**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Kalafut**

**Date: 1/27/2020**

**Participant #: 635**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Luning

Participant (Code in black): #635

Dr. Luning:

So this is Celeste Raver Luning. It is January 5th, 2022, and I'm with participant number 635. And just so you know, we'll use... that will be the only number that's tracked on this recording.

635:

Okay.

Dr. Luning:

So, um, first question is, what was your last BUD/S class?

635:

Last BUD/S class? Uh, I was in [SWCC 00:00:19] class 120.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

And, uh, [inaudible 00:00:23].

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, and then were you in one before that, or was that-

635:

That was it.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

That was the only one I was in.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Um, so, uh, is... I don't know SWCC as well. What... Is it phased like BUD/S?

635:

Yeah, it's kinda similar, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Uh, I didn't get into BCS, which is like first phase-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... first phase equivalent of, um, SWCC.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

So I DOR'd BOW.

Dr. Luning:

Okay

635:

Um, but, yeah. It's... I think it's three phases as well.

Dr. Luning:

Okay, okay.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, and how many weeks ago was that?

635:

Um, that was like... That was... It was like December 10th or 12th-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

... or something like that.

Dr. Luning:

So not that-

635:

Yeah, not-

Dr. Luning:

... that long?

635:

Not too long ago.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Do you know how long you're hanging out here in [PHEDIX 00:01:13]?

635:

I have no idea.

Dr. Luning:

Not sure?

635:

Nope.

Dr. Luning:

Um, so, uh, tell me a little bit about your childhood, like what... where'd you grow up? Do you have siblings?

635:

So, I was born in Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Um, I have three siblings. Uh, two of my brothers were my full brothers, and then I had one half-brother-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

... that was 17 years older than me.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. A lot older.

635:

A lot older, right. So, uh, no, I had two that... One's two years older and one's five years older, so.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Um, and, um, yeah. I lived there for, um, eight years. Moved to Texas during the recession.

Dr. Luning:

Okay, yep.

635:

And, uh, grew up, uh, in like Austin, Round Rock. Uh, moved to Houston as a teenager, uh, for my dad's job, and graduated high school. Um, went to a commercial diving school.

Dr. Luning:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

635:

Graduated that, and then, uh, wanted to come do this.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Great. So, um, any sports?

635:

I played Lacrosse in high school-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

... for one season.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. And when did you move to Texas? In 2008.

635:

2008.

Dr. Luning:

[crosstalk 00:02:31] Makes sense.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Vegas was pretty, uh, hit pretty rough.

635:

Oh, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Uh.

635:

It was horrible (laughs).

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. I used to, um, before I became an academic, uh, lived here, ran all these swim schools up and down here, and we did a pool in Vegas and tried to open it right about 2008 (laughs).

635:

Right, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

And decided not to do that. So, uh, know that area very well in that time. Um, how about... How would you describe your personality? Three traits of your personality.

635:

Um, I'd say I'm pretty like quiet.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

You know, reserved. Um, hard-working and open to new experiences, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Why do you say open to new experiences?

635:

Um, I mean that's just one thing I always kind of have, have done for myself. I think it's like important to do that, to leave yourself open to, to doing things that, you know, are uncomfortable or new or that you wouldn't think you would do.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

That kinda thing.

Dr. Luning:

Um, if you, and you talked a little bit about it, but if you talk about the last five years of your life, kinda talk through what you were doing, where you were?

635:

Last five years?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, I was in high school in 2017 through 2019.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Uh, I did like a online school so I could work. Um, so I graduated kinda early. I graduated at 17. After that, um, I just kinda worked for a little bit after high school, and then I went to a commercial diving school in Houston for seven and a half months.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Um, graduated that. Uh, and then pretty much right after that I enlisted in the Navy, uh, started working out for this.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, for, I don't know, five months maybe.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

And, and then shipped to bootcamp-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

... in July of 2021.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Is, um, SWCC like BUD/S where they're, they've kind of, and I know that it's all changed recently, but like you're doing a special thing at bootcamp, um, or is, are you in bootcamp with everybody else?

