**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Taylor**

**Date: 1/29/2022**

**Participant #: 651**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Celeste

Participant (Code in black): #651

So this is Celeste. It is Wednesday, January 5th, 2022. And I'm here with participant 651. And, um, so first question for you is, uh, what, uh, um, what class were you in?

351.

And was that your, your, um, only class?

Yes.

Okay. And then what phase did you leave?

Uh, I was performance dropped in BO.

Okay. Can I ask what, what you got performance drop for?

Um, a multitude of things. Um, a little convoluted, um, happened with, they can't submit a course and I needed to know of course to get in because of the grade on that, you know, to get out of that. And then during a swim, I needed one more swim to class up and my swim buddy DOR in the middle of the swim. So I got kind of.

Okay. And they don't like re re put you with somebody else.

In that case, it was, it was a little bit of a mess in that instance. I, we were already in the way back. He did, he, he essentially given up, he didn't say DOR, but he basically was just going along and taking his time and he can't abandon my priority was to stick with him for his safety and his sake.

I figured that'd be, I'd be better off than failing at swimming. No grasper here.

Makes sense. Um, how many weeks ago was that?

Um, this would've been, um, October 17th, 20th, maybe around that time. I think maybe it's the beginning of October. I could be, could be wrong, but

So tell me a little bit about your childhood, where you grew up, brothers, sisters, parents, that sort of thing.

Um, I was born in Colorado. We moved around a lot. Um, We moved from Colorado to California, uh, in the bay. And then we moved to Texas and then back to Colorado. So each time it would be around the time that I'd be getting my boots on the ground. So I would say when I got to California, it was around elementary school.

And then by the time I finished elementary school, we moved, I got to junior high in Texas. Finished junior high. And then we moved. I did high school in Colorado. Any brothers, sisters, I have one sister older, younger, younger, how much younger she's graduating high school is her. I think she's, she'll be turning 18 this month.

Okay. And then that moving, what moved you around?

Uh, just the business. My parents were in the golf business, so it's not stable and it's, you know, we, it would, it would sound a lot better than it was. And by the time we got there and still late to kind of. Um, that would kind of collapse and then they'd get another job offer and we'd go here and there.

So, and you said a golf business and they do that together.

Uh, they did my mom, uh, now they both actually gotten out of that and now we're actually doing other things stationary, so great. Um, golf business though.

What got them into that?

That's just something my dad was. They love golf growing up. My dad worked at the same golf club since like the eighties when he grew up.

So I had worked there for a while, long time, but, uh, it just, I think there's just something they both picked up. My mom ended up cause that's where they met. So then they just picked it up and then, you know, being a sales cashier and food and beverage. Uh, but they both gotten out of that at this point. So it's a messy gig.

Yeah. Yeah.

And the servicing is, it's a pain in the room. Understand.

Um, so if you had to describe your personality three traits, how would you describe it?

Um, that's tough, I guess. Do a few would be one, um, resilient in a way that I don't, you know, that doesn't toot my own horn, but that I'm kind of too dumb to just hang it out. Is genuine would be the last one.

Yeah. Okay. Um, talk to me about the last five years of your life prior to joining the Navy, what were you doing? What's that?

Um, when, when I, when I moved back to Colorado is really tough. Um, I kind of left a lot in Texas, so, um, with football and everything, that's where I learned to play football.

It's bright. I attribute that to a lot of my driven this. Um, just learning to be a man, the first kind of lessons of being a, you know, an adult and, you know, manhood. Um, but when I got here or Colorado, I should say I got kind of really discouraged and I struggled with, um, just early adolescence. I mean, you know, you used, I just struggled with, um, fitting in and I, you know, I, I tend.

I'm, it was a lot of things. I think it was, it was me kind of butting heads with my parents. Um, me kind of wanting to act out for attention sake and, um, mental I, a mental obstacles. Um, whether it be, I don't, I I've never been diagnosed per se, but I think it had maybe do with ADHD maybe. Some degree of obsessive compulsive disorder.

