**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Kacor**

**Date: 1/26/2022**

**Participant #: 659**

Interviewer (Code in blue): Dr. Deirdre Dixon

Participant (Code in black): #659

**Interview Guide**

**Okay. Great. Uh, what's your number?**

**659**

**And do you mind if I record?**

**Yeah, that's fine.**

**Okay. Thank you. So, um, what phase did you wind up leaving the BUD/S training?**

**Uh, third phase**

**Third phase, and what, how many weeks ago was that?**

**Uh, that was over a year ago. So I, I made it to a third phase of my first go, and then, um, I got in trouble, I made some mistakes, I got dropped. Um, I was able to TAD here on base for a while and then go back into the pipeline. Because of my age, I wouldn't have been able to leave and come back. Um, so I came back into the pipeline in, uh, August, early July. It**

**And started over like from square one?**

**Yes. Um, yeah, so I started over, um, I got to Tuesday morning of Hell Week and then just, uh, I couldn't keep up with the class. I got pulled week and now I'm here.**

**Okay. I'm gonna ask you more about that, but could you take a minute and tell me a little bit about your childhood? Like, um, are your mom and dad still married? How many siblings do you have? Did you move around a lot? You know, stuff like that.**

**Uh, I only moved once when I was a kid and that was, um, like 20 minutes away. So I, I've lived in Rochester.**

**Mm-hmm**

**my whole life. Um, I'm the oldest of four. Uh, my mom is always around. My dad traveled a little bit, um, for work**

**Mm-hmm**

**but he was around pretty often as well**

**So did you play sports?**

**Uh, yeah, I played soccer was my main sport. And then I did, um, track and field, lacrosse, um, little bit of basketball, but mainly just like soccer and track.**

**What position did you play in soccer?**

**Uh, it was forward like a centerman.**

**Okay. My, my kids all played soccer, so I'm always interested in that.**

**Yeah. Yeah. I love it. It's fun.**

**Yeah. It's a great game. Did you, I don't know in Rochester, is it, what's the season for soccer? Like in Florida, we play from August to may.**

**So it was mostly, uh, uh, mostly like summer through the fall**

**mm-hmm**

**and then in the winter we just played indoor.**

**Oh, okay. Yeah, Okay, I See**

**but the winter was, it was like a lot more scaled down because there was only one like full size indoor facility and it's an hour away. Um, so from the most part, like the indoor, you know, part of it was just like staying in shape and playing some small side of the game and stuff.**

**Yeah. Keeping your foot on the ball.**

**Yeah, exactly. Stuff like that.**

**Yeah. Okay, cool. If you had to describe your personality in three traits, what would you say?**

**Uh, I guess relaxed, um, determined and, uh, fun loving.**

**Okay. Nice. So what did you do in the five years prior to BUD/S when you first started, like you went to high school, did you go to college? Did you work? Did you go straight from high school?**

**Uh, I went to college, um, finished my degree and then I worked for a year while I prepared for BUD/S.**

**So, um, where did you go to college?**

**University of Pennsylvania.**

**Okay. Wow. What did you study?**

**Uh, policy, philosophy, and economics.**

**Was that in the Wharton school or is that in a different school?**

**No, just the, the college.**

**Okay.**

**Arts and sciences.**

**Okay. Yeah. And so you graduated from there and then you worked for a year. What, what did you do then?**

**I worked at a law firm. I just was assisting a bunch of attorneys and, you know,**

**Mm-hmm. Did you like that? Or**

**I liked it. Um, the people I was working with were really cool and, uh, the work was, you know, um, stimulating, but like I wanted to do this, so**

**mm-hmm**

**I wasn't gonna stay today.**

**Okay. Um, did you think any experiences you had in those, you know, the years prior to buds, did you have any experiences that like, like changed your life or your attitude about things?**

**Nothing like specific, like, not like a single moment, but I definitely feel like growing up playing like a run, a lot of running sports helped cause you know, I like came out here and like there were so many guys who were having like stress fractures and stuff and I, that wasn't something that they had to worry about cuz I had been, you know, running around for my whole life. So**

