**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Goldman**

**Date: 1/24/2022**

**Participant #: 604**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Miles

Participant (Code in black): #604

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Why don't you start by telling me what your number is?**

**604:**

**Number 604.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay, perfect, 604. Okay. So, um, first of all, what- in what phase did you leave BUD/S? Or ...**

**604:**

**Hell Week.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**In Hell... During Hell Week?**

**604:**

**Yes, ma'am.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay, and, um, how- so long ago was that?**

**604:**

**Uh, November 1st.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, so you've been here a while?**

**604:**

**Yes, ma'am.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**A couple months or something?**

**604:**

**Yes, ma'am.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Um, okay, so tell me a little bit about your childhood, like, your family, your bir- you know, how many kids are in your family-**

**604:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**... and all that stuff.**

**604:**

**Um, so I'm the oldest, there's two kids, I've got a brother, he is like, 18 months younger than me.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**Um, grew up in a military family, my dad was career Coast Guard.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, wow.**

**604:**

**Um, so I was born in Maine, don't remember that.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Wow, I'm from Maine.**

**604:**

**Um, okay. But I grew up in... I was born in Ellsworth, um...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, wow.**

**604:**

**... but then I grew up in, uh, Southwest Florida for the early part of my childhood, and then my dad got transferred to Coast Guard headquarters, um, in Washington, DC, so I grew up, for all my formative years, in Fairfax, Virginia.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, okay.**

**604:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**And then after high school, what'd you do then?**

**604:**

**After high school, I went to Florida State University, um, got a bachelor's in commercial entrepreneurship, minored in leadership and, uh, U.S intelligence studies, um, went through SEAL Officer Assessment and Selection, so as in 2020, during COVID. Um, so-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**So you were an ROTC in college? No?**

**604:**

**No, I just went to college as a civilian, and then, um, if I had got picked... I went through the whole SOAS program, and then if I got selected from that, I would have went to Officer Candidate School, and then reported out here as an officer, um, went through that selection, didn't get picked for OCS that year, so...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**... rather than reapply, I decided to enlist, and now I'm here.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay, so you... So at the end of... So as... W- would it have been an option to like, become a civilian, or- or you had to either... What were your options, I guess? For SOAS, I don't- um, I don't know that.**

**604:**

**Uh, okay. Uh, SOAS is like, how the- the SEAL... Uh, it's SEAL Officer Assessment and Selection.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**So you can become a SEAL officer one of three ways, OCS, which is Officer Candidate School, if you're a civilian, um, ROTC, or graduate from the Naval Academy. So-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**... as a civilian, I was applying to go to Officer Candidate School to become a naval officer and then come out here to go through SEAL training.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**But it's just a little bit of a different pipeline for how they select the SEAL officers, so...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay, and so now, what will you do?**

**604:**

**Um, now, since my plan didn't really work out, um, obviously, and I've kind of had to readjust what I wanna do, um, but I'm hoping to go EOD.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay, so you'll go back in the fleet? Is that the way it works or no?**

**604:**

**No, I'm supposed to take a PST, um, which is like, a physical screening test on Thursday.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**And then, um, somewhere, probably next week or something, meet with the EOD chief to get re-rated and then I'll be going through, if everything works out, EOD selection.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**EOD selection is quite similar for SEALS, is my understanding, right?**

**604:**

**That's my understanding as well.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**You still do a lot of cool- cool [crosstalk] stuff.**

**604:**

**Right.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**But not at all, there's something different about it, but... Okay, so, um, you'v- family f- of four, right? Two kids, two... And did you grow up with both parents...**

**604:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**... in the house and all that stuff? Okay.**

**604:**

**Yep.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**And then, um... So this question, everyone loves this one, um, so if you had to describe your personality into some traits, what would you say? You- I mean, you know, like, there's all kinds of personality-**

**604:**

**Yeah, um...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**... traits.**

**604:**

**... I'd say I'm very like, go- goal-oriented, um, I think I'm someone who has like, a strong work ethic.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh-huh.**

**604:**

**Um, I think I set like, high standards and stuff for myself. In high school, I had a lawn care business.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**(laughs).**