635:

So we were in bootcamp with everybody else.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

They used to have 800 divisions, which was like this special warfare-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Okay. Yep.

635:

... divisions.

Dr. Luning:

Yep.

635:

But they, they got rid of that.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

But I don't know why.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

But we were with the, the... everybody else.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. But that... Getting rid of the 800 divisions, that's like recent, right? That was-

635:

I think so, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Uh, that's my understanding, because-

635:

Because I remember before I shipped there they were like, "You might be in an 800, you might not be in an 800."

Dr. Luning:

Got it. Okay.

635:

So, I don't know why it changed.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Um, anything in your life you'd say like is kinda of life-shaping, crucible type of experiences, good or bad?

635:

Um, man. I don't know. I mean, it's just kind of like a coalition of everything.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

You know what I mean? I can't think of one big experience that, that really like changed everything. Um, but, I mean, I guess like my dad would... Like he wasn't gone necessarily-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... but like, you know, for few years, like he'd have to drive from Austin to Houston every week on like Monday morning.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

And then come back on Friday evening. And so, um, that was when... And he did that for several years, you know?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

And he like slept on the cough and shit so we could live in like a nice house-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... and stuff, so. I think that was always one thing that I kind of, you know, realized. It was like, okay, you know, that's the reality, so.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Now, were you the oldest out of your-

635:

Youngest.

Dr. Luning:

Youngest. Okay. So, two older brother-... Two close older brothers and then one-

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

... much older brother?

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Um, what about what, um, made you... Talk to me a little bit about commercial diving. What made you want to do that?

635:

Commercial diving? Um, I thought it would be just a super interesting job.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Like I never really had any interest in going to college.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Uh, like for a while I just was thinking like I'm gonna be like an accountant and, you know, do that route and kinda just have a, like a normal whatever life.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

And then I was like, you know, might as well live while I can live, have an interesting job.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Like do something that's cool, that I think is cool. Um, so that's why I wanted to do that. And I always loved the water. You know? I always was interested in diving and, you know, uh, as far as like skilled went with like you know how you're growing up and you find out what you're good at and what you're not good at? Like mechanics was always something I was decent at, so I was like, all right, underwater, you know, construction.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

[crosstalk 00:07:20]

Dr. Luning:

Is it... Is that what you do with commercial diving? You do like on the oil... What... I mean, what do you do with commercial diving?

635:

Yeah. So it's, I mean, there's a whole bunch of things you can do.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, underwater construction.

Dr. Luning:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

635:

Is what most of it is.

Dr. Luning:

Got it.

635:

Shallow water, kind of like sub 100 FSW.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

So if you're gonna stay like shallower than 100-

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

... feet of seawater. But you could do, um, saturation diving, which is like really deep.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Where you're down there for like a month at a time.

Dr. Luning:

Huh.

635:

Yeah. So it's pretty interesting. I mean, it's like, it's like being in space or something like that.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. I th-... I didn't know you did that.

635:

I did not do that personally.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

But you could do that, for sure.

Dr. Luning:

Huh.

635:

Um, but it's mostly like shallow water or construction.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

That kind of stuff.

Dr. Luning:

Interesting. Um, how about any of those experiences impact your training for kind of prepping to come to SWCC?

635:

Um, yeah. It's just like, um, not getting flustered.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Like not panicking.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

You know? Because that's, that's the first thing they told us in dive school was, you know, divers don't panic. They opened the class with that line.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, so, because you really can't... I mean, while it is all kind of like strange and, and, uh, nerve-wracking in a way, kinda like this, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

(Laughs)

635:

You still have to perform. It doesn't really matter if you're nervous or not, so I guess that helped.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, what motivates... Or actually what, why did you decide to join the Navy?