**Mm-hmm. Okay. Um, describe your background that led you to join the Navy?**

**Um, well I wanted to, I wanted to do something like I thought was meaningful and um, you know, got me excited to feel like a purpose in my life. Um, wanted to do something that I could, I could help, help people in a way or uh, help people who are oppressed and um, you know, this community stood out to me. My, I also have like a history of, um, Navy service in my family, so okay. When it came down to it and I evaluated, you know, sort of the goals I wanted to achieve and what kind of service I could do to achieve those goals. This was the, really the best option. The only option for me,**

**I always ask cause I was army. So I always wonder what, what leads people to the Navy. But I think the SEAls are, you know, it's a pretty compelling thing. Okay. Um, so what do you think motivates you on a daily basis?**

**On a daily basis? This, I mean, I, I like having like a schedule and you know, things to do like an immediate, um, respect. So like I get up and I've always got like kind of an idea of how my day's gonna go and getting those things done makes me feel like I'm, uh, accomplishing things, but um, more broadly, like I think sort of long term and like what I want to accomplish in a week or a month or a year, and so like I also do things to reach those goals.**

**Okay, and then could you tell me a little bit about what happened at BUD/S? What, what brought you here? I mean, I know you said it a little bit, but**

**Oh yeah. Um, I just, I got in trouble a bunch of times when I was in third phase and um, you know, made some mistakes and got dropped from the program. Uh, they gave me a chance to come back and I came back and um, I don't know, I, I just couldn't keep up with the class in Hell Week. Um, I think maybe some injuries that I'd had or just like some overused stuff contributed to it, but, um, I, I wasn't able to keep up with them and I got pulled from hell week and now I'm here. So, I'm just dealing with medical stuff at this point and I'm trying to figure out what's gonna happen with my life.**

**What went through your, when they said, yeah, you could start over from zero day or whatever they call it.**

**I mean, I was, I, I was like, yeah, let's, let's go, let's do it. Cause I mean, I'd already done it at that point, and like, um, in my mind I've always just been like, like it, it's not that long, it's like three weeks, um, you know, two weeks and then Hell Week, Hell Week is just kind of a blur. So I was really just like, well, I, this is like, really what I want to do so I can just suck it up again and do it. Um, so yeah, it wasn't really, I wasn't feeling negative or I was excited**

**Mm-hmm. Okay. So tell me about it time that you had a difficulty, you had to make a difficult decision at BUD/S and what went through your mind as you made that decision. And could you give me an example?**

**Hmm. Um, man, there's a lot. Uh huh. Let me think about it. Can we, can I come back to that question? Sure, sure. Yeah.**

**Um, the next thing is, is there anything you would've done differently during BUD/S?**

**Uh, I definitely, I definitely, there was one time where, um, I got in trouble with a bunch of guys that I was rolled with when I was in third phase because like we were supposed to be attending a, these PTRR workouts, and, um, we weren't doing that. We had this one guy that was kind of like the, the older guy, like the more senior guy who was rolled. He was sort of calling the shots and he was like, okay guys, like, we're gonna, you know, we're gonna go do tasking every day for the instructors, and like, by virtue of doing tasking, we will not be able to attend those PTRR workouts, and so therefore we won't do them, and the main thing was like, the guys didn't really want to swim, and like I personally didn't care either way. I was like, well, like, cause I swim on my own, so I was like, oh, you know, we won't, we won’t all be fit, whatever. Um, but we eventually classed back up and um, two of the other guys that were rolled, one of them being the guy that was like the shot caller, um, failed the first swim, which is like an automatic board. And so then it sort of came out that like we weren't going to the, the workouts and um, you know, at the time I was like, oh, well what's the big deal, like I passed the swim, and like, I didn't even think that these workouts were important. We were still doing stuff that we were, you know, told to do every day. I was, you know, I was asking the guy who's an LPO essentially, ike what's up with the day and he'd give us a, a list of tasks, can we do 'em and go work out? But, um, in hindsight, like I definitely should have piped up more and been like, hey man, like we should be going to these workouts or we should at least ask them. It was, it kind of felt like we, we took advantage of the system or maybe some goodwill on their part of like, assuming that we were gonna do what we were supposed to do, and, um, you know, didn't really think that, like I thought it was kind of like making a mountain out of a mole hill, but like in hindsight I definitely should have, you know, been more direct and like asked about the, the workouts. Cause they did say we should be doing them.**