**604:**

**Um, so that's kind of why that led me on the path to- to go to college for entrepreneurship and stuff. Um, and I just liked hav- I like having my own business, 'cause it kind of allows me to do what I wanna do, and kind of having my own business at such a young age made me realize like, what I can accomplish through that.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah.**

**604:**

**I got my pilot's license when I was 17.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Wow.**

**604:**

**And I paid for all that with-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**With your lawn mowing-**

**604:**

**With my lawn mowing business.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Wow, that's- that's quite a thing.**

**604:**

**Yeah, so then I went to college for entrepreneurship, continued that, started a- another... Like, a moving service in college, um, 'cause we had to st- start a business for that program that I was in. Uh, but with all that in mind, I always knew that I was applying to be a SEAL, that's what I... That was like, my dream job.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, wow.**

**604:**

**Um, so I- that's why I did minors in leadership and- uh, and U.S intelligence studies, 'cause I wanted to be as qualified as I could to get selected out of SOAS.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Right, right. Um, okay, so in the last five years prior to coming to BUD/S, um, what do you think helped you the most, [inaudible] the most, that kind of thing? Like, preparing to come here?**

**604:**

**Um, I had a good group of friends at Florida State that had similar ambitions, um, one ended up coming through BUD/S as well, um, but- but we were all like, a g- a- a workout group, we would work out and train together in college.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**604:**

**Um, so that helped being around like, the right people through my college years, and college allowed me another four years to really prepare to come through this pipeline of like, preparing physically, and just maturing mentally, and stuff. And then I- i suffered a couple injuries in college, um, just like, freak accidents, couple surgeries that w- were setbacks in my whole training. Um, just, you know, the whole idea of overcoming setbacks and stuff-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh-huh.**

**604:**

**... and continuing on to the goal.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah, that really helps you, doesn't it?**

**604:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Great, yeah. Pretty good. And so do you think... How do you... How did these experiences that you had, how do you think they affected you here? Impacted your training here?**

**604:**

**Um, I think there were just always experiences to like, come back to and reflect on, um, like, no matter how hard it was in the moment, I never like, even thought about quitting and stuff, I kept going until I was physically broken, and I couldn't keep going anymore with my boat crew and Hell Week.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh-huh. With your boat crew and Hell Week, is that what you said?**

**604:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Um, so what happened that caused you to- to stop at BUD/S?**

**604:**

**Um, I was just pretty banged up. Um, I had... I ended up... When I got out, I had stress fractures and stuff, a pretty high grade ankle sprain and all that-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh-huh.**

**604:**

**... so that really affected my running. Um, and then just- just overall, beat up, like, abrasions and stuff everywhere, uh- uh, some pretty deep like, lacerations and stuff. Um, but that just made it like, kind of physically hard to continue, and then just the dynamic of like, our boat crew, um, it was just kind of a luck of the draw, I guess, like, who the leadership in your class is gonna be...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Ah.**

**604:**

**... and for our particular class like, um, to be quite honest, like, we could have had a lot better leadership, I don't think that there was much, um, camaraderie or- or like, that team aspect that I thought I would experience here.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Right.**

**604:**

**I didn't- not see that.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**What class were you in?**

**604:**

**351.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Um, was that the same class as Aldridge was in?**

**604:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay, your description is almost identical.**

**604:**

**We're all 351, so you'll probably hear...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, oh, okay, all of you are? Okay. Um, so what about your background led you to want to join the Navy?**

**604:**

**Um, growing up, um, a military family, I just knew I wanted to serve.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah.**

**604:**

**Um, so... And then I got my pilot's license n- in the civilian world, and I- I thought maybe I'd wanna fly, um, but then I- I s- I guess I kind of... In my early teenage years, I had kind of already made up that I wanted to be a SEAL, um, but I still wanted to get my pilot's license, just 'cause that was something that I always wanted to do, so I made sure that I did whatever I could to do that. But as far as like, going into to- to- [crosstalk].**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**But what- what- what- made you d- I mean, you said in your teenage years, you knew already then you wanted to be a SEAL, what made you know that?**

