**TRANSCRIBER NAME: ENS Tom Evans**

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**Participant #: 264**

**Length of the Interview: 17:56**

Interviewer (Code in Blue):

Participant (Code in black):

**Interview Guide**

**“Okay, thanks. Okay so I have a series of questions. We have 15 minutes to get through as many of them as we can. So far I’ve been able to get through all of them so...umm..**

**SIO: So when did you start BUD/S?**

**Uhh it was, I reported in July, I think, and it was around August when BO started.**

**Yeah.**

**SIO: Was this your first BUD/S experience?**

**It is. Yeah. My original class was 339**

**SIO: How many siblings do you have?**

**I have two older siblings. I have an older brother and an older sister.**

**Is it brother, sister, you?**

**Brother, sister, me, yeah.**

**What was your parental situation growing up?**

**Uhh my dad was in the Navy and my mom kinda raised me, brother and sister. She runs a home business too so she works a full time job so.**

**SIO: Were your parents married?**

**Umhm.**

**SIO: What was your relationship to them?**

**Uhh it was pretty normal I guess as normal as it can be. Uhh let’s see yeah Dad a lot less than mom but yeah pretty normal relationship.**

**SIO: What if any life changing events happened in your life prior to BUD/S?**

**Uhh life changing...uhh I got accepted to the Naval Academy I guess. Went straight from high school to the Naval Academy. That was kinda a wake up call I guess. Almost like first time out of the house sorta deal.**

**SIO: So how did going to the Naval Academy umm factor in your experience at BUD/S?**

**Umm so that’s where I kinda like had to start the pipeline I guess like umm I guess like it starts your junior year at the Academy, so, and like I guess I started preparing like well I prepared before I got to the Academy I knew I wanted to do it. I knew I wanted to go be a SEAL like umm around it was, I was like 15 or 16 and then heard about the Academy, applied and then kinda like kept that goal of like being a SEAL like as I was at the Academy because I knew I could do both at the Academy.**

**SIO: How do you think your personality contributed to your progression through BUD/S?**

**Umm people tell me I’m sorta I’m, people tell me I’m kinda quiet like I don’t know like very laid back personality, umm, so I guess I don’t know I never really, I don’t get angry I guess. Yeah, I don’t really give in to my emotions I guess if that makes sense. Kinda like people say I have no emotions so probably why. Don’t really react to things.**

**Heard that before.**

**SIO: Describe your background that led you to pursue becoming part of the SEAL Community. Do you have any SEALs as family or friends or you said your dad.**

**So my grandpa and Dad were both in the military. They did, my dad did close to thirty and my grandpa did 20. They weren’t SEALs but they were in the Navy. ALways kinda knew I wanted to be in the military. I didn’t know what I could do in the civilian world. SO at a young age I knew I was going to be in the Navy. Umm then I guess through the books, through movies, I think I actually heard my grandpa one day he tells sea stories he says he told me a story about the UDTs that he interacted with on his ship. Dudes that were wearing khaki shorts on the weatherdeck or whatever, smoking cigs, just so that kinda appealed to me a little bit I heard that at a young age and my dad worked in Millington so he brought home some SEALs some SEAL friends. Didn’t really know what their job was you know it was mostly through books and movies probably.**

**SIO: SO tell me a little bit about your childhood. Were you umm, how were you disciplined?**

**Rod and lash I guess.**

**Spanking.**

**Spankings definitely umm I was kinda umm in elementary school umm I was always kinda a handful always got cause my school is corporal punishment too so umm got some paddlings at school growing up umm and then I’d get busted whenever I got home too. Yeah whenever I needed it which I did a lot so.**

**The same thing.**

**Sitting on a wooden stool to make your butt raw too.**

**Ooo.**

**It sucked.**

**SIO: Did you move around throughout your childhood and teenage years?**

**Yeah we uhh I was born in Japan uhh we moved around Little Creek in Virginia. I remember early childhood growing up in Virginia Beach uhh went back to Japan. Spent a couple years of my childhood there growing up and then went back to Arkansas, I’m from Arkansas, my family is from Arkansas so that’s where I kinda like grew up.**

**Where?**

**6:55 Uhh so Northwest River Valley so there’s a town called Scranton, Arkansas, 200 people.**

**Grew up in Fayetteville.**

**Okay yeah so I’m..**

**In Hot Springs.**

**Yeah yeah I’m like, I’m like an hour like right on the Arkansas River about half, hour and a half east of well I guess southeast of Fayetteville. You know Port Smith?**

**Yeah.**

**Yeah I’m like an hour and half east on the river.**

**Okay. Yeah my Army reserve unit was in Fort Chaffee.**

**Yeah.**

**Just outside of Port Smith.**

**Yeah Fort Chaffee is like 40 minutes away from me.**

**SIO: And then after Arkansas, where did?**

**Yeah so.**

**SIO: Did you go to the Naval Academy?**

**Yeah I went straight to the Naval Academy. I was in Arkansas fro third grade until leaving for Annapolis.**

**SIO: SO tell me about your teenage years. Did you participate in any team sports or activities with a tight knit community?**