Um, um, just a lot of thoughts going on. It's a lot going on. I would say a lot if there were girls in the mix. Um, and just something I overcame playing like football was a mess when I got into Colorado. So it wasn't some definitely not Texas football. I had a lot of success in track. Track was always my thing.

Um, and then by the time I think I, I just, each year I got.

In terms of just my mental state and like establishing your, why was, uh, freshman year was a mess?

I wouldn't go back at all. Um, a lot of anger and then sophomore year was spent just like, you know, girlfriends and whatnot, it's mess. And then by the time I got to my senior year, I kind of was like, accepted.

Like, this is who I am. It's why I'm developing as, and I'm okay with that. Um, and then I didn't have a plan and I would always. This kind of popped into my head. One day I had a buddy who was, um, heavily involved in this community. So I was like, let's go for it. I pulled the trigger on it. And then within a year, Ready to rock and roll here.

Okay. So, so, so, um, you kind of enlisted right out of high school at a year. Okay.

Year before.

Yeah. What'd you do that for that year?

Uh, I worked, I took advantage of COVID.

Okay.

Food service industry.

Yeah. Okay. Um, you said you had a buddy that, is he a seal? Is he, uh, kind of the same problem that I had?

He actually got dropped into SQT. He was about two months from getting well. So he's been a freelance contractor for the. Uh, it's eight years.

Okay. Okay. Um, you might've talked about some, but if you think about kind of this experience in the five years leading up to coming here, anything that you say is life shaping kind of crucible type experiences?

I would say I S yeah, like with football, if it wasn't just a mess, you know, it's with the popularity contest and it wasn't, it was a matter of, um, essentially failing in its own way and not, you know, I'm not being. Uh, right. I guess, you know, being dealt a good hand and feeling like if something was owed to me, um, very much the same feelings I had here, where I was like, I felt like I was robbed.

Um, and a lot of resentment held up, but I had to overcome that and realize it's just what happens. And there's a, you know, always next year in a way it's very much still applicable here. So how about, how do your experiences kind of shape or impact your training prep to come here? So I, it was, it was funny.

I just didn't, I always thought like, you know, we'd be getting handed to it and football and I'd be like, you know, I'm doing a lot better than that guy or that guy. Um, and I just, I don't know. I, I felt like that was like, that's just what being a man was about. Just being like, like suck it up, you know, licking the wounds and just, you know, rub some dirt in it.

And that was. I, that was, I guess I was, I was raised for a little bit from, uh, from my grandfather just because I would spend summers with him and he was a Vietnam vet. So that was, you know, that different generation. Um, and they kind of bridged the gap where it's like, you know, you're going to be a man, you're going to suck it up.

And that was kind of, um, so I saw that in football and I was like, well, hell I can do that. So I, um, when I got here, um, or before, I would say, say before, when I started training, I couldn't. I got all that. I struggled in the water. I was terrified of it. Um, and it was just a matter of trial and error coming in, coming in and, uh, in and out, in and out, I would just, I struggled heavily and I'd freak out.

But, uh, I had, uh, my mentor back home, um, who was a team guy. He gave me, um, probably one of the biggest, I would say that. Moment that shaped and made me realize that it was a realistic was I was showing up. I hadn't been contracted. All I was doing was showing up. I had been enlisted. Um, so I was in the delayed enlistment program, but I hadn't had any contracts.

So at that point I was just waiting and I was, uh, showing up to the pools and getting my, you know, getting it handed to me. And it had been the fifth week of may showing up and getting pulled out. Cause I'd freak out too many times. And he told me, he was like, well, he pulled me aside and said, You're going to come out of here being one of the best candidates we've ever had considers like you've shown up for the past five weeks and you haven't quit and you still don't want to quit.

We have to physically pull you out of the pool. So he was like, remember this conversation. Don't don't think of me as just know blowing smoke, but remember this. So I did, um, I think that probably helped me out more names. Just know that someone with that stature can believe in me and see something in me.