**604:**

**I wanted to serve at what I viewed as like, the highest level, um...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**604:**

**... special operations, where I can make like, the most impact.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**604:**

**So just that whole aspect of it, and then being around like, a group of like-minded guys, and having that strong like, brotherhood bond...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah.**

**604:**

**... while getting to do the stuff that, you know, I wanna do to contribute to our country's national security.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah, for sure. Okay, and then what motivates you now? Like, on a daily basis, what makes you kind of get up, and get going, and do your thing/**

**604:**

**Um, just the- the whole... Like, having this new goal of getting to go into EOD 'cause they're still special operations, and so I'm just kind of readjusting my sights to... For my experience hereat BUD/S, um, like, I tried getting picked up officer, that didn't work out, I came through the enlisted pipeline, and I guess just from my personal experience, like, what I saw with... And I don't know if it's the nature of... Like, the culture of the teams now and stuff, but this whole, um... Just like, h- how- who they were selecting and stuff, um...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**604:**

**... just not what I thought it would be, so I'm kind of maybe a little bit turned off from- [crosstalk].**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Who they were selecting i- in BUD/S, you mean, or i- in SOAS, or in where?**

**604:**

**Yeah, just, uh, from- from my experience in BUD/S, like, who kind of got pushed out...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Ah.**

**604:**

**... uh, that were... In my opinion, there were good guys over the guys that were favored.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh, that's an interesting perspective.**

**604:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Um, so then tell me about your experience then at BUD/S, that's kind of what you're talking about, so tell me a little more about that, what, you know...**

**604:**

**Um, yeah, I was just, uh, a little disappointed, and like I said, like, who- um, who was making it through and- and who kind of got... I don't wanna say force to quit, 'cause at the end of the day, it's always your decision if you're gonna leave-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah.**

**604:**

**... or not.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh-huh.**

**604:**

**But just the- the culture that I saw was not really something I... When I saw who was like, making it through and- and who was kind of being favored as, uh, doing well and stuff, it wasn't necessarily the best teammate type people, it was just, uh... It was pretty cu- a pretty cutthroat environment.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh.**

**604:**

**So there wasn't really that aspect of brotherhood or t- or, uh, team camaraderie in BUD/S, from my experience.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, wow. That's interesting. Yeah, for sure. Um, so when you were in BUD/S, did you have to, I guess related to that, make any difficult decisions that, you know, you- you kind of mold over in your head and tried to figure out what the right decision was morally, or ethically, or an- anything, I guess?**

**604:**

**Um, yeah, a little bit. I mean, like, this theme of like, talking to people or pulling... Like, kind of happened to me, like, telling... M- certain members of my boat crew pulled me aside during Hell Week...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh-huh.**

**604:**

**... um, and- and basically told me like, that I should quit.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Huh.**

**604:**

**Um, so it's kind of like... At that point of training, I was pretty surprised of that, 'cause I... It's kind of expected in my mind that once you make it to Hell Week, like, you deserve to be there, everyone's physically tough enough to be there, it's just kind of luck of the draw who's banged up more than other people.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Right.**

**604:**

**Um, so just kind of cutthroat, you know, if you're... 'cause I heard- I heard stories in the past, and I had buddies that went through, and you can boil it down to the only reason they're in the SEAL teams now is because their boat crew came together during Hell Week and maybe slowed down for them to make sure that they made it through as a team, rather than just-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**... rather than saying, you know, "Oh, you're pretty injured right now, um, get out of here."**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Wow, and is that what happened to you?**

**604:**

**Pretty much.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**It's 'cause you had so many, "You're beat up," and...**

**604:**

**I was just pretty beat up at that point, and- and it just luck of the draw, who was in my boat crew, and their personalities, and stuff.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**And then are those people still here?**

**604:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Hm, that's- that's- it's just an interesting perspective to me. Um, so then, um, is there anything that you would have done differently in BUD/S i- if you would go back? Would you have changed anything?**

