So high school, college?**

**644:**

**It was just high school.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So you went straight from high school and then you enlisted and then you went in the Navy?**

**644:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Uh, for SEALs?**

**644:**

**I ori- uh, I enlisted in, when I was 17 and then I just joined after I graduated.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Awesome. Um, so were there any experiences in your life up to BUD/S that you wou- that you would say had a big impact on you or that were life changing?**

**644:**

**Not really.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Or life altering? Okay. That's fine. Um, well, so what was your background that led you to decide to join the Navy? I know your dad was in the Navy, but-**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**... anything else?**

**644:**

**Um, not really. I mean, I just like always thought of being a SEAL and like ha- that being like a really cool job and being able to help people and all that.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Was your dad a SEAL?**

**644:**

**No, he's just regular.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Um, so how did you f- even find out about the SEALs?**

**644:**

**Actually I have no clue 'cause my parents, they always told me when I was little that I just walked up to them one day and I was like, "I wanna be a SEAL." And then I started watching a bunch of movies about it and then, I don't know. I just got like really dedicated in, in trying to do that.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Thank you. Um, what about what motivates you on a daily basis, would you say?**

**644:**

**Just trying to be better.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. And can you tell me about what happened at BUD/S? Like what was your experience?**

**644:**

**It was a really good experience. Um, I was originally in class 349 in BO but then I got rolled. I got performance rolled. And then I didn't join 350 so then I went to 351-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**644:**

**... where I actually went to Phase and then I made it three days in and then I called it.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Can you tell me about that?**

**644:**

**It was just I feel like getting rolled. So, um, the PTRR thing like after you get rolled, what they put you in, it's just really complacent 'cause it was... When I was... When they had it, 'cause now it's a different thing, but now it's called a CATS. But when I was in, we only did like one evolution a day and that was it. Like we got really complacent because we had like one evolution free time and all this stuff. And, I don't know.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm.**

**644:**

**It was just like I, my mindset wasn't in it anymore once I got actually in Phase.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Do you think if it would've been different, uh, you might've stayed more focused?**

**644:**

**I think in 349 if I would've actually went with my first class, I would've made it farther just because I was like... I went from bootcamp to prep straight into BO and it would've been just like a straight-shot thing.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm.**

**644:**

**So I th- I think I would've made it a lot farther than how far I made it.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. What was your performance roll?**

**644:**

**I didn't fail any evolution but it was, um, that class was like 300 SO candidates and I was in the top 180.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**644:**

**So.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. That's, makes sense.**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. So, um, tell me about a time when you had to make a difficult decision during training at BUD/S and what went through your mind and can you give me an example?**

**644:**

**Can I say quitting is?**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah. Yeah, sure, sure.**

**644:**

**Okay. Um, that was probably the most difficult decision I ever made just based on the fact that it's the only thing I ever wanted to do and coming to the conclusion that like I can't make it any farther, just in my mind it was like, it was really hard. And I know some people made it farther with like worse injuries and all that stuff, but it was just like I don't know.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So you said, "Made it farther with worse injuries." Did you have an injury?**

**644:**

**I don't wanna like blame it on that but I couldn't like, I couldn't really walk 'cause I didn't stretch. I was told to stretch. Um, I was talking to people who were rollbacks and they said, "Just stretch. Like that's more important than your sleep right now." And I stretched the first day and then by the second day and third day I couldn't even walk anymore.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Oh, wow.**

**644:**

**So I was like crying when I was running 'cause I was in... The transits, they were just, it was in like normal pace but I couldn't really f- keep up with them.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**So it was, it was pretty sad.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Did you do any sports in high school, or?**

**644:**

**Yes. I played football-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**... in, originally in Tennessee. I started in eighth grade and then I asked my dad to move so we could go play in Texas and so we moved to Lake Travis which is a pretty good football school.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**And then, um, yeah, I played there.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**All four years.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Um, was there anything you would've done differently coming into BUD/S, knowing what you know now?**

**644:**

**Yes, a lot. I would've prepared a lot better because when I was training, everyone was like, "Stop lifting weights and get like... Do a bunch of calisthenics," and all that. But then, if I could go back now, I'd get better at running with weight, um, way more comfortable in the water, and just running in general 'cause that's all you do is just run every day.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**So.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. That's... Would you, so I've interviewed a lot of people and, um, people who have got rolled, medical dropped, all kinds of people, and what I find really interesting is the people who made it through, a lot of them got rolled or dropped medically, or just quit and decided this wasn't for them and then they go out to the fleet for a year or two and then they, then they decide to come back. Do you think you would ever consider coming back?**

**644:**

**Yes. Right now probably not 'cause I'm in like the, my phase of where I just got out so I don't wanna [crosstalk 00:07:50].**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah, you can't do it now.**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**But I'm talking about years down the road.**

**644:**

**Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative). I could definitely see myself coming back 'cause the program itself is really good and I enjoyed it.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). And you're pretty young.**

**644:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). I'm 19.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Um, so a lot of the people who are successfully make it through have been to college or had a lot of experience, so.**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**You're one of the younger people that are in the program even I think.**

