

MiraCosta College Student Veteran Oral History Service Learning Project

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Interview Location: MiraCosta Community College Library

Acronyms:

JW: Jeremiah Wilson (interviewee)

RM: Robert Martinez (primary interviewer)

FB: Frank Bamford (secondary interviewer)

SW: Sarah Woytkiw (secondary interviewer)

RM: Hello my name is Robert Martinez. Today is April 13, 2017 and we are in the library interviewing student veteran Jeremiah Wilson for the MiraCosta College student veteran oral history service learning project. The people attending this interview are Sarah Woytkiw and Frank Bamford.

RM: Jeremiah where are you from?

JW: Moreno Valley California, born in Westminster.

RM: Have you lived there your whole life?

JW: I have moved all over, just back and forth from the IE, to Orange County, and Huntington Beach, wasn't too bad.

RM: What was your job (MOS).

JW: MOS, I was a 0331 machine gunner in the United States Marine Corps.

RM: Can you elaborate a little bit more?

JW: Happiness is belt-fed. I guess I was a grunt. I was on a vehicle mainly with the 240 golf; 50 cal's always jammed after an IED.

RM: What was the highest rank you achieved?

JW: Lance corporal, I got in a little too much trouble. I beat up a sergeant on a ship and threw rattlesnake at another. I mean I still got two good cookies out of it, they pretty much were just like bad boy. They all liked me. I always got stuff done if they needed it done or if you needed it I would find whatever you needed. I stopped a couple of Staff Sergeants from getting into trouble for losing ammo. I had quite a few connections.

RM: Do you have any siblings?

JW: Yeah, I have a brother, a blood brother he served in the Army. He got his enemy marksmanship badge. He took shrapnel into his left elbow in Baghdad. My grandfather was in the Marine Corps, moved over to the Navy to fly in Vietnam, and then after Vietnam he went back to the Marine Corps. He retired from that and went into the Air Force Reserve and the Army Reserve. Therefore, he was in every branch except the Coast Guard. I also have a stepbrother and stepsister.

RM: Is your brother older or younger?

JW: He is younger.

RM: So, did you join first?

JW: Yeah, I joined first. I think he changed his mind and he wanted to deploy after I got back and that's when he joined. I think he wanted to feel that sense of pride as well.

RM: What made you want to enlist?

JW: I always wanted to enlist ever since I was a kid. I was looking up at my grandfather's medals, pictures of Emo Jima and watching microfilm of Hiroshima. I was always brought up in a military mindset ever since I was a kid. If you asked me when I was five years old what are you going to do, my answer would have been that I was going to join the Marine Corps.

RM: So, you've always done what you wanted to do. How old were you when you enlisted?

JW: I was twenty-one, I had to wait three years because I got in trouble. I partied a little too much, caused a little too much damage, and a few other things. The judge pretty much told me to just go home and watch the movie Cool Hand Luke. I only received a two-hundred-and-thirty-dollar fine, everything else got dropped from horrible things to nothing. Then I had to wait for three years and that was it. I enlisted the day I was off probation.

RM: So, from these situations they said you couldn't join the military for three years?

JW: Yeah I was supposed to go to boot camp within two weeks. I kind of pissed that away by getting drunk in public, vandalism, and I kind of stole a car, but I returned it.

RM: Was that because you were not already enlisted?

JW: I don't know what it was. I think it was because, I was joking around with the cops and I think the judge knew I was just being a knucklehead.

RM: Why did you pick the Marines over other branches?

JW: Because my grandfather was in it, and I always just thought it was a higher pride. I mean the few the proud, that's one hell of a marketing campaign.

RM: Do you remember any of your instructors?

JW: Yeah actually, Sergeant Saputo, he was one of our green hats in boot camp. Also Don Lee and Kowalski, I can remember them plain as day. Especially Saputo, on the day there was a platoon guy walking by, and he pulled him out of formation and goes, "you like Lego's I like Lego's one day we're going to recruit a ton of Lego's and yell at them all day to get out of here". I remember that it was funny. I liked boot camp it was easy. From day twelve on I was pretty much the guide. The drill instructors were kicking my ass and everything else, but it was fun.