**Mm-hmm. And I've interviewed a lot of people, uh, successful graduates, and I think it's amazing at how many people come to BUD/S, then leave, they get medical problems or whatever, and then they go back into the fleet for a year to who, and then they come back to BUD/S. I understand, you said you're too old to do that?**

**Yeah.**

**Is that what you said?**

**Yeah.**

**Okay. But if it were available to you, would you think about doing that again?**

**No, probably not. Um, I mean, I just feel like I've, I've gotten what I need to out of this, and I also think that like with what I've seen friends that are in the job now and stuff, um, you know, I just think it'd be best if I go a different direction, you know?**

**Okay, sure.**

**Cause I don't wanna, I don't really want to, I wouldn't want to come back and do this again and then have it not work out for whatever reason, and then I'm, you know, in the Navy for another four years or so I've, you know, shot my shot twice now and like, I don't even know if I'd be allowed to come back <laugh>**

**Yeah. I don't know either. I just, it's a question that we gotta ask, so yeah. Okay. So, um, what practices…you got pretty far? So what practices, physical, mental, spiritual did you use to push through any really tough times during the training?**

**Uh, mainly just like this, we learned this one mental toughness thing. It's it's like a, he calls it like pause, breathe, think, act, but that was just something that like really stuck with me and master chief Mag taught us that. That was something that really stuck with me because there's a lot of times, especially like with the underwater stuff where there might be something that's all of a sudden like jarring and just being able to like take a second and like understand what's happening physiologically and relax and think through a problem. Like that was something I did on a, probably a daily basis.**

**And could you say those words to me again? What is it?**

**It's a Pause, breathe, think, act, I think so; he called it PBTA, but yeah, that, um, and then kind of like segmenting things or**

**Is that the same as box breathing? I heard someone else talk about that.**

**Um, I would, I mean, I would do the box breathing as like a, a preparatory thing, but like in the moment I was always doing the cause, they just try to, there are things that get thrown at you, that's like super jarring. It's like, like in second phase, when you do pool comp it's they start out the test and they turn you around a lot and take your air away, and for some people like that can, you know, cause you to freak out, like the first test happens and it's really uncomfortable, but then you do the second test and you're like, oh, well it's, you know, I can sort of relax a little bit here, and for me, like just being able to take that like split second and relax is like super helpful.**

**Okay. Thank you. Um, how do you think this experience changed you as a person?**

**Um, I mean, I don't know. I, I kind of feel like maybe like kind of the same, honestly.**

**Okay. Yeah.**

**Um, but I feel like a lot of the stuff that came in here expecting to see or wanting to see, like I got a sense of, of that, and so that's been, that's been really beneficial and great, like,**

**Okay, let's go back to the, is there a time you had to make a difficult decision and what went through your mind as you made it in? And do you have an example?**

**Yeah, um, well one of 'em was like, I, I was doing land nav and um, I was like, you had to like radio in at a certain time, to, uh, you know, say like I'm, you're going to extract. And I had to take an alternate route to the extract and it wasn't an area I was familiar with. I had like, I was like super low on time. Like I needed to pass that day and I found my fifth points. I, you know, points to pass for that day, nd um, so I b-lined it to like, where I thought the extract was. I showed up and like it was at this, I think it was called like meadow loop or something. Um, and I show up and I'm looking all around and banging a sign right there that says meadow loop. So I'm like, oh sweet, like I'm in the right spot, but like I wasn't absolutely certain. Um, and I had three minutes until I had to radio in. So I radioed in cause I like, meadow loops here. I'm here. I don't have that much time and I can't fail. So I called them and uh, I'm like, all right, I'm here. And you know, I'm waiting like no one comes to pick me up like, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes goes by. I'm like, all right, like I must be in the wrong spot somehow. So I'm kind looking around; I realized that I had lost a, a piece of gear, so I'm also looking for that. Um, uh, but like what I would've done differently is I, I would've, uh, called them and been more upfront about like, not being absolutely certain I was where I was, so that's that's it. Did I answer that question fully? Wasn't**

