

Kevin Maxey

IDS-493

1/30/2025

Personal Narrative

I was born in Maryland and spent my formative years as a reckless and outgoing child who had the run of the neighborhood, but I also had a love for playing video games and reading books. I spent most of my time at my grandparent's house with my mother. My grandfather introduced me to playing simple point-and-click adventure games on the old Windows 98 personal computer. Another hobby I picked up in elementary school was reading Sci-fi and fantasy novels and I also played soccer for the local recreational league. In 3rd grade, I was introduced to the fantasy world of Harry Potter and lost in my imagination. I would religiously follow the book series throughout grade school and into high school. In 3rd grade, we moved from Maryland to Virginia, and I found it difficult to start fresh and meet new friends.

In high school, I discovered my different sides to myself as I had to think about what I wanted to pursue as a career. At the beginning of my senior year, I chose an introductory course, the Administrative Justice class, where each quarter had a different aspect of criminal justice, such as law enforcement, crime scene investigation, criminal law, and federal law enforcement. At this point, I was sure I wanted to pursue a career in Criminal Justice; however I didn't know what subdiscipline I wanted to focus on. During my Senior year, I also took an Introduction to Psychology class that piqued my interest in how the human mind operates and the need to understand human behavior. This newfound interest completely overshadowed Criminal Justice, and I applied to George Mason University. Unfortunately, I was turned down and settled with

Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). I attended classes at NVCC that focused on psychology. Eventually, I decided to move out and find myself, so I applied to Old Dominion University and was accepted in 2012.

During my time at Old Dominion University, I did alright in my classes. I focused more on my Psychology classes than my general education courses. I didn't realize it at first, but I was losing my interest in Psychology as I realized I would have to pursue a Master's degree and a Doctorate in order to truly work in the field. In my last semester, when I was supposed to graduate, I failed a required class and ended up back where I had started at my parents' house. I spent a year working for my parents' government contracting company as a General Clerk at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), sorting files in banker's boxes and cataloging the files. In 2015, I enlisted as an Information Technician in the U.S. Navy. I was shipped off to boot camp in November 2015. I spent the next two months being taught the Navy traditions and etiquette while pushing myself to my physical and mental limits. I graduated from boot camp at the beginning of 2016. I was transferred to Florida, attending Information Technician A school for six months, where I learned how to work with various communication systems and data processing servers. I graduated from Information Technology (IT) A school in July of that year. I was given orders to be stationed in Naples, Italy.

In Naples, Italy, I was responsible for maintaining and upgrading Navy networks, ensuring that ships could communicate and carry out their missions around the Mediterranean Sea. I spent three incredible years enjoying Naples's culinary specialties, such as pasta, pastries, and pizza. I also spent some time traveling to Belgium, France, England, Ireland, Greece, Poland, Montenegro, and Japan. Working in Naples for the Navy, I discovered my calling was operating

computer hardware and software components. In my last year there, I made Petty Officer Second class and earned the privilege to move out and live among the locals. Moving out into town in Castel Volturno felt like I had been living under a rock during my time in Italy. My landlord was excellent; he went above and beyond to ensure that I had a comfortable place to stay. On Saturdays, he cooked traditional Italian pasta dishes with antipasti and pastry desserts. I met many civilian contractors who taught me how to troubleshoot networking components and maintain the physical components in server racks. For the first two years, I worked on the watch floor 12-hour shifts two to three nights a week, alternating between day and night shifts every other month. For the first two years, I lived in the barracks, which wasn't fun, with random weekly room inspections to ensure that you maintained your living space less than ideal. At the end of my tour in Naples, I was given orders to Suffolk, Virginia.

During my last years in the Navy, I was a help desk technician troubleshooting cyber incident reports for Navy commands worldwide. We would report on a multitude of exploits, such as malicious DNS beaconing, phishing emails, and computer viruses. During my last three years in the Navy, I earned CompTIA Security+ and Computer Advanced Security Practitioner certifications. I reenrolled in classes to finish my psychology degree. I also decided to pursue my cybersecurity degree to supplement my experience in the Navy. When I separated from the Navy, I was hired by a government contracting company, AERMOR LLC, to work in the same building but as a part of the server team, returning to my former duties as a System Administrator. I worked the remaining year and a half on that contract, maintaining the virtual and physical server environment and ensuring the availability of system applications. As that contract ended, I switched to my current Azure Virtual Desktop Engineer position. I continue to use my experience

as a System Administrator working on Microsoft's cloud computing solution, Microsoft Azure. We are responsible for maintaining the virtual environment so that users can telework across the globe using their own personal computers to connect to a virtual environment where they can complete their work responsibilities. We are also responsible for patching applications and deploying the new monthly marketplace image to protect the virtual environment from potential security vulnerabilities. I have also automated the patching of applications via PowerShell scripting to reduce the amount of tedious and repetitive work. Looking back at the path I have taken to get to this point in life, I realize the path wasn't smooth or easy. I had to constantly adapt my position to keep myself from giving up on my goals in life but, but each failure is a lesson that we can either choose to learn from or grow or you can ignore it and continue to keep making mistakes.