RM: Was one of your drill instructors from boot camp one of the officers you picked a fight with?

JW: No. One guy was just an a hole and as a matter of fact his Lieutenant came up and shook my hand afterwards. Then I kicked the crap out of him, because he was such a d-bag he knocked water out of my hand, so technically it was him assaulting me first; I was defending myself. The other guy told me I couldn't chew Tobacco and I wasn't having it.

SW: How did you get through boot camp?

JW: It was quite easy actually. There's this thing called hell Friday or Black Friday or something I can't remember. It's when a squad member from another platoon comes in and starts hazing you. They start telling you to clean and stuff like that. I told the guy to f off, I'm already twenty-one years old and I have some eighteen-year-old punk yelling at my face. So, my drill instructors went in there, I can't go into what they did to me, but they asked me why I was doing it and I told him I wanted the power. After that I was guide from that day on. I threw the guide off the top deck and

they were like what the hell. I always got in trouble for hazing the new recruits without them knowing it. Boot camp was pretty damn easy in general, there is no stress to it. You get up, you get fed, you go run, you go do push-ups, go to school, and then do it all over again.

RM: Does each branch do the same boot camp?

JW: No. It's getting softer unfortunately.

RM: How long did you serve?

JW: Only six years unfortunately. I would have stayed in if I could.

SW: You got medically separated?

JW: Yeah. I wish I could have stayed in, I love the Marine Corps it was the easiest job in the world. You get paid to go camp and shoot something and then go back. I mean you get free chow and you're living on base. If you think college is fun, go join the military.

SW: Were you in the barracks the whole time?

JW: Yes, I was in the barracks until I got married.

SW: Are you still married?

JW: No, LOL that is a whole other interview. That's like the do's and don'ts of the military.

RM: Where were you stationed throughout your service?

JW: Camp Pendleton. I was hoping to go somewhere else, but I got stuck close to home which wasn't bad. All the other Marines had a second home away from home. Matter of fact, I have a friend flying out from England in June. We are going to go out to my house and hang out. They had keys and everything else and if I was stuck on duty they could drive out to my parents and there's always beer stocked in the fridge, so it wasn't bad.

RM: Where would you have preferred to have gone, if you could have been stationed anywhere?

JW: I wouldn't want to go to Twentynine Palms that's for damn sure. I guess I wanted to go to North Carolina where my grandpa was stationed for a while. My whole family is from the south and from Virginia, I wanted to go out there, but it's just didn't happen.

RM: Where did you deploy to?

JW: I went to Ramadi, Iraq in 05, and then afterwards we went on a 30 horse MEU in 06. Then after that time I was having my 3rd shoulder surgery, and they were pretty much saying "Hey get out of here."

RM: What was your first shoulder injury?

SW: How did you get hurt?

JW: It was from lifting weights. When I got to Iraq I weighed a hundred and ninety pounds, when I left I was two hundred and forty with a 20-inch waist. All I did was go on patrol, lift weights, go on Patrol, and lift weights. It was pretty much just over-exerting my body just trying to get rid of aggression.

RM: Did you see combat?

JW: Yes.

SW: Do you have any stories that you want to share?

JW: No, I'll keep those for me and other people.

RM: How would you stay in touch with your family?

JW: When I was overseas I would call them. They had Facebook back then I think or Myspace; I've never had social media. I think I had Myspace for like three months until I got kicked off. Some church group kick me off those bastards. I would call them, I would write letters, that's about it I guess.

One of the coolest things I got from my family was an Easter basket on Easter Sunday, and in Iraq that was cool. I walked around and handed out all the candy to the kids if it wasn't melted.

RM: Was it easy to stay in contact with your family when you were deployed?

