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Title:

About the Author:

Keywords:

Abstract:

Andrei Oros

9-3-08

Rhet. 105

For the ethnography project this semester I will choose to study the fire department here on campus. I have never had any experience with anything related this but I have always had an interest in the life that firefighters live. I would like to learn more about the attitude that they have regarding their job. The only information I have comes from shows and movies but those are rarely credible sources. However, I am sure that there is some truth lying in these shows so some of the occurrences might seem familiar.

The department is located on the corner of Dorner and Gregory Dr. I have passed this many times during my walks to the main part of campus and I have seen the equipment in the garage and a few of the members standing outside. It is about a five minute walk from my room.

The one thing I am most interested in is what they do during their down

time. How much time do they spend preparing? When they are together is it like a family atmosphere or more of a friendly one? What other activities do they do to pass time? It would very beneficial to my report if I were to spend a few nights in the department with the members, waiting for the call to come in. This will give me one of the best insights into their life not at home but not in their fire gear either.

Fire departments are always populated with some members seeing as how they need to be ready for any incident at any time. Since someone will always be there I don't think there will be a scheduling problem. I can observe whenever I have time and they are open to it. We will have to work out a set day during the week when I can observe them throughout the semester. One of the only problems I see with this choice is me possibly getting in the way of the job they are trying to do. I think that going out on a call with them will really expand my knowledge but as I mentioned, I don't want to get in the way of their duty to the community.

Andrei Oros
Rhet. 105
10-20-08

A Fraternity of Firefighters

After September 11, 2001 the nation's firefighters have been put under the spotlight across the country. They have become more respected and looked up to for their selfless courage and compassion for the citizens of the nation. This has led to many Hollywood productions painting the lives of these heroes on the big screen. All of these movies and shows show the "brotherhood" of firefighting that comes from living and risking their lives next to each other. This relationship is one of the most important aspects of being a successful department.

The relationships that firefighters have with each other are unlike any a group of people can have. Their life styles cause this connection. Other than members of the armed forces, one would be hard pressed to find another life style that is as dangerous and involved as that of a firefighter. Members of the shift I have been observing have told me of more than a couple cases where they have directly witnessed deaths. As anyone can imagine, death by burning has to be one of the most gruesome ways to go.

Firefighters deal with severe medical incidents for a living. Not only those of burn victims but any medical emergency call. The entire shift has EMS training under their belt. Many firefighters these days do. Any EMS call will evoke some kind of emotion and strategic thinking in the firefighter's mind. Every single call they go on requires them to focus their effort on the task at hand. All of this causes the bond between the firefighters to grow.

This bond is the most important thing in the fire station, on the truck, and at the scene. This bond is how firefighters are able to do their jobs. Without a successful team atmosphere it would be impossible for the firefighters to act as efficiently and safely as possible. Firefighters communicate every move they make to someone else. This

communication is learned during the academy but perfected on every call. The bond that firefighters have with each other increases the quality of communication that goes on between them in the field. After living and working together for so long the understanding between them becomes greatly improved.

I thought that there were a lot of disagreements in the station that hindered the relationship between the firefighters. There are members of the department that others are not fond of and they don't really carry on a relationship. However this does not affect the way they work together. There seems to be some kind of unspoken code of conduct or something that unites all firefighters. Members of the station have told me that they would risk their lives to save a fellow firefighter. I have read about this sort of unspoken bond in different sources but not one specifically talks about it. I think all firefighters are emotionally connected to each other.

This idea goes back to the fact that there are a lot of emotions in this certain career; emotions at calls, at the station, and at home. All of these emotions from different sources all mix together and cause a lot more stress for firefighters than in many other occupations. They also have to trust each other. This is an emotion that is required for the firefighters to be successful. They have to know that the firefighter behind them is ready and vice versa. Firefighters seem to train themselves to do be able to trust their lives to another firefighter. Pride is also a huge emotion that firefighters feel regarding their work. The members I have met have told me multiple times that they "love" their jobs and could not imagine doing anything else. Every firefighter I have talked to has felt the same way. If every firefighter feels like this about their job then they are bound to be proud of each other as well. All these feelings seem to be the similar to the ones that members of the armed forces have in regard with each other. Now I have never been in the military but I believe that there is a strong connection between soldiers as well. Both life styles are very intense and require a large amount of mental and emotional strength.

