**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Taylor**

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**Participant #: 650**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Patti

Participant (Code in black): #650

Okay. So what is your number for the study

Number is 650.

Okay, great. Okay. So tell me just a little bit about how you grew up, like your family set up.

So I grew up with, um, in a divorced household. My parents divorced when I was in, uh, fourth grade and, uh, My dad was an alcoholic and I live mainly with my mom.

Um, and I have a little brother and an older sister, um, grew up, uh, having a good education. And I went to a nice school in Philadelphia or just outside of Philadelphia. And, uh, yeah, both my parents remarried when I was in middle school. And I gained a lot of stepbrothers and step family through that.

And did your stepfather move in with you then in middle school, but not his kids, I guess not his, not as kids.

They would come and visit. They mostly lived. Um, they were older, so I forget, but they, they would come over and stay, but it wasn't their main house. Um, yeah, I think that was middle school. That was probably 2000.

Yep. Yeah. Okay. So, and then did you play any sports in high school?

Oh, I played, yeah, throughout growing up.

I always, I played a sport for every season. Um, and then some more, but I played, uh, lacrosse was my main sport, um, in high school and that's eventually what I got recruited to play in college. So I played in college and, uh, um, also I played two years professionally. Yeah, I forgot to mention. Sorry. Forgot to mention that.

When did you play that?

So I played for the Annapolis bay Hawks in 20… 2013, and then went out to Denver, was picked up by them for, uh, the Denver Outlaws for 2014, 2015.

So that was between high school and college. That was after college. So after, um, my one year playing in grad. Uh, I, uh, was finishing up my master's. It's not, it's more of like a professional beer league, um, than anything else. It's not something you can make a living off of doing, but… Uh, because the sport's not that big, but yeah

For timeline purposes, what year did you graduate? High school, college, graduate school?

I graduated high school in 2012. Um, I took a gap year after my freshman year of college at UVA, um, and finished undergrad in 2017 and graduate school in 2019.

And you played professional lacrosse and what year?

In, uh, 20… 2018 season and 2019.

Okay. So you could do that while you were, um,

Yeah, my book that year in Denver, I wasn't contributing.That was, uh, that, that was, uh, I wasn't in shape to play anymore.

Oh, okay. Because you were busy with school.

I was busy with school and partying. Oh yeah. That's in reality.

Okay. And so then tell me a little bit about the training that you do. To build up to going to buds.

Right.

So we know that you came into buds after 2019. So then what was the training that you did like yourself in shape to come here to?

All right. So that started, I guess, uh, after grad school, I worked for a couple of different jobs. Um, I went on a long road trip and on that road trip, um, I made the goal of, uh, so 83 day road trip. I made the goal of. Going and starting training in Annapolis, Maryland with a group down there.

Uh, and that started in, uh, 2020, the fall of 2020. Um, so I was training if you can count that 83 days. Uh that's when I started training. So maybe about a year and a half worth of getting ready to come to buds.

Okay.

Yeah. And then getting here and getting, yeah. Going to bootcamp in may of, uh, 2021. Yeah.

Okay. So you, did you go to bootcamp and then come here or did you go to bootcamp and then do that other training thing up there? And then come here?

I went to bootcamp. So straight from bootcamp, I came here. So I did, I trained prior to going to bootcamp and May, 2020.

Right.

But they have like, uh, I don't know, maybe they call it orientation or something.They used to do it up there, but then I guess it moved it down here. They, so we spend time in Chicago. So I spent after bootcamp, we trained as a group, like military training in Chicago, and then came here from there.

Okay. And then we went to BO for four weeks and started the phase here. Okay. And then at what point, um, did you stop?

Uh, but I stopped buds and hell hell week. The fourth week, first day, um, early November, right?

Yeah.

To November I wrote down here one or two November.

Okay. And, um, what was the problem? What caused you to stop?

But I, uh, I got, I had something called SIPE swimmers, induced, pulmonary edema, and, uh, my which started in the second week of phase.