Basically expressing like, Hey, you're what we would look for. So that was huge. I would say that's the biggest moment by far. And then I had another moment with my, uh, my friend, um, kind of in the same thing. We were doing some water exercise, um, and he gave me a timeline and I didn't want to do, and he's like, you have three seconds to do it.

And I did it and he told me, he's like, that's what I knew you were worth investing time into. So, and this is a friend that was helping you train. He was the, he was the friend. That's us also the contractor.

Um, what made you want to do seals joined the Navy in general?

I had met, um, my grandfather. He was a big influence just being, uh, you know, uh, and he was army.

He was army, uh, paratrooper in Vietnam, um, combat medic the whole, uh, so he, he had introduced me to some, uh, some seals way back when I was younger. Um, and I had always thought those were, those guys were like, you know, That's the pinnacle of being, uh, so, um, militant, he was the only one that was in the military in my family had heavy influence though.

Um, and then I ended up. Just you watch movies and then those things become the, you know, they kind of plant seeds, but, uh, I think it was just, it came down to me, um, Ida, someone asking me like what I wanted to do and they brought up the military and then the military, when I kind of tossed that idea around, I was like, well, I don't want to just do anything.

I want to do something that I have to earn. So yeah. Um, this had been something that I'd always. Like that, that would be the coolest thing. I like, I can't imagine doing that. And I was like, why not? Like, why couldn't I go and try that? So I figured it'd be a blast if it worked out. If I actually, I know, I knew I could do it something deep down told me I couldn't do it.

So yeah.

Makes sense. What motivates you on a daily basis?

Uh, I would say the possibility just coming back.

So that's your goal to try to?

Absolutely. Absolutely.

What are you doing to try to prep?

Um, I chose another rate, um, that would keep me in shape.

Great. Great. Would you choose a rescue?

Hopefully, hopefully I can secure a contract with that, but that'll keep me in shape. That'll keep me, I mean, doing a job that's still cool and righteous and I would say. Uh, give me a turned around cause I'm still young. So I'm in a good window of time where I can finish up that contract. Come back. Makes sense.

That's great. Um, describe your experience here at buds.

Um, it was different than I thought. I think, um, it was, it was much different than what I thought it would be. Um,

I had heard a lot of parts that were just very beautiful. Like I had a lot of fun with it, but I think the worst, like the thing that, all the only thing that made me that deterred me the most was just the other, the other candidates it's very cutthroat and very lonely.

Um, so talk to me about that. Cause you're 3, 5, 1, and I've heard it was, uh, that was not fun.

That was, yeah, it was a rough class. Um, contrary to what a lot of the other. People that were in my class will say, uh, I could see it. It was just like, it was very cliquey. So you had groups of friends that were all leaning on each other. Um, you know, so it ended up being like in, and they were just a very ugly to each other very little because I, um, I would just say I could be a little bit of a pushover cause I didn't, you know, I figured, Hey, we're all in it.

You know, as a team, when I treat each other with some dignity, And it ended up being, it was a very ugly place. It's a lot of,

Where was that coming from?

I think comes out of a place of a fear. I would say it's fear and being uncomfortable, but not, um, also, um, feeling like a lot of these, the people, I feel like it says a sense of self-consciousness because they feel like they have to prove something because they're in a place where it's like,

You know, it's like, it's a test of manhood and also like, uh, you know, you have the, how they're going to measure, like, you know, oh, that guy, it's like, everyone's, everyone's looking at each other and sizing each other up. Um, and I just didn't care to do that. Um, it's not worth it. And I was, you know, so I ended up just getting pushed under the rug all the time and getting, um, the little and just horrible.

And it's just like, needless. Yeah, it's always like everybody else. Everybody's always sizing each other up and saying things to make themselves feel better and I just didn't buy into it. So it made, it made it really lonely in place. And by no means, am I saying I, and I probably was part of that to some degree, but I wouldn't say to the extent that you know, that other people were, um, I just didn't really have anybody that I felt like was, you know, it's hard to care about other people and nobody cares about you.

And that was probably the worst.

Um, where do you think that was? Was that from like the bud student leadership?