JW: Yeah, I think it was fairly easy. I mean you get to write letters, you don't have to pay for postage. I mean you could take off the back of an MRE box and write a letter and say hey how you doing. They got irritated occasionally, asking how come you haven't called us or written to us, but no news is good news. It wasn't too bad, your family becomes the people you're deployed with. You're more worried about them then you are for the people back home; you have a bigger chance of dying on the 5 freeway than in combat.

RM: What was the food like?

JW: You know a lot of people talk bad about the food. The food actually wasn't too bad except for the eggs. The eggs were just horrible. Heck there's a camper party every Friday. There was steak and lobster. I mean it wasn't bad we were fed pretty well, that's one thing that the military does; they take care of their troops as much as possible.

RM: Did you feel pressure or stress when you were out there?

JW: No, I don't think I really felt too much pressure or stress. I mean I was aggressive and really mad half the time, just because of shit that was going down.

RM: Were you more aggressive when you were trying to get the combat?

JW: No, I just had that mindset. They had to wake me up with squirt bottles to get me up for watch some nights. I would just punch them and pull them into my bed and go right back to sleep. I got in trouble out there too; I damn near beat the crap out of a Staff Sergeant out there because he was mouthing me. My aggression level just went up; I wasn't really too stressed.

RM: Didn't hold anything in I guess huh?

JW: No, I mean that's why I went to the gym all the time to relieve my stress. I mean if I was p'd off or something I'd go and lift weights and that's what I think kept my stress down. Then also you got good buddies out there smoking and joking messing with each other playing pranks; it was a lot of fun.

RM: Everyone's in the same situation?

JW: Yeah.

RM: Was there anything you did special for good luck?

JW: I carried a little teddy bear, not like a big teddy bear it's one of those vulgar bears I guess. He was flipping you off and had little weed board shorts and I always carried him in my pocket. I carried the lighter my pops gave me. Also, a receipt from the last meal we ate out here. I think it was Claim Jumper, no Outback, everybody wrote me a letter saying something, so I carried that for good luck.

RM: How did people entertain themselves?

JW: A few things I won't say. We made crazy bets. There was a guy, I don't want to name his name, well actually I just did literally his name was name. He drank dip spit. We would pull pranks on each other, we put Saran wrap on a toilet seats so it would splatter or smosh poop all over you, and we CS gas people.

RM: What's CS gas?

JW: Tear gas. We would spray people just to get up. Just stupid stuff, whatever Marines could get away with.

RM: Can you tell us a couple of your most memorable experiences?

JW: Coming back was the most memorable thing. I think it was the best feeling I have ever had just coming back and seeing my family again. Meeting my friends, I can pretty much remember every time I have met one of my best friends in the military. I could tell you where we were at and what we were doing. Those are pretty memorable because we are pretty much family, and then a bunch of drunk good nights I guess.

RM: Were you hurt on deployment?

JW: I got rattled a little bit. We got hit by an IED, I blacked out for a few seconds, woke up and came to like everything was normal, but that was about it. I don't know how long I was out, but it was probably only a few seconds.

RM: Were you alone?

JW: No, I was in a Humvee. Matter of fact, we were going down a road and we were going to send a platoon down that way but, our captain Jamie C Edge (who got shot by a sniper a couple weeks later) was like no we're taking the lead and we got hit by an IED. I don't know how we survived that one. The bomb was buried too damn deep thank goodness.

RM: Scary situation. Were you awarded any medals or citations?

JW: The Leatherneck award. I got a certificate for boot camp. I got my good cookies that's about the only good award I got. I got my combat action, nothing for valor or anything like that, just normal medals and stuff like that. I didn't get any cool medals, no brawn stars or anything.

RM: What skills did you learn in the military?

JW: I know how to push a broom well. I know how to clean. Leadership mainly, that's probably the best thing that you can take out of it is leadership. I mean as a grunt you don't get too much hands-on training.

RM: What were the benefits you got from your years in the military?