So that. Uh, I guess this the sixth week overall, if you count though, and then, um, the first phase of buds and then, uh, it progressed, um, on and off, but it was the worst and how weak and my lungs just got full, filled up with blood more. And my oxygen level got to, uh, at least when I went, when I got to a little hospital there, it was 81.

Um, So, yeah, and I couldn't, I could no longer like, hold up my weight with my boat crew and, uh, um, decided to quit.

Okay. Probably a smart decision. Sounds like your blood oxygen was 81. That's quite low since it's supposed to be like 97 or 98.

Yeah.

So, okay. So what is it about your background that, um, led you to join the Navy?

I wanted it to be, I played lacrosse. So I played team sports. I wanted to be a part of the best team that I possibly could. The idea of, um, service was always had been in my head since I was younger. Um, I wanted to be a Marine when I was in high school and I talked to a recruiter, but, uh, that co going to college was a better decision at the time.

And, uh, and, uh, Yeah. So I got back to the idea, that idea when I had some time to think about what I want to do with my life a little bit later on, you know, that being a Navy seal was something you might be interested in.

Like, did you know somebody?

Oh, I taught, so I talked to, uh, some guys my age who were close to the training pro current training group process pipeline.

Um, I talked to people who are in the teams now. And then I talked to men who were either retired or later on in their career, um, of being a navy seal. And they all seemed like guys, I wanted something that they had. And, uh, and the more I had those conversations, um, I knew it was the best of the best that I wanted to work with.

Um, Those conversations, just cemented that like idea. And then, um, yeah. Then once that ideas stuck hold, that was all go to.

And, um, what do you have this athletic challenges that are, that are buds, you know, there's the swimming, there's the obstacle courses or running or whatever. What do you think was the most challenging for you?

Um, the most challenge. Uh, probably running, uh, I dunno, it all felt fine until I had long issues. Um, the most challenging was probably running with a boat on my head and it just, uh, it felt the most uncomfortable. So.

Physically prepared to do all the other things that you have to do.

Sure. Yeah. There was nothing that, like, I didn't feel like it was impossible and you could do all the obstacle course flipping over.

Well, that was no problem for you.

Yeah, I felt good. I had practiced. So it, um, it, at least for the underwater stuff. So the things that I was going to feel uncomfortable about, I worked on prior to like doing them, um,

Yeah. And how would you say, were you a good swimmer coming into buds or was that something?

Yeah, I had, I had to work on it. Um, my, yeah, I didn't know what a combat side stroke was. And, uh, so I like, yeah, I had to ask and start learning and learned about drown proofing and how to stay afloat and hold my breath and tie knots and all that, all that stuff. It definitely took work, but, uh, yeah, I didn't show up and just.

Yeah, you weren't like a college swimmer mark Spitz.

Right.

So then, okay, so now moving on to more like cognitive stuff, what motivates you like on a day to day basis? What motivated you while you were here? That kind of thing?

Um, what motivates me on a day to day basis? I want to, my goal for a mission for this is to be a part of the best team that I possibly can be on the, with the.

Um, and, uh, why I want that. I want to have it pretty. I want to have a strong family life. Um, and, uh, you know, and at the end of it, I want to be able to be the best version of myself by being the best version, giving my self to others in the best way that I can. And, uh, um, Th the medium by w what I chose to do that was by being a seal, so that goal in the background, um, even though that the goal of being a seal is instilled there, the mission to be, you know, best version of myself, or be on the best team hasn't changed.

So that's, uh, helped me be a better friend to the guys who are here or. To start pushing toward my next job. Um, and, uh, you know, having faith in that, like if I do, if I bring that version of myself today, that it can, uh, you know, that tomorrow will figure itself out.

Right, right, right, right. Yeah. Yeah. No, that's, that's great.I mean, the motivation, you know, is, is very clear that you don't wanna, you know, be a good person to lead a good life and have a nice family. Pretty simple, right. The American dream.

Right.

So that we all want to be happy. And, um, okay. So then, um, I think you've probably touched on this, but like, what was the most difficult decision that you had to make it buds quitting?

Yeah. Yeah. Making a decision to stop. Right. Um, and, uh,

Yeah. And tell me a little bit about how you came upon that decision. We talked about it before, and I know the answer, but for the, for the record

Uh, I knew that I couldn't help my boat crew anymore. Um, I had fallen out a couple of times and, uh, I passed out individually.