635:

Um, I, I kind of always wanted to try this-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Program out specifically, um, just to see like can I do it, can I not do it, whatever. But, um, I think it was just kinda like one of those things where I got done with diving, and diving, the first few years of diving is kinda, you're like a tinder and you're just kinda like, um, work like doing like stuff topside, um.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

And like you could dive for a while, you know what I mean? So I was like, you know what? Diving is always gonna be there. I got the cert. It's a lifelong cert.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

If I get out of the Navy I can just go back to diving. Like if I hate the Navy I'll just serve my time and go back.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, but, I mean, uh, you know, I've, uh, I've always wanted to do something like this, so I figured I'd just give it a try now while I'm still young and, you know?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Makes sense. Anybody in your family in the Navy or military at all?

635:

No. Nobody. I think the last person in the military for my family was in like the '60s or something like that.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, what motivates you on a daily basis?

635:

On a daily basis?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, just thinking about the future. If I don't work now, I won't have anything.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

You know? You gotta start young to get what you want, like, you know, when... I don't want to be working like a desk job at 60.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

You know? It's just not worth it.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

I'd rather just work hard now to do nothing later.

Dr. Luning:

(Laughs)

635:

(Laughs) I guess.

Dr. Luning:

Understood. Understood. What about, uh, if you were to describe your experience at SWCC, what was that like? I know you were in BOW.

635:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Um, it was good. It was really good.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

It was nice. I mean, ever-, like everybody else in the class was like very motivated, too.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Which is super nice to be around people like that. Um, I enjoyed it for the most part. I mean, it was uncomfortable.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Like, it's just n-, it just is. But I, I thought it was really interesting. Um, I mean, for me it's just like I wasn't able to like k-keep up with the standard, as far as like times-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... literally go. So I was just kinda like, you know, I don't know that I wanted to stay and kinda waste the class time a little bit-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... because I'm not keeping up with the class. But, um, for me, like I enjoyed the whole experience.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

I thought it was pretty neat.

Dr. Luning:

Uh. Um, so tell me about kind of a, if you're willing, a difficult decision you made when you were going through the SWCC training, um.

635:

A difficult decision? Um, I think leaving was a difficult, was probably the most difficult decision, but-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... like going through, um, I don't know that there... Like you don't really make decisions (laughs), I feel like.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

It's just kinda like they tell you what to do and you do it to the best of your ability. Uh, it's not... There's... I wouldn't say there's a whole lot of decision-making, at least for my part. Maybe like, yeah.

Dr. Luning:

So when you say you don't really make decisions, uh, talk to me a little bit about that. Like what do you think when you say that?

635:

Well, for me, it's like you just kinda show up, right?

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... to the [inaudible 00:12:08] and you do your best.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

At the [inaudible 00:12:10]. It's not like a lot of like, okay, I'm gonna make a decision here-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... to show up or not. Like there is no kinda decision. Like we all want to be there, you know? You're gonna do your best. It's just like the only decision I feel like I really made in the pipeline was leaving the pipeline.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

So it's like there's active thinking, like okay how could I do this like smarter so that I don't, like whatever, like... But, I wouldn't say that there was like big decisions that I made at least.

Dr. Luning:

If you don't mind, will you tell me a little bit about what made you decide to leave?

635:

Yeah. Uh, so, I think the reason I left was just because like, like how I wasn't... I wasn't meeting the standard.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

And then towards the end there I got, I got hurt.

Dr. Luning:

Okay.

635:

Um, I fell off the O-course.

Dr. Luning:

Yep.

635:

Um, and I hurt my, my knee a little bit. I was LLD for like a week.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, and I tried to come back the next week, uh, and I was just like, you know, this is not gonna work out-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... I don't think. I c-, I think I could have got med rolled to the next class, but, I mean, I just was... I was just... didn't feel like I should.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

I guess. I don't know.

Dr. Luning:

W-was, um, do you know why you didn't feel like you should?

