**TRANSCRIBER NAME: MCVICKERS**

**Date: 13 AUG 20**

**Participant #: 123**

**Length of the Interview: 20:08**

Interviewer (Code in Blue):

Participant (Code in black):

**Interview Guide**

Is it ok if I record this interview?

Yes.

And what is your particpant ID?

123.

Ok easy questions first, when did you start BUD/S?

I think we got here June 10 of 2019.

And you were in 338?

Yeah originally.   
When did you get rolled into 339?

It was after Lifesaving in First Phase.

When that happens do you go back to the beginning of first phase?

No you jump in with the next class after Hell Week.

Well that’s good.   
Yes yes.

How many siblings do you have?

Three.

And what’s the birth order?

I’m the oldest and then I have a 25 soon to be 26 year old sister, a 16 year old brother, and an 8 year old brother.

What’s your parent situation? Two parent household?

Uh yeah, divorced at I think I was like two so separate households from then on and then … kinda bounced school districts in the middle of high school like in 10th grade I went from living with my mom my whole life to living with my dad so dealt with that whole move and then switching of the schools and then unfortunately after college I was almost done with college I moved to Philadelphia to do so and then I lost my father … so then came after college moved in with my aunt and uncle while looking for a job.

So where did you grow up?

In Pennsylvania.

And then you went to school in Philadelphia?

Yeah right outside of Philly it’s called Eastern University.

Ah I know the area.

Are you from there?

No I’m actually from Maryland but I know the area

So you grew up with your father starting midway through highschool and then you don’t have to share but can I ask why you moved in midway through high school?

Um yeah that’s fine my mom was going through another divorce and we had to move out of that house into a town house and was going through the typical teenage youth not really getting along at the moment so she kicked me out and then I moved in with him.

Ok and then your sisters are they full sisters or half?

One sister is full sister and then the 16 year old is on my mom’s side and 8 year old is on my dad’s side.

Any life changing experiences prior to BUD/S?

Um definitely my dad passing away.

Was that a surprise?

Kind of but not really … so he ended up being diagnosed with cancer, fought it, won it. Healed and then took a huge blow and it just went downhill fast. So I actually was in college, quite college and came back to try to help out with that and then after went back to college.

And how long did you take off college?

A semester.   
And then how do you think that factored into your experience here at BUD/S?

Uh I just … anytime that it got hard you just think back on those moments because that was the hardest thing I’ve ever gone through. Because you think about your dad he’s your mentor … your huge dad he’s like 6’1” 240 lbs just solid muscle, worked construction. Have him every weekend and every week during the summer. That man who can lift cinder blocks for days and then he can’t even get out of the tub. Just helping him drive places and helping him get in and out of bed that just took more of a toll than anything so anytime it got tough out here just thinking that if I was in pain how was he doing what he went through.

Tell me about your personality and how you think it contributed to going through BUD/S?

I mean the hard working aspect … I think the stubborness is number one honestly that whole factor of when people tell you to quit or don’t think you can do something the stubborn factor just outweighs everything because now I definitely will just because you don’t think I can. … Uh definitely humor you know I would say that’s a huge part of it … having a good laugh whenever shit hits the fan because they try to get you down all the time so just whenever you would find a way or find people to make one thing funny to aleviate that stress or pain that’s happening so yeah I think that’s huge that stubborness or finding humor in things.

What about your family background made you want to become a SEAL?

Always just trying to be the best in any aspect whether its growing up I played a lot of sports so trying to be the best guy out there or the competitiveness so trying to win everything so going through that and growing up hearing different options of what you want to do and you hear that they’re the best in the world it definitely peaks an interest because where better to go than to be the best of the best.

What about any military in your family or friends that were SEALs?

No it was just my one buddy who would always talk about it with me in wrestling in high school but unfortunately he didn’t end up going through with me.

So what was your parents discipline style, spanking, time out, toys taken away?

Um I would say a little bit of everything so like the wooden spoon whenever something would happen … or getting sent to your room … I guess that isn’t a punishment… but yeah it was the wooden spoon until one time they hit me with it and it broke and I laughed and I guess that was the end of that.

So we talked about your teenage years but tell me about activities you did, sports etc.

So growing up it was sports all year round. It went from baseball in the spring to wrestling in the winter and football in the fall so I didn’t even have a break and sometimes I would miss the first couple practices because that other season was still going on so it was just like day in and day out … and that wasn’t like a punishment I liked that.

Was there a sport that you liked better than the other?

Um when I was young no whatever sport I was doing was my favorite of all time but when I got older I had to give up football in high school because there wasn’t enough time and then when I got to college I had to give up wrestling just because baseball took over everything.

So you played baseball in college?

Yes.

So talk to me a little bit about the last 5 years before coming here. So you leave college then what?