I, we did a ruck run and I was in last place. And this was leading into more like group activity. So I, it was pretty clear that I wasn't going to be able to hold up my end of the bargain, um, for my boat crew. And, uh, uh, so yeah, that decision to like, just not hurt anybody else was, was clear. Um, I wouldn't have cared if it kept being individual stuff. Like I could have just honored that.

Yep.

Again, like you're holding your whole group back, holding the group back. So I didn't get, that was a pretty good to you that like made you feel like you should stop or, or no, no, not once they were, they were ready to keep running. Um, even though that I fell out twice before and uh, they said, I remember as, as I was turning, I looked at them and I. I just shook my head and I said, I can't help you guys anymore. And they said, what are you doing? What are you doing? Um, but I just turned around then, yeah, the cadre was ready, was ready for me. I was getting chirped at, from them, from the instructors, like, when's it going to be? You're pretty messed up. Um, it was clear that I was messed up, uh, but, uh, But it was, yeah, it was pretty easy decision.

Yeah.

And probably one that I wouldn't change because I can't change it. One that I wouldn't change.

Yeah. When you're bleeding like that and you have blood in your lungs, I'm not sure you all the willpower in the world is

yeah, my legs weren't working. Right. It was this very strange, super strange sensation.

Like, uh, just every, you know, things that. Fine before were just weren't working. So my legs, my legs. Yeah. Well, yeah, but, but as you explained it before, when all the blood goes inside your core and you just can't use your arms and legs, they don't work.

Right.

Because they don't have the right connection with your brain.And there is less oxygen going everywhere, not just your brain, but to your muscles. So, uh, yeah, it doesn't get. No. I mean, I don't even know how you get past that unless you just came in the summer when the water's warmer waters never really warmed the Pacific.

Yeah.

That could have been, yeah. There's less SIPE than the summer, but then there's, there's a trade off then there's like something called gauge.

So your, uh, there's always something, right? There's that other thing I heard about to the B V something where. Just as bad.

Right. Okay. So, um, let's see, we did that one. Um, would you consider coming back to buds?

Uh, sure. I think I would, but it depends on my next job. If it's a job where the Navy puts in time intimate, it'd be, uh, like do a technical role and they expect me to stay in that job.

Um, and I can make a career out of it than I was. And I, and I can, if I like the people, you know, then also then also, right.

Otherwise you'll put in a packet to come back.

Otherwise I put, yeah. Otherwise if it's a job, if I'm chipping paint, then I'll come back.

Okay. I remember that, that term. Um, so then another question is, would you have done anything differently in buds, but you've kind of gotten to that, that you, you decided to quit, but you, you really didn't have a choice.

Yeah, I, I I'm like you have done a little bit differently. Maybe that could have caused it. I didn't know. Well, maybe this is, uh,

I don't know if I should say this, but there, there are guys who take like P performance enhancing drugs that, uh, that I never is a world I never knew about. Um, and I talked to my dad about it, my dad and my dad said. Eh, just get it all on that. If you come, you can come back. And, uh, and I, I don't know if it would've made a difference, but maybe I would explore that.

I'm not sure it's technically not the right thing to do. So I, I wouldn't, but I I've thought about that. Uh, but no, I w I wouldn't change a thing about how I treated myself and how I, uh, how I did things.

Right. A little bit out of your control in many ways.

I mean, yeah, maybe.

Following the rules, it appeared to be out of your control, so.

Okay. And then, um, did you have any mental, physical, spiritual practices that you did to kind of help you get through the difficulty or difficult moments or get you motivated to get out of bed and get out there to go in the grinder or whatever?

Um, the morning was a hard time to get through, but he's like getting up out of bed.

And, uh, I mentioned before music would help. Music is pretty powerful, like metal, uh, something that's kind of in line with like getting angry and using that and like funneling some energy that's uh, because it's cause your, it hurts getting sometimes getting up. Um, but, and then also I've found, uh, actually I didn't mention this before, but.

