**Jack Sylvester:**

**Date: 16AUG**

**Participant #10/3049:**

**Length of the Interview: 12:45**

Interviewer (Code in Blue):

Participant (Code in black):

Um Yep and I’ll hit Record here. And then Uh Do I have your permission to Record

Of Course

Ok and can you tell me participant ID numbers and why you have two of them there?

Um the first one is 10 and second one is 3049 that’s because I got rolled out of a previous class.

Ok and when did you start your BUD/S Class? Your First BUD/S Class?

June 10th 2019.

And is this your first BUD/S experience?

Yes

Um so let’s talk about your family uh are you…do you have siblings?

I’m one of five.

Ok and can you tell me where you fall in the birth order and if its brothers and sisters?

My oldest is an older brother and then there’s me and then a younger sister, younger brother, younger sister.

Big Family?

Yeah.

These are all one set of parents..?

Yes

…No stepsisters or brothers. Were your parents married?

Yes.

Ok and uh how long have they been married?

[pause]…twenty years…

How’s your relationship with them?

Great, I’m really close with both of them.

And relationship with your siblings?

Really close with them as well.

Ok good, any life changing events that happened prior to coming to BUD/S?

Umm my senior year of High School, my best friend killed himself. Umm other than that no.

Im sorry.

Its ok.

That sounds really hard. Um do you think that factors into your experience at BUD/S? How often do you think about him?

Um I mean I definitely think about him for sure….um….it definitely keeps me going in the mindset of like I don’t wanna grow up and not be anything I wanna be a good man like he was so…I don’t know…I look up to him because he was a really great guy and so….I don’t wanna go down a rabbit hole and not be anything with my life.

So you feel this obligation to honor his legacy?

Right.

Ok….What was his name?

John

How do you think your personality contributed to your progression after BUD/S?

I think it worked out pretty well because…Im not much of a downer so it worked out.

So you have a overall positive mental…

Yes

Attitude. Ok anything else in terms of…?

I just don’t want to quit [laughs] I don’t know

Ok so you have a tenacity?

Yes. Headstrong.

Describe your background that lead you to pursue becoming part of the SEAL community. So do you have any SEALs that are family of friends?

No no. I don’t know anyone in the teams other than the instructors that are here.

Anyone in your family military at all?

My brother joined just before I did to go to the Air Force to be in the Military Police. Other than that no. We were the first two.

So what gave you the idea?

Um growing my dad had always talked about how he wished he would have joined because it would have set him up for his life for his family and so that was my idea. I wanted to join so I had a good base to start off of.

So he encouraged to join the military in general?

Right.

So why SEALs?

Um they offered it to me at MEPS and I went with it.

And you thought why not?

Pretty much yeah.

So lets some more about your childhood and how you were disciplined, so what was your parents parenting style?

I had very, very good parents, they were strict but they also let me learn. So like [pause] anytime anything happened they were like ok if you’re going to do that its going to suck. Like…that’s how it was. Um very, very good parenting.

Were you spanked when you were younger?

Yes.

And as you get older how was the discipline? Was it like take away your video games or take away your phone?

Take away phone and car and [pause]

Privileges?

Yes.

But there was also this sort of go out and make mistakes in a sort of safe environment…

Right.

..and learn from it?

Right.

Did you move around during your childhood?

No. I moved like three different house but it was all…

Same Area?

Yeah.

So you didn’t have to move schools..

No

…or friend groups?

No. Same school entire childhood.

And then in your teenage years did you do sports or activities?

Yes. I played football, ran cross country, um wrestled and played baseball.

A lot sports.

Yeah.

Any…what would you say was your dominant sport?

Wrestling for sure.

How many years?

Um 3

And then in the five years before BUD/S can you tell me what you were doing?

Going to high school and working.

What were you working?

Ummm landscaping.

Ok. Like out in the projects?

No we had our…its…called Pawn Pro Shop, its like professional built ponds like we would go to people’s backyards and build a pond swan. And I ran, we had 14 different ponds and with all sorts of different koi fish and stuff like that inside of them. And I just ran the entire yard and kept it clean and pretty.