JW: I must say friends. That's one hell of a benefit, yeah know, we have a strong backing with each other, we keep in contact. Obviously, school, I got my GI bill so that's a major plus. I'm disabled too, I'd rather not be disabled, but I get free medical care and stuff like that, so I'm happy about that.

RM: Was there something you learned as a military service man that you are now pursuing?

JW: No not really. What I know I grew up with. On my fifth birthday, I got a twenty-two and a push lawn mower. I have the hard work and I learned how to shoot at a young age so, nothing that I tried to pursue when I got out.

RM: Were you a hunter?

JW: I didn't start hunting until I got on Camp Pendleton and was hanging out with a bunch of rednecks. I got fap'd (Fleet Assistance Personnel) out from land five and I was working on the range. I got in trouble a few times for getting rabbit pellets, shooting ducks and eating them. Everyone else in the chow is eating a bag of nasty and stuff like that, and here is this California boy eating rabbits.

RM: What was your first day in boot camp like?

JW: The first day wasn't bad. When I was younger, I went to naval cadets and I almost got thrown out of there for getting into a fight. My mom yelled louder than the DI's, I was more afraid of her than them. First day wasn't bad it was just like what the heck, facing the unknown. It wasn't that bad it was just shitty I guess, just the first day being stuck in a room with stinky nasty mofos.

RM: When did you get out of the military?

JW: June 10th, 2010.

RM: Did you want to get out? Were you removed for any special reason?

JW: No, I got out because of medical reasons. My body injuries wouldn't allow me to continue being a grunt and I didn't want to do anything else.

SW: Did you have any surgeries while you were in the military?

JW: I had three shoulder surgeries. I had a foot surgery. Just recently I've had one on my back from wear and tear, probably mainly from the IED blast. My seat was only a toe strap basically that I had out there for seven months.

RM: Did the surgeries help?

JW: My shoulders still hurt, I don't get much movement, can't lift weights anymore. Unfortunately, I am a road biker, but I don't wear spandex, so it's probably the only PT I get. It worked to a point but it's not one hundred percent.

RM: Have you tried anything else to help you like stretches or yoga?

JW: Oh, yeah, Stretches and yoga. Yoga's the shit. It's one hell of a work out, people make fun of it but it will rock your world. I did yoga and stuff like that. I use to be big into weight lifting, so exercise is my main key. If I can I try to go out and ride bikes as much as possible, and before I'd ride about three, four miles a day.

RM: How much do you work out during the week?

JW: Right now, I don't have any time for anything besides school.

RM: Did you immediately sign up for college or did you start working?

JW: As soon as I got out I wanted to be a diesel mechanic. I wanted to work with my hands. I just thought it was cool, because it's the backbone of America for basically trucks. Without them we basically don't have anything, and the sound of the gig breaks and the diesel can't beat it. So, I went to school after I got out. So, by January I was out in Arizona starting school.

RM: When did you start your first semester in college?

JW: In this college or the trade school?

SW: Let's do both.

JW: September was when I started UTI. I got done with that in July 2012. I was a diesel mechanic for a while, until my back just kept going out and my shoulders. Then I started this semester at Mira Costa in January.

SW: This is your first semester?

JW: Yeah.

SW: How is it different than the trade school?

JW: Trade school had a bunch of dummies over there, here they seem brighter. It was a bunch of mechanics; we are just a bunch of knuckleheads. I think you get a better education coming to an actual college because they explain things more. At the trade school, it was more of just telling you what to do. Here they explain things, and there is a lot more work involved. You use your mind, instead of just your hands in a repetitive motion.

RM: What kind of student were you in high school?

JW: I was a wild child. I probably got C's and B's in my classes, maybe I can't remember, probably a lot of D's and F's. I wasn't the best student. I think the Marine Corps lit a fire under my butt to make me become better student.

RM: What inspired you to go back to school?

JW: My body is to tore up to be a mechanic. Also, dealing with VA. I have always wanted to help people, but after seeing how the VA treats fellow vets, I wanted to go back to school to become an OTA and help with vets that are injured and show them more support than what the VA does.