**644:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So, yeah. You're... Good for you for, for that. What practices if any did you have that y- helped make you through as far as you did, like mental, physical, spiritual practices?**

**644:**

**I would just pray every day.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**644:**

**Uh, every morning I was, uh, like in Phase, the first few days I was like really motivated and, and I would just pray, just thank God for, uh, the opportunity that he gave me, even on Wednesday, the day that I quit. I was feeling like really good that day and all that. But I would just pray.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So you quit on Monday of the first week?**

**644:**

**It was Wednesday.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Wednes- uh, sorry.**

**644:**

**Yeah, Wednesday night.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Wednesday of the first week? Wednesday night? And what like went through your mind? Like...**

**644:**

**I don't know. On the grinder, um, we were having proctor time with our instructor and he was just talking to us and then, I don't know. He was like, "If you don't feel prepared," and all this stuff, like, "just come back in two years." Like, "Be a man. Have some self-awareness." And then it kinda just hit me that I was like, "I'm not ready right now."**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**644:**

**I'm not mature enough. I'm not physically prepared and... I mean, obviously I was physically, physically prepared but I didn't feel like I was mature enough. I felt like I was pretty, like, kinda selfish going through, just based on the fact that, um-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**So that's an interesting word. You're like the third person that s- said, "I was being selfish." And I don't really... Can you explain that any more? 'Cause I don't really, I don't really get what you mean.**

**644:**

**Yeah. Um, so a big thing like going in is abandon self, embrace team and I never really, um... That never like stuck with me until that day, just because like going through it, I would always look for how I can have an advantage and like how I can get more sleep and all this stuff without caring about every, everyone else and like how much sleep they get and all this stuff. So, um, yeah. It was just like I didn't... I cared more about me than the entire class which is not a good thing.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Thank you. I appreciate your shedding some light on that. Um, how do you think this experience changed you as a person?**

**644:**

**I think that just going through, like not even making it, but just going through just proves that I can do more things than I thought I couldn't and I'm definitely gonna use like some of the lessons I learned in, for the rest of my life.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Can you give me one or two of those lessons?**

**644:**

**Just like the em- abandon self, embrace team thing.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**Like don't, you don't come first. The team come first and then, and then you worry about your teammates and then you.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**I haven't heard that. Thank you. Um, so w- what events did you struggle with?**

**644:**

**Um, m- mostly the runs just 'cause I wasn't a very good runner coming in.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**And I, yeah, I basically just struggled with the runs. The swims were all right-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**... after I got my technique down and I don't know. The, a lot of overhead stuff is pretty bad, too, like the logs overhead and all that.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**'Cause I got weak shoulders.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). And then do you think your class liked you?**

**644:**

**I'd say so.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay.**

**644:**

**I mean, I don't really know anyone who didn't.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Okay. Uh, and then what was different do you think about those guys who made it?**

**644:**

**I think their why was a lot stronger.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Oh, okay.**

**644:**

**Yeah. That was one thing about me-**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**That's super interesting. Yeah.**

**644:**

**Um, going through, 'cause I always knew like what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a SEAL and all this stuff, but why? 'Cause that was one thing I always struggled with was, "Why do I wanna be a SEAL?" And I know that those guys, they definitely just had stronger whys than me.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**That is very prophetic. Thank you for saying that. That's very interesting. We'll definitely dive into that. That's important. Uh, and then the last thing I have is what should we have... What should I have asked you that I didn't ask that you think would be important for someone coming into the program knowing? Like what would you wish you would've known a year ago or two years ago, or?**

**644:**

**Um, I don't know. I just wish I like knew what to actually plan for instead. Like what to prepare for.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**You mean physically, mentally?**

**644:**

**Physically, mostly. Just because like coming in, the PSTs, that's like nothing compared to what you actually do.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Ah.**

**644:**

**Like the pool swimming, obviously it's like a controlled environment so you don't get like injured and all this stuff but the stroke is different, and all this stuff. So it's not really like correlating, you know what I'm saying?**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Yeah, so you wish you would've known you have to run seven miles with-**

**644:**

**Yeah.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**... a 35 pound rock or whatever it is and you have to swim.**

**644:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Like what do you actually do every day? Is that what [crosstalk 00:13:34]?**

**644:**

**Not like, just like a, like a gist of it 'cause obviously the whole thing is like a shock factor. So you can know what you do but you can't really prepare for it, 'cause obviously you can get better at running but then once you add on the beatings and then the no sleep and eating a little bit, it gets a lot harder.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**644:**

**So like the normal person... Like when I quit, I was telling my friends about like surf torture and all this stuff, how like that got a lot of people, but then they were like, "Oh, it's just like a ice bath." So if you don't go through, you won't know what to do. Or you won't know how to prepare 'cause someone could tell you all this stuff, but I feel like you have to experience it first.**

**Dr. Dixon:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. Well, thank you. So is there anything else you wanna say, or? This has been super helpful. I really appreciate your willingness to share with us. Let me stop this.**