Well…any college?

No

And then you…what was the inspiration to then enlist. Your dad said military service would be a good opportunity?

He talks about it would be a good way to start out your life, like a good base, to start off of and so I ran with it.

Ok, would you consider yourself impulsive?

No, for the most part I think things over before I do it.

Do you have any tattoos that you got on a whim?

I have one tattoo but that was because my buddy John died. That was in memory of him, so I guess that was a little bit impulsive. But that’s the only thing.

Yeah but you didn’t have some drinks and then…

No.

Speeding tickets?

No

Uh…uh…big purchases. You see a car and you want to buy it?

No

What was the most challenging component of BUD/S? So it could have been a day, an event. Could have been a theme like water or logs?

Um for me it was the pressure chamber. I just had a hard time clearing my ears.

So it was physically uncomfortable?

Yeah…physically, trying, they just wouldn’t clear. That’s what I got rolled for. Just couldn’t clear my ears.

So how was that experience of getting rolled? Was that challenging? Sort of having to realize you were going to have to redo some of the…?

I didn’t really have to redo anything and it was kind of nice, because I got a break and time to heal and then just trying to get ready to go back into it… so it worked out for me.

So that doesn’t really sound like a challenge…I mean your thing…what was really hard for you?

I just literally couldn’t clear my ears that was the only hard thing.

In the whole experience of BUD/S, that’s it?

That’s it.

Ok

Yeah, I didn’t really have a problem with anything else.

Ok, what motivates you? What gets you through hard things? When things are challenging?

[Pause] I don’t know. I just don’t want to quit. I was raised right and then like [pause] I feel like I have a good family name back home, like a lot of people know my dad, and my dad’s dad and all that. I don’t want to disrespect the name.

Ok. Do you have a practice? Like a physical, mental, or spiritual thing that you use to push through challenges? So some guys talk about prayer or mantra or like meditation or like visualization exercise? Do you do anything like that.

No

So you just show up and perform?

That’s it [both laugh] Simple dude.

What are you thinking about when you’re under the log or in the boat, you know the grind?

Just thinking about my share of the weight so nobody else does.

When you made a difficult decision during training, what went through your mind when you made that decision? Can you give me an example of a decision that you really struggled with? For example running classmates out?

Um one of the hard ones is during PREP I got close with a guy that I came out here with and I ended up having to run him out of the boat because he just wasn’t carrying his weight, he was dragging everyone else down. He was just a liability at that point. So it was rough but after 2 days of it I had enough, so I just told everyone I’m don’t and [sic] and I ran him out twice.

So whyd you make that decision?

Because I was looking around and I knew how my body felt and I knew it wasn’t just because the circumstances, this was hell week, I knew that he was dragging the boat down he was not carrying his weight he was just hurting the other guys from the boat crew.

So you did what was best for the boat crew?

Yeah and it sucked because I knew him, good dude.

Why do you think you were successful at BUD/S

Just do what the instructors say, then it won’t be as bad.

Ok what did you notice about guys that did make it?

Good group of dudes, good attitude. They know whats right and whats wrong and don’t quit. Everybody else that end up not making it, the turds, they try to get away with stuff and cheat through, nobody here does that. Good group of dudes.

Do you think this experience has changed you?

I think so. It definitely makes me appreciate more things.

Anything else that I didn’t ask that you think would be insightful for us? Trying to figure out what makes a successful candidate.

I feel like a lot of it has to do with childhood and how they were raised. Cause if you were raised in a really shitty situation…you…you…theres nothing to fall back on. And whenever I look back I have my family name that I want to live up to. Um I just want to make a good imprint on that name. I got a great family behind me if I ever need them. I don’t ever…I would never want to tell my dad, hey I failed, I didn’t make it. And so if you don’t have somebody to look back, look up to like that then I can see how it would be hard for them.

Ok great. Good stuff