SW: Can you give any examples of your experiences with the VA?

JW: I would go there and show up for appointments and it's delayed like 2, 3, 4 hours. One time I was out in Arizona, my back was killing me, I sat there from 12 O'clock in the afternoon and didn't leave there until 5 O'clock. There was a guy struggling for oxygen and the wouldn't give him any oxygen. They decided to take me first so I said, "no, he can have my spot. I can walk out of here." They just grabbed me. That was horrible to see that. I also had a friend who was in the army. He was going through some drug problems, having some issues after Iraq, and they were not giving him the help that he needed. You hear about other stories where they didn't help the vets and then the guy overdosed. It is sad to see how they treat vets. Then every time I am down there I see homeless vets that are not getting fed. I mean, I'm sorry, but they served the country you need to take care of them. I ended up buying them breakfast because they were too cheap at the VA. It's only a dollar and twenty-five cents for some eggs or bacon and they can't even fund that. That hurts to see. That's why I want to become an OTA and help vets. Vets need to take care of vets instead of these freaking civilian locals.

SW: Yeah, they do not know anything.

JW: They cannot get to their level. A vet's not going to open up to another person that's not another vet. That's what sucks. Vets are only going to talk to someone that's lived the experience. I have changed my doctor three or four time already because they don't want to give the help. With my back, I was complaining about it for a long time and they didn't want to give it to me, or help me out. They just said, "here's your medication." I don't want pills; I want to get back to work. It exasperated my back even further, so it's even more damaged than where it should be.

RM: They didn't give you help? They just gave you a muscle relaxer?

JW: Yeah, I would tell them I'm good I don't need pills. That right there eats away at the economy. How much do those pills cost? You know what I mean?

RM: It's a numbers game too you know. If I get rid of ten, if I go through 10 people, I make more money than if I spend time with each one of them.

JW: I don't know if they get paid by how many people they see a day, but it's just the lack of care. They say hey you've got some pain, here's some Motrin and water, but at the VA its some opioids or something and that turns into people getting hooked on painkillers.

RM: I definitely agree it's a problem. They just give them out like they're skittles or something.

JW: They have bottles that are Costco sized. I just need them when I'm hurting, but you're going to send me an entire bottle. That's the problem.

FB: Do they provide any emotional assistance or anything like that?

JW: Yeah they do. Matter of fact, I go to... I don't admit this to too many people. I go to the PTSD courses down in San Marcos, which is good, they do a lot of outreach. I have met a lot of good friends. There is twenty-two vets a day that commit suicide. I just got a call back from my buddy a couple months ago, that his friend, one of the guys I had deployed with and hung out with, committed suicide while he was FAP'd out. I don't think their getting enough help.

SW: Do the classes you're taking at San Marcos help you? Do you find them helpful?

JW: Yeah I do, it keeps my mind busy. Like I said before when I first started talking to you, I can't sit still, I'm a hundred miles an hour all the time and these classes do help. They help to keep my mind off things.

SW: Do they teach you how to cope with PTSD?

JW: With PTSD, yeah they do. They give you some building blocks and stuff like that. The person must be willing to do it. I have changed everything from my genre of music that I listen to, to who I hang out with, a lot of my friends aren't the best so I stopped hanging out with those people. I stopped hanging out with anyone that puts out bad vibes. I pretty much don't feed the hate anymore.

RM: What is you major in school?

JW: I don't know, I would say liberal arts, nursing and kinesiology.

SW: You want to be an occupational therapist assistant, right?

JW: Yeah, I want to help people that have had injuries. I had two boys go down in a motorcycle accident, earlier this month. My other buddy, he's not the same anymore. His mannerisms, his voice and everything else has changed. He must see an OTA all the time.

RM: You mentioned the GI bill earlier, can you explain what that is and how it helps you?