Was that coming from the, it certainly came into it, trickle down. Our leadership was horrible. Um, our officers were nasty. Um, yeah, the man the message was basically like I'm, I'm on my I'm on my horse.

I don't care if you're you stay on yours or not like I'm riding in one direction, you guys can eat. You know, screw off if you get in my way kind of mentality and that's the way it was with everybody. Um, so I mean, I think that's from what I've heard, uh, towards the latter half of hell week, that's essentially what happened with which people just said, like, it don't get my way, which I mean, I'm from what I've heard from other people is like that, that, that does happen.

But I saw that it extremely prevalent in this class driven kind of by that. The officer leadership, officer leadership, and then it trickled down to, uh, a higher enlisted guys that were, um, war. Um, guys that had been in the program before, who just that thought that they valued themselves higher than other people.

And, you know, felt like it was their job to get people out of, um, a boat crew or get guys to quit. And I just, I don't buy into that kind of stuff. So.

Um, tell me about when you had to make a difficult decision, uh, during your time here and, uh, walk through what went through your mind when you had to make that decision?

I would say the second week, it really gotten to me. I just didn't know if I really wanted to stick in here and stick it out for, you know, as long as I want it to, um, you just get sick of waking up so early, you know, three in the morning to. Heinous things to, and, uh, it had been, I w I was sitting there and I'd feel kind of discouraged because I didn't feel I was, I was failing some evolutions.

Um, I'm by no means a stand out. I just, I can just kind of get by. Not that I don't try as hard as I can. I just, I'm not a, I'm not some huge athlete and I'm not, uh, I'm not, I'm not a stud by. Um, and I felt like because of that, I wasn't supposed to be there. So I was kind of getting in my own head. And then along with the, uh, discouragement from, uh, other classmates, I just didn't know if like, Hey, you know, maybe this isn't the place for me.

Um, which in retrospect is certainly nonsense. But I, you know, I, I, I was sitting, we were getting ready to do a swim when you sit there for an hour, just having the anticipation built. And I was like, I don't know if I want to do this. And I just decided, I was like, we're going to stick it out for the rest of the week and then we'll make our minds up.

And then the next day of the last evolution of the day was sort of passage and that got me so amped up and I was like, screw that. I'm ready to rock and roll. So it was really disheartening to see that, uh, by the time I'd kind of like overcome some of those demons and like, I'm so ready to do this thing that.

You know, they decided to drop the hammer on me. Yeah. I got boy, I got, uh, boarded right before we classed up. So that Friday, the Monday, the Friday before, uh, got that Monday we had, they had classed up, so.

Okay. Okay. Um, is there anything you had done differently?

I think, um, with the, with knowing what I know now, I probably, I probably would have, uh, just trained differently from alterations and how I train.

There's some things that I focused on that were important. Um, I would say, I mean, the water was important, but I think that was probably a huge part of my development, but I, I probably could have taken certain aspects of training seriously. More, more seriously. I would say, uh, I wasn't as strong as I should have been.

I could run forever and I can swim forever, but I would just get destroyed under heavy things.

Yes.

Specifically getting, getting some more up or something.

Absolutely.

I got torn apart, so I failed under like logs destroyed me. I can make it through, but that was the worst. That was the worst evolution by far.

Yeah. So makes sense. Um, we talked about this. Goal is to kind of come back. And, um, and where are you talking about kind of how you're doing that, um, practices, mental, physical, spiritual that you do to get through challenging things?

I would say getting dropped as it says, probably been the hardest thing that's ever happened. Um, it's been a very, it's been an existential crisis for me. I died, struggled with like identity who, you know, who in the world I am. I would say consulting with my, uh, my good friend, um, deciding what's important in that moment.

So whether that be, uh, just doing something for me and realizing that, you know, in this moment I am, I'm, I'm, I'm the most important person because I'm in, you know, uh, in need of something that a pick me up. So I kind of I'll do things like, okay, guilt, go get a nice dinner, go do something for yourself. Um, base or sort of like certificate and surreptitiously waiting around for, you know, I guess something good to happen.