**Yeah, but it said meadow lake. So was it the wrong place?**

**I guess so like I was there, but I needed to proceed further down the road to the highway and I didn't**

**Pick up?**

**Yeah. So I, I didn't know that, that, like, I didn't know that that was where I was necessarily supposed to be or which way down the road I was supposed to go. Um, so yeah, I was a little disoriented and I wanted to pass. I thought like maybe they were just gonna come and grab, this is a mistake, but I should have been like more front, like, Hey, I'm, I'm at Meadow Loop, but like, I'm not exactly sure where I am, uh, checking in <laugh>**

**Did you pass that or ?**

**No, I failed for that.**

**Okay.**

**Because then they, they ended up driving around and they found me and they were like, ah, you are 400 meters away or something like,**

**Okay. Uh, what event did you struggle with the most?**

**Uh, Hell Week.**

**Okay.**

**Yeah, it was just really physically demanding. Um, I always felt like I was kind of like middle of the pack on like everything and you know, Hell Week is just like a total physical exertion, so**

**Okay. And then do you think your class liked you?**

**Yeah. Um, I do, I mean, I think that like the the demands like training put on like the students and the individuals, like it can separate between like how you would normally behave with somebody if you were like grabbing dinner or like hanging out versus like, um, being in BUD/S, especially in first phase, it create like a ton of adversity and it creates like a lot of friction amongst members of the class. Um, beyond first phase, like it gets it's different, you know, but it's still cliquey. Like it's, you know, it's still like anything, you know, any sports team. I, I I'd like compare closest to that cause like just everybody has their friends, but I didn't, I never had anybody where I was like, oh my, of God, I hate that guy, like, I know that guy hates me.**

**Yeah. So yeah, sure. No. Sure. Great. And then what do you think was different about those who made it and those who didn't, do you think?**

**Uh, I mean, I think like all the guys that make it, like, you know, they know they're gonna make it, um, and there's not really anything that's gonna stop them from making or like at least getting like going to the point where their body's gonna break down and then they can't physically make it. But, um, the guys that don't make it, I think are the dudes that have any like sort of doubt, um, whether it's like doubting themselves or doubt like doubt from someone at other people, people that aren't supporting them or whatever. Um, I also think in time it seems like guys who a little bit more like more life experience tend to do a little bit better, but**

**That’s absolutely true.**

**Yeah, but it's not to say like there's some dudes that come in that are young on just like really, you know, studs who are really mature for their age and they, they crush it usually**

**Mm-hmm, great. Okay. And then lastly, so we're trying to write these articles for people. What do you think I should have asked you that I didn't? Or what do you wish you would've known starting this whole thing?**

**Um, I don't know. Uh, like starting the survey or just starting?**

**No, no. Starting the whole BUD/S program. What do you wish you would've known?**

**Um, I think one thing that's kind of interesting to me, especially like being out of the pipeline now is like how, it seems like so many people come into this and don't necessarily have a plan B. So I, I mean, I think that like the overall commitment to the Navy kind of gets like thrown to the wayside, um, while you're in BUD/S, or in training, and um, if you know, something goes wrong and you're you quit or like in my case, you get pulled or get medically, can't continue; all of a sudden, like your life is a lot different, and I think like starting this more people should like take that into consideration.**

**So you think they should have a plan? B, are you saying that they shouldn't have a plan B or they should have a plan B?**

**I mean, I, it varies from person to person. Some people like, like I said, those guys that are gonna make it, like they probably don't have a plan B cause they're just gonna do it, but me personally, like always have a plan B.**

**Yeah.**

**Yeah.**

**That's a good idea.**

**Yeah. Um, uh, the, the, the officer that's running this, uh, entire study, he told me to tell you that I've already done this with class 340.**

**Okay.**

**Yeah. So,**

**But we didn't interview you?**

**No, I did the, uh, I did the survey with them and uh, I think I did the blood draw.**

**Okay.**

**So I did the, I did the pre-Hell Week and the post-Hell Week one.**

**Okay, Perfect. So great. I'm glad you did the survey too, cause then we'll have your complete data.**

**Yeah. It'll be interesting. See you to see what it shows**

**For sure. Thank you so much for doing this.**

**Oh yeah, Thank you. It's been cool.**