JW: The GI bill helps you go to college. It pays for college and you get paid to go to school if you're doing 12 credits or above. It helps you take the stress off you by helping pay for rent. The GI bill gives you gas money, helps you pay for school and car insurance stuff like that. If you want you can do FASFA as well, but I wouldn't suggest it, you're just going to rack up debt.

RM: Do you qualify for FASFA or financial aid?

JW: Yeah, but I work enough to support myself, so I don't need the financial aid.

RM: What are you doing right now?

JW: Property management, so just renting out properties and doing maintenance.

RM: How was your transition from military to school?

JW: From there to school it was kind of tough. Everyone is so damn P.C. these days. After leaving the military you're not even close to being P.C. so it just kind of sucks having to deal with people. It's hard to talk to people sometimes they're just immature, and I guess I'm immature too in my ways. I think the hardest part is talking to the younger generation, they just don't understand.

RM: I get that too.

JW: How old are you?

RM: I'm thirty-two, like I said there is a lot of younger kids straight out of high school. There is just a maturity thing, some are mature for their age, but some are not. Some are just here because their parents are making them. They just think it is the next step and they aren't taking it seriously, then you get put in a group with them.

JW: Another thing that drives me nuts is that we show up for one class and we have a class afterward, and they don't show up to the next class. Like you were just here and hour ago?

SW: Yeah come on, you couldn't make it another hour?

JW: Yeah, exactly like what's going on here, you are not taught like that in the military. It's just hurry up and wait. You get there and wait. I beat you guys here ha.

SW: I know; you were here before us.

RM: You are on top of it.

FB: Does the difference in respect coming back to society bother you?

JW: Yeah, a lot of kids these days just don't respect each other, it's just kind of hard you know especially after being overseas. All the Iraqi people aren't all bad; I've met a lot of good people and these kids want to sit here and look down on them and they have no experience on it. I've known a lot of good guys, some hajis saved marines lives after getting shot, so they wouldn't get shot at anymore. And you hear all these people getting all racists about it and stuff like that. Just shut up.

RM: It's just ignorance.

JW: They are just too busy stuck on Call of Duty, you know what I mean.

RM: They think that is exactly how it is over there.

JW: They think they want to go do that. No, you don't. They just have no respect for people.

SW: They have no respect for their teachers or any authority.

RM: They think they know everything.

JW: Yeah, a teacher got a bad report on rate your teacher and everyone in the military that was in that class thought she was awesome, and everyone else was complaining. I just thought has your mom ever whooped your ass? Or given you a stern talking too?

RM: Just do what your teacher is telling you to do, that's all it comes down to, she's not asking you to do something different than everyone else.

JW: Exactly, they just get all butt hurt about it and it is just irritating. You are paying to go to school, you might as well do the damn work.

RM: Take it seriously, when you are young it's hard, you think you know everything, and you don't want to be here. As you get a little older you realize life is short, you need to make as much money as you can.

JW: Right, no joke, spend it all.

RM: What are some contrasts between civilians and military members that you have noticed.

JW: I think military members are more likely to get things done. I work two jobs and I still made time to come do this, and I always try to stay on top of things. Like we were talking about earlier, the kids just shrug stuff off, they are all OFP (on their Own Fucking Program) and they don't want to contribute or something. They are young they haven't learned anything.

RM: They all think they are going to be TV Stars or YouTube sensation.

JW: Yep exactly. After I couldn't work on trucks anymore I went into customer service, oh my gosh that was the most difficult thing in the world to deal with. Going from the military, to being a mechanic, to talking to some idiots, they're just lazy they want everything done for them. When I was selling parts, they were like "hey can you come out here and install this for me?" and I'm like no I'm not installing your water pump, are you crazy? Do you have money? You can't do it for free? No.

RM It's not how it works.

JW: You got YouTube, learn how to do it.

SW: I have noticed that no one is ever on time, I feel that military members are always early.

JW: They bred it into us, we hurry up. You have a formation at 3 o'clock and you are waiting there at 12. You are waiting around, and the formation doesn't start until 6 o'clock at night.