I would sleep in a different room that was unoccupied once it got later on. And, and, uh, so I'd have my own space and, uh, and I would bring up my, uh, uniform so I would sleep on my own and then wake up, um, on my own as it got later on. And that just sort of helped me just, uh, get at least feel like I had somewhere.

That was my own for short period. Um, And then, and then also, uh, but then when we were all together going through something shitty together, uh, yeah, just putting myself around guys who were in this innocent, near the same spot, uh, who had sight or something. Um, I'd usually rely on looking at, I don't know, looking at somebody else, reminding myself that I'm not going through this alone at all.

Yeah.

That was my encouragement. We're all in this together.

Yeah. Right. Okay. And then a question I forgot to ask at the top was the three traits that you would use to describe yourself.

Oh, sure. Uh, what was the one that stood out? Oh, obsessive. Yeah.

You said obsessive, obsessive empathetic, um, hardworking.

Uh, yeah, I, yeah,

I don't know if I liked the obsessive.

It's yeah, because there's obsessive because there are some, I think there, I get attached to an idea or a something that strikes me and I can't get it out until it's until I do as much as I can, like rock climbing was something that I attached onto and really got progressed.

Um, quickly and sunk a lot of time and to being the best rock climber that I could, because there were problems that were all and, uh, you know, it's something that I wasn't good at, but that I really liked. Um, so I wanted it to be better. Right. And it was a community that I liked, but, um, but then also, yeah, there's can be negative sides of obsessiveness.

So being aware of those two, like. Alcohol use runs in my abuse, runs in my family and that's something I've found with myself. Um, so yeah, that's a, that's a characteristic that I think you can find maybe a lot of other guys that do this, but definitely with me. Yeah. Well, and it's, I guess it's probably good that you are aware of it.

You know, if you weren't aware of it and then you could really get yourself into trouble, I would think, you know, so.

Okay. And then, um, what, how did this experience change you as a person? Or do you think it changed you as a person?

The, yeah, the experience has, uh, so knowing how far I can push myself, um, is helpful.

And then past where I thought I could go before ever. Uh, but it hasn't changed at the core of like who I am. I, uh, yeah, there's there there's nothing that buds has given me that I haven't, that it hasn't happened to me, um, in some way shape or form before it was just maybe a different level. And, uh, and so having gone and I think, yeah, I was lucky because of I'm a little bit older and I've had those experiences, but.

So, um, I w there's no, there's new, like input there's new information and there's more data that I can like look at with how I react to stress or like different crap. But, um, it hasn't changed who I am, right.

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And then, um, did, did your class like. I mean, did your classmates?

I think so. As far as I know.

Yeah. Okay. Yeah. And then, um, do you feel stuck now?

No. And that I, uh, I feel grateful, like, so with that gratitude, there's a, it's in pot. It's really hard to feel stuck. So I've been. Blessed to have this opportunity to like, do one of the coolest things, like be a part of a community that I looked up to, I still look up to.

And, uh, and, um, even though that like my jobs, aren't, aren't even w you know, in a perfect world, what I want isn't available right now. Right. That that's, uh, that that's that's okay. Um, and that I can still do as much as I possible. Um, To a, to be the beyond the best team. So like, I want to do EOD or I want to go, um, be a corpsman and a SARC.

Um, so these other cool jobs that the Navy provides and, uh, I'll do as much as I can to get those. But even if I don't like, you know, um, I'm, I'm grateful to be where I am and like, to be able to go surf with friends. And, uh, that's kind of at the core, right.

That's a cool deal. And you'll come in and I asked you, I can't remember if I asked you now or before, but would you come back?

I w I would come back if, uh, if it's not a job that's, um, that I'm, uh, able to like, make a career out of, or, you know, have some good relationships and do cool things that I want to do.

Yeah.

If it works like with the other job.

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Did I forget to ask you anything that you think I should have.

Uh, um, there's the history. There's like how I grew up. There's where disposition.

Now you had a suggestion about a question that could be asked. Was that, do you feel stuck now? I thought that's what I thought. That's what I was. Okay. I just want, wanna make sure I got that. Okay. So now let's end this before we.