**604:**

**Um, I would say if I.. If my... If I would have changed, it would, uh... I'm trying to think of how to put this like, if I wanted to be successful in this pipeline, I could have been more cutthroat like other guys, and...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Mm-hmm (affirmative).**

**604:**

**... but that's just not my personality, and that's not... That wasn't my understanding of the community going in. I was here to be a teammate for everyone.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Right.**

**604:**

**Um, like, I had some of my friends who were injured, and, you know, you just help them out, 'cause that's like, what you do, make sure that- that you make it through together. Um...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**For sure.**

**604:**

**I just... That was my mentality going in, but... So having the experience that I had, no, I don't think I would have done anything different, even if it still met the same outcome or I didn't- didn't make it through the pipeline. But if I had to be someone like that to make it through the pipeline, um, then at the end of the day, I just don't wanna be part of a community that- that does that.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Right, right. Yeah, for sure. That's just crazy. Um, so let's see, um, would you consider coming back? I- I feel like I know the answer, but I'm gonna ask you, would you consider-**

**604:**

**(laughs).**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**... coming back at the- [crosstalk].**

**604:**

**Yeah, at this point in time, no.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Uh-huh.**

**604:**

**Not with the culture that I saw.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**Um, maybe later on down the line, if we get into like, a big, like, war situation, and they need guys, and then I would consider coming back. But where we're at right now, probably not.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**And you're happy with your decision to do the EOD thing, or?**

**604:**

**I am, I'm looking forward to getting into that community, 'cause from what I understand and what I've heard, it's still a pretty tight-knit community of people that care about each other, and you have-**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Right.**

**604:**

**... like, you still have that brotherhood and team- team bond.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah, that's critical, for sure. Okay, and then when you were in BUD/S, I mean, or now even too, do you have any- anything in particular that you do to kind of get your head space straight? You know, like, they say, um, physical, mental, spiritual, kind of help you get through challenges?**

**604:**

**Um, yeah, we had a lot of mental toughness preparation and stuff throughout, um, the different parts of training here, like, prep, and we'd have different talks and stuff with, uh, retired SEALs who would offer words of advice.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay.**

**604:**

**Um, so they offered some pretty good like, mental toughness techniques like, um, just remove yourself from the situation, the way you kind of frame your thoughts and all that, and never let a negative thought complete itself in your head.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Hm.**

**604:**

**Um, 'cause you saw that all the time, like, where maybe guys just got overwhelmed with what was going on, or they feared like, what was coming next, so they would just quit because they... It was like, uncertainty, I guess.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah, or if you just think about all the crap you have to do in six months, you would just be like, "Oh, my God, I'm quitting right now."**

**604:**

**Right.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**If you just take it one thing at a time, I guess. And then, um, how do you think this whole experience has changed you as a person?**

**604:**

**Um, I definitely pushed myself, um, I learned that I can go a lot longer...**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Yeah.**

**604:**

**... and accomplish stuff that I never thought that was possible on such little sleep and just being in such poor like, uh, physical condition, or such like, you know, physical mental duress, just all that. I think I'm just a tougher person now, mentally and physically.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Oh, yeah.**

**604:**

**Um, so I'm excited to go into the EOD pipeline knowing that I have this experience to reflect on when things might be challenging in that pipeline.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Right, right. Yeah, I'm sure it's no cakewalk either, right?**

**604:**

**Right.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**I mean, it will be... Yeah, for sure. Okay, and so, um, just to make sure I got this right, um, you- you graduated from college?**

**604:**

**Correct.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Otherwise, you were [inaudible] gonna go to SOAS, and then you stopped with SOAS, and then you could either come into the- into this pipeline or do something else, I suppose, right? And you chose to come here?**

**604:**

**Yes.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay. All right, so I think that's all the questions I have.**

**604:**

**Okay.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Um, then the- the final question is, do you- do you have anything that we should be asking that we're not? Like, you know, in your experience, or some piece that helps make, not make, you know, whatever? You provided some great insights already.**

**604:**

**Yeah, I don't think so. I think.. No, I don't think so.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Okay, okay. So that's it, we're done.**

**604:**

**All right.**

**Dr. Patti Miles:**

**Painless enough.**