You got to do it for yourself a little bit in that, not selfishly, but, um, and then there is a religious element to that. Um, But I think that's always in development. I think I'm too, too young to make a distinction on what I truly believe in as of right now. I mean, you grew up with you going to church and whatnot.

So, uh, but as I get older, I want to make, be able to make sure I can make my own innate, uh, conclusion. So, um, how's this experience changed you as a person, if at all, I feel like I'm way more mature. Um, as far as other 20 year olds, I can't imagine you could just go into college. Could have, I mean, I understand college right now is probably really difficult, but I can't imagine it's not to devalue what that, what other people might have gone through my age.

But, uh, I think this is bar none, probably one of the more difficult decisions you can make. You would've had a different experience. If you came in a little bit older, Yeah, I think it, it, it would, it would have changed the circumstances. Um, I would have probably have a little more wisdom than I do now. Um, I'd probably be a little stronger.

Um, I have a hard time building muscle. I can just run and swim forever. That's all it is all I really have going for me, but I can't build muscle for, for squash. How about, you talked about the logs where evolutions, you struggle with anything new, other evolutions that struggled with. I'm not, I'm not a great swimmer.

I can swim for a long time, but I swimming the water was my big struggle. So I still had elements of like, Ooh, I'm breaking out a little bit, but I was having the ocean part or like the breath holding water, just water. I'm not, I don't know. So, I mean, in Colorado, I was terrified. Just being in the open ocean.

So the first time that I actually stepped foot and, uh, open ocean was a pace, a little wild, a little bit of a flooding of just, you know, um, I love the ocean now, so I'm, I'm even trying to get better at that. Um, as I spend time here, I got to go, I go snorkeling couple of times, uh, every, every month or so.

So just to. Acquaint myself with it. Yeah. It's uh, so I was a swimmer and then I actually ran a swim school, um, multiple locations here in San Diego for 11 years. And, uh, swimming is one of the things that you have to teach your body to be very calm. I would freak out exactly. And it was just like exposure.

I think that's what's so that was what was really important to just getting in there and just like, even if I'm not doing anything, just being in the water for an hour a day, that's what it did took for me. I mean, Howard thousands of hours in the pool, just to be able to come here. I never thought in a million years I'd be able to have achieved what I did even here surprise myself.

So, uh, it, it, it takes that training. And especially when you don't start, like when you start babies, like it's developed and, and versus doing it much later, it's hard. Cause this gets in the way. Absolutely. I mean, it's. Freak out like a child. I would, I would lose my mind. But now that is, I think that just the opportunity for me to overcome that was huge.

I have so much confidence now. Like, because I thought I was like, I'm, I don't think it's possible, but I'm just going to continue doing what I'm doing. And I don't think there's any way I'll ever make it to Coronado. But if by some chance I do, it'll be because I just keep my head down and keep doing it.

I said, My big, my big motto and the motto that carries me through every day is, you know, don't quit get fired. So not to incentivize quitting or getting fired, but, uh, keep you on until someone says you can't. Yeah. And ultimately that's what ended up happening, but I'm happy. I'm contented with that. I've come to terms with the fact that maybe it wasn't, maybe it was for the best.

Cause you know, if you look at it from a perspective of everything happens for a reason. So. What about, um, we might've kind of hit on this, but did your class like you? Um, I think it would be hard to determine that, um, I think some people were just like, it's fine. Other people probably didn't like me cause, um, I tend to just try to make humor out of dark situations.

So if we're in other people would get really angry and riled up. When, you know, when you're under a boat. And I just feel like this is ridiculous and I take a step back and be like, well, what we're doing right now is ridiculous and absurd. Like I get that. We have an objective, but like maybe try to make a little bit of light and make it more enjoyable.

You know, don't just take, go at each other's throats. So that, that pissed people off. Yeah. Certainly people found that trade of mine really annoying, but other classmates or absolutely.

Um, so anything I add should have asked that I didn't ask.

Um, nothing comes to mind.

Okay, great. Great. I'm going to turn these off.