635:

Uh, I just felt like coming for a few weeks, honestly. I mean-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... because like even before I got hurt I was, I was struggling, like I said, to, to meet like the [crosstalk 00:13:41]-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... times and stuff like that.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

I just feel like I, I should have prepared as a civilian--

Dr. Luning:

Got it.

635:

... for like a lot longer.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Because I didn't realize the gravity of the like... I mean, I did, but I didn't.

Dr. Luning:

Yep.

635:

You can't do what they're doing.

Dr. Luning:

You're not in it.

635:

Right.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah (laughs).

635:

And so, uh, and it all just came so fast, too. Like bootcamp is so short, and then you just come straight in here and you're just like, "Holy shit," but, um, yeah. I just felt like I was kinda wasting the class' time, and I didn't want to do that.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

So.

Dr. Luning:

Makes sense. Um, is there anything you would have done differently? I mean, we talked a little bit about preparation.

635:

Yeah. Um, anything I would have done differently? I don't know. I mean, not really.

Dr. Luning:

No?

635:

Besides just preparing a lot longer. Um, but, as far as like being like in the class and stuff, I mean, maybe just being a little bit more active or trying to like seek a leadership position or something like that.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

If... I don't know how it works with SWCC, if it's the same with BUD/S, um, if you were to try to come back, is that something you'd be interested in or?

635:

I've thought about it. I mean, maybe. I, I'll, I'll probably have to think about it a little, a little bit longer.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Uh, honestly, I don't know if it's for me necessarily.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Because like getting there, you know what I mean?

Dr. Luning:

Yep. You kind of saw a little bit.

635:

I got a little bit of it. It's just kinda like I don't know if that's like something that I want that bad.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Because you need to want it like more than you need to want anything, and I don't know if that's the case, because like, I like, I enjoyed it. It was a cool experience, but like I don't know that I would... Like SWCC, it seems like a really cool job, but I don't know that I want the job so bad that I'm willing to do that for like I don't even know how long, five months, eight months or something like that.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

I don't know if I... I'd have to think about it.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Really, if I want it, I'd have to really, really, really want to come back.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. That makes sense.

635:

Yeah.

Dr. Luning:

Um, any practices, physically, mental, spiritual, that you kinda do to push through challenges?

635:

Um, I think, you know, I mean, I've, I'll meditate from time to time.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Yeah. But most of the time just try to think about being somewhere else, I guess.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. When you do that, is it like (laughs) actively like, "Okay, I'm gonna put m y mind somewhere else," or does it happen naturally for you?

635:

I think it just happens naturally.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

It's not like I'm... Because it's kinda hard to do that while you're like running or something like that.

Dr. Luning:

(Laughs) yeah.

635:

Because it's just like, you're just thinking about running, but, I mean, I'll just kinda think about something before it-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... so that I'm not like, you know? Because I know it's gonna hurt and whatever, but if you keep telling yourself that, then it's just like you're gonna psyche yourself out, so I think you just think about something else, and then when it's time to do it you just do it and that's it, you know?

Dr. Luning:

Makes sense. How'd this experience change you as a person, if at all?

635:

Um, I think it definitely made me more detail oriented, because that's like a, a huge, you know, every, every detail you get wrong you pay for it, I guess, so you become more detail oriented naturally I would, I would think. Um, maybe like they, I mean, they, they had some pretty interesting philosophies that I will never forget.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

Um, but like, like they would say shit like, "Fight fear with aggression," and stuff like that. I mean, I think that's definitely something that, you know, you take things like that with you-

Dr. Luning:

Yeah.

635:

... into life further, but, um, change me as a person? I don't know. Maybe, I mean, I probably gained a little confidence from it.

Dr. Luning:

Yeah. Anything, um, I, I didn't ask that you think is worth sharing?

635:

Um, not, not at the moment.

Dr. Luning:

Okay. Great. I'm gonna turn off the-