So in college in my senior year … I tore my shoulder apart, had surgery on my rotator labrum and bicep tendon so that was part of the recovery. I immediately came home and got a job working at a warehouse for Amazon and while I was doing that just from playing sports growing up I was big into weight lifting so that was a big part of my regiment then so I would say it was probably about a year into working at Amazon I decided that I just wasn’t … this was not for me I was not enjoying it I didn’t like working behind a desk and if I was going to pursue this thing with the Navy you know I was already twenty-six so time was already dwindling down.

So then did you go to boot camp?

Yep so then boot camp and I had to jump through all these hoops because of my shoulder but then yeah it was bootcamp for two months then Prep for a month and then out here to start this process.

So what year did you graduate college?

2015.

Then you worked at Amazon for how long?

Up until I left so 2018 so about 3 years.

Do you consider yourself impulsive at all?

(laughing) I guess it depends on who you ask.

So for us I guess it would be any tattoos that you got on a whim.

No I mean I do have two tattoos but nothing too crazy.

Any speeding tickets or crazy purchases.

No I don’t think I have any speeding tickets. Purchases … no not really. So I guess not … not for this aspect anyways.

What do you think the most challenging component of BUD/S was?

Oo... I would say just the grind. It didn’t really matter what Phase you were in either. So like First Phase obviously you’re getting beaten down just with the physical and metnal aspect of it but then even when that day is done you know that day will end you have to go back and clean all your gear for the next day and wake up super early and you know that even though you are sore and tired you have to willingly wake up and face these instructors that you know will destroy you again. So I think it’s just that constant wake up, get destroyed, go to sleep, sore, tired, wake up, and then it’s the same thing in Second Phase with disciplinary actions so you’re still getting wet and sandy so even though you made it past all that stuff in First Phase you think it would start to get easier but it doesn’t. And now you’re diving so you still have all that stuff but now you’re exhausted from diving. And then the island obviously you’re out working every single day and even the weekends you’re still waking up super early. So I guess its just the mental grind.

So how do you get through that?

Uh practice maybe I guess it depends on growing up or how you grew up so maybe people who weren’t exposed to sports or weren’t exposed to that grinding aspect … I don’t know.

Is there anything that you did growing up that you think prepared you?

I mean I just worked my ass off every single day … and I mean I didn’t have someone there so no one made me do it so I guess just the willing to do it myself and I guess just like the I can do it myself. You know with sports the coaches make you do it but it’s that off time I think that’s where you make your money.

Did you feel like you were supported by the group here?

I think everyone is pretty much on the same page I mean you definitely have your outcasts but I don’t think those people are here anymore and I couldn’t tell you why they’re outcasts but pretty much everyone here is similar I mean we’re all meatheads in the gym and we’re all pretty stubborn when it comes to being told you’re not doing something so at first I was a little nervous about that thinking there may be too many cooks in the kitchen but I think it was the complete opposite you know because I think everyone is so willing to help everyone out because we’re all so similar minded and we all have the same goals and it’s not like I want to be here and have to compete against you it’s more like we’re all here so let’s help each other out and make each other better and see how great we can become as a team?

What about any practices physical, mental, or spiritual that helped you push through here?

Um… like religious factors?

Yeah if any at all.

I would say my number one go to whenever it got tough was dad. That was number one every single time, no doubt that was on my mind.

Was there anytime you had to make a difficult decision, moral or ethical whether it was personal or watching someone else?

Myself no but one of my good buddies did DOR during Hell Week and we met in boot camp and they just kind of stole my best friend. But we had to have a tough conversation in the middle of Hell Week during chow you know me trying to convince him to not but then his reasons why and just watch him ring the bell after and just that image and he talked about those few months during boot camp and seeing that image that just wasn’t very fun. But other than that no I don’t think that any of my decisions were that tough.

So was that a conversation that you had to have with him and say that wasn’t a good decision?

Yeah but other than that I don’t think I really had any of those tough decisions … none that I remember.

Why do you think that you were successful in completing BUD/S?

Um I guess what I said before just the stubbornness you know the grind from everything just being able to handle that and not get distressed because people are yelling or anything like that so yeah I think just the constant grind and being able to handle that.

Anything different about the people that made it compared to those that quit?

Antying different… I mean I guess all the people that DOR they all had a different personality than these guys a less humble factor. All of these guys when you talk to them … well I guess you are making them talk about themselves but when you don’t when people aren’t they usually don’t and I think that that humbleness because all of those people that DOR they were all talking about how great they are and they were talking about how they can’t wait to do this next evolution even though everyone knows that evolution sucks so I guess just a different attitude towards things.   
How has this experience changed you as a person?

Um I mean… I still think I’m still the same person that I was … I mean any mental aspect or … I don’t think that … no I don’t think that it really has changed me much I think I’m still the same person that I was in every aspect.

Anything else that you think I should have asked to help our study?

No not that I can think of.   
Ok well then thank you I’m all done with you, congratulations.

Thank you.