**Uhh yes so my high is pretty, my high school I went to after public school is pretty tight knit group of guys, uhh all boys catholic school. Umm in an monastery so um I played football there umm met some lifelong friends there and it is it was pretty tight knit because everyone was \*loud crash\* we, we uh, in an all boys school everyone like kinda makes fun of, all the guys going there are kinda like us against the world type of mentality so yeah I played football in highschool.**

**SIO: What have you done in your life in the last five years prior to BUD/S?**

**Yeah I was at the Academy.**

**At the Academy. Yeah. So you’re straight from the Academy?**

**I was the first class out from the Academy.**

**SIO: Would you consider yourself impulsive?**

**Umm.**

**So they example they asked.**

**More indecisive than anything.**

**Indecisive.**

**Umm the example they give is whether, for impulsivity, is whether you have any tattoos.**

**Nope, none. No tattoos. I can’t decide I always tell my friends I could never decide what I’d want to put, that's why I haven't gotten one yet.**

**I’m almost 50 and I haven't gotten one yet.**

**SIO: What was the most challenging component of BUD/S? Think about your hardest day or event.**

**It would be… I think the hardest part was… for me personally it was the biggest thing I had to change was I love to read I, I read through high school all the way going to the Academy and not having time to do what you want. Cause I almost, I almost said the grind, the daily grind was the hardest part, but it was easy waking up everyday. You know, even though you know we were gonna get beat and go and get wet and sandy. That was still easy. It was easier waking up here than it was to go to school at the Academy so I guess like the hardest thing was just having your whole so there was just no time for, for you to do thin..do your hobbies. Yeah probably a compound answer.**

**SIO: What motivated you to push through?**

**Umm… I think...its always been a goal of mine umm.. Friends and family definitely a big part. Never could look my friends and family, I guess yeah being afraid of the shame it would bring, bring to my close friends and family if you know I gave up.**

**SIO: What practice spiritual, mental, physical etc. did you use to push through the challenges?**

**Uhh I went to church, I’m catholic, went to church every Sunday umm before every big test gate you know always prayed. Uhh I also did some meditation, Wim Hoff, Wim Hoff meditation, a little bit of that.**

**What is that?**

**Wim Hoff, uhh, just breathing techniques, uhh, I knew of him and did that all the way throughout college and then we actually got a class on Wim Hoff here so umm yeah definitely did that for my meditation.**

**SIO: So yeah, so when you made a difficult decision during training what went through your mind as you made that decision? What decisions did you struggle with?**

**Uhh**

**The example that they use is something like turning in a cheating classmate.**

**The hardest decision...I think it was mostly just based, I think this program is based on reputation and you don’t want to be known as the guy you know who constantly makes wrong decisions especially like I’m an O so like we always had to make a call like on the log or like under the boat umm. I think..hard...hard decision was trying to get with a good boat crew. Like a solid group of guys that i knew would be at the end of Hell Week. Trying to like hustle my way into their crew to like...is that...like I kinda never doubted that I could make it through, but I also kinda doubted how strong I am I guess like everything like my abilities to make it through like whether I’d be a detriment to their crew or like an asset.**

**SIO: So why do you think you were successful in completing BUD/S?**

**Uhh...honestly just...uhh like the...everything they asked me is not hard it's all doable it's just whether you want it or not. I thought the same thing like preparing at the Academy like doing screeners doing screenings at the Academy, physical screenings like I was never like the most physically fit or mentally sharp, but I think when it comes down to it I think it’s whether you want to be there more than others dudes want to be there.**

**SIO: Did you notice anything different about those who didn’t make it?**

**Umm yeah one of the, a good friend of mine dropped like second week during first phase umm he said that he didn’t, it wasn’t worth it because he’d gotten engaged and you know didn’t think it was the right place for him and I’m married too. Been married through BUD/S, throughout BUD/S and I feel like one of the things he said like all big dog SEALs all older SEALs that in passing you know, whether we were working out at the gym or like in a pool I think would always say “it’s worth it, it’s worth it” and like that was probably the biggest motivator knowing that it’s gonna be worth and the guys that aren’t here probably lost that sense that it would be worth it in the end. They’re probably going to go on and do great things.**

**I’ve been holding on to those. Last couple of questions uhh how did this experience change you as a person?**

**Uhh it kinda opens your eyes I feel like uhh this program like just me and my opinion, I feel like what this, what this program does is that it gives you basically is a lifetime, lifetime of lessons all bunched up in like six months..and.. You know part of struggling to experience mentally what happens here over the course of a lifetime and here its kinda condensed.**

**SIO: Is there anything else that I should’ve asked that helped or hurt you about BUD/S?**

**Something that hurt me like uhh...what was the question?**

**SIO: Was there anything else that I should’ve asked you about uhh that helped you or hurt you throughout the program?**

**Umm yeah no I mean you have to have a certain level of physicality, but a lot of people have the ability to pass all the physical testgates, but it’s definitely uhh...knowing...having a good sense of who you are definitely helps, whether you want it or not or whether you think it’s gonna be worth it in the end.**

**Okay, thank you.**

**Yeah sorry I went over there.**