RM: My **tato** was in the marines for 20 years and he was always early. Always there twenty minutes before, helping with things he didn't have to do. He was like a machine his whole life. Its drilled into you.

JW: You are brain washed that way.

RM: You stop, you die.

JW: Body in motion stays in motion.

RM: How does your service experience help you with school?

JW: Staying on top of things, having the fortitude to stay on top of your stuff. You always got a job to do, so just do your job, that's what helps me here. Even between going back and forth from the hospital this month; the days I had class I'd rather be at that hospital, but I had things to do so I was here. I think that helps a lot because the military teaches you to become that way, become a productive member of society, yeah shit sucks, but you must do it.

RM: How does your service make it challenging to transition to school?

JW: It's going from a warrior mindset to dealing with pc people I guess. Pretty much every joke in the military is gay or disgusting, a bunch of grab ass and talking shit to each other. Here you have to watch what you say; you know what I mean?

RM: Not everyone is over 18 here ha.

JW: Yeah, they do not know how to take it, their feelings will probably get hurt.

RM: Ridiculous, this is very true these people are weak.

RM: Do the veterans services at school help you?

JW: They helped me enroll and stuff like that, I don't use them that much. I'm usually too busy, so I don't have time to go in there and do too much with them. If I'm between classes I'm usually sitting on a bench reading, so I don't spend too much time in there. I'm trying to go to another college after this.

SW: Which college do you want to go to?

JW: An all-girls catholic school (Everyone laughs).

JW: There is an OTA program through Saint Kates, they are kind of slacking right now, so they are about to lose my business. I got accepted, but between my finals and everything else, I already struggle as much as it is. I must study 24/7 because if I don't I'm going to forget everything. Hopefully in the fall I will be able to start, but I can't do the May classes right now because of my finals here at Mira Costa.

SW: Did the counselors help you more than the veteran's services?

JW: My counselors were at the veteran services and they talked to me about the programs and stuff like that, I don't think they were paying attention, they were just trying to crunch numbers.

RM: Do you want to start a program that helps people like you?

JW: Like OTA? I just figure, if you are an OTA, you are working with someone hands on and if you're able to sit there and talk to them and give them your time. They are going to open up and the biggest thing for healing is feeling calm and relaxed. If you're stressed out you're not going to heal your body, all your cortisol levels are going crazy and everything else. People need an OTA; they need someone by their side and in the corner of their ring.

FB: Have you talked to any vets that are OTA's?

JW: No, I have not. I haven't run into any vets that are OTA's, it's just one of the things that I decided to do. Most of the vets I know are mechanics or working on the police force and stuff like that.

FB: So, you just want to make a big impact and help some people?

JW: Oh, yeah. If it's just one person I'll be happy. You know I can't reach them all, but if I can just reach one person it will be worth it.

RM: What challenges or anxieties do you have about school?

JW: I mean Failing, competition is another one. I'm competitive, if I don't get a good grade or if I don't kick someone's butt on the test I'm going to be mad, then I have to study harder next time. Those are my anxieties. The other day I woke up and I thought I forgot to bring my poster board to school. I woke up and it was 6 o'clock at night before school, it was Just an anxiety dream I had.

RM: What classes are you taking right now?

JW: English 49 because my English aint the best ha ha, I got Strona though.

RM: I had him last semester and I loved that class.

JW: Yeah he's cool. I'm also taking psychology and human development; it's cool I'm learning a lot more.

RM: A lot of interesting things in psychology.

JW: Yeah, I started to self-evaluate myself and I'm like all screwed up ha.

RM: Did you have any support from anyone when you made the transitions from service to school?

JW: Yeah, I have my family, my friends, my girl, and I got my dog, she's always happy to see me. That's pretty much my support system so, it's not too bad. Just kind of bummed I'm not going to be able to hunt this season, but oh well.

RM: Is there anything you would like to add before we end?

JW: I don't know I'm so sick right now, I wasn't really prepared. Just came in here.