The view that the American public has on firefighters has grown more respectful since the attacks on 9/11. Now the public is also proud of the firefighters that are there to help us. This respect is another reason that firefighters are incredibly proud of their jobs. Some of the shift members have mentioned driving around in the truck and having people look at them is a nice feeling. I've had one member of the shift tell me of a few young children giving him a hug at a fire prevention education activity. They told me that it was an awesome feeling. However I do not think that the additional attention firefighters get from the public these days has changed their view of themselves and their job. It has changed the job itself but I think the mindset has remained the same. Of course the incident affected New York and bigger cities more but even the station here has made accommodations to house national security equipment. The government has provided the station with a trailer full of equipment needed to help at a disaster site.

The public view of firefighters comes from the pop-culture interpretation of them.

Some of the ideas pop-culture spreads are very contradicting. I have passed many calendars in stores that have a man dressed in firefighter pants and no jacket or shirt to cover his muscular body. In other cases I have seen firefighters portrayed as large men; not muscular but heavy-set. In my visits to the station I have yet to see either end of the spectrum. The firefighters I have met are well built, fit men. Many of them look like they spend time in the gym on a regular basis. Even the one woman firefighter I met looked to be stronger than most; and she told me that she values exercise a lot. I am not sure how I came to believe that a majority of firefighters are heavysset men. The first part of that belief is false but the second is in fact quite true.

The presence of women in fire stations and on the engines is rare. I have only seen one women firefighter in my entire life and I met her on one of my field visits. She told me that she was the only woman in the department at the time but there was another one who was on military leave. I get the feeling that she had to make a conscious effort to be accepted as part of the station as a man would. She was cleaning and prepping the tools in a room in the back of the garage. She then later asked the Lieutenant when she should start cooking dinner. She even told me that during training, she was chosen as an example for a greater percentage of the time then the men would be chosen. I know that no one is the same but I feel like the case is similar for most women in the fire service. It is hard to prove a generally Caucasian male population that you are just as valuable as they are.

An overwhelming percentage of firefighters are Caucasian. I have met two African American firefighters at the station and the rest are Caucasian. I thought that as times changed, fire stations would become more diverse. During my interview with Mr. Wisher, he told me of the work that another member of the station has gone down to St. Louis and Chicago to try and get more minorities to go into the academy. He told me that they even tried recruiting African Americans on BET. Firefighting had always been a predominately Caucasian run service and departments feel that evening the ratio out more will do the station good.

I think the stereotype of firefighters being mainly Caucasian males has stuck with departments has been prevalent for quite some time. However, I have not seen the relationship between African American firefighters and Caucasian firefighters differ at all from the relationships between solely Caucasian firefighters. Then again I have not seen the mixed relationships as much as the Caucasian shift I have been observing. The only times I have been in the station with a mixed shift, the two African Americans were in their offices while the Caucasian members were out in the station. The African American members did have different positions in the station other than firefighters. One of them is a fire safety and prevention officer and the other is a lieutenant.

Rank is yet another factor that changes the relationship between the firefighters in the station. While the firefighters work on tools, cleaning the station, or servicing the truck and equipment the lieutenant is in his office working on department and station

schedules and other paper work. The firefighters also have to take orders from the lieutenant during the calls. This requires the lieutenant to command a little more respect from his men than firefighters or engineers command from similar ranks. The lieutenant still goes on calls and does his job as a firefighter but he is also in control of the two other men on his engine. In the station, higher ranks interact with the men in their command just as normal firefighters do. Rank does not change the type of interaction they have with each other when they are working in the station or relaxing in the evening and at night. The lieutenant of the station that I have been observing sits down and watches TV, eats dinner, talks about families, and jokes around with the two under his command like there is no difference between them.

Firefighting creates relationships that are cemented in the lives of members of fire service for their entire lives. These relationships are the base of the fire department and everything else is just built off of these. The station has been compared to a frat house at times because the firefighters say that they form an unbreakable bond of brotherhood that they will keep with them forever. Without these complex relationships the fire service in the United States will fail and leave its innocent citizens without one of the noblest services.

Initial Exercises:

I just met with the fire station early Thr. morning for the first time and got the consent form signed and I observed the engine for the first time

Andrei Oros

Rhet. 105

9-15-08

A Fire Fighter's Best Friend

I walked into the garage following the Fire Prevention Officer after talking to him in the office. The first thing that comes into view is the large backup fire engine. The truck is crimson with a thick white stripe running down the side. Immediately the atmosphere changes from the hallway into the garage. The hallway looks a little like those in office buildings with a narrow walkway constricted by the white walls separated by a few doors leading to offices, the living quarters, and the kitchen. Once I stepped foot into the garage it really looked like a fire station. Along with the engine there were a couple of white pickup trucks and a red trailer with the Homeland Security emblem on the sides. Five minutes later the main fire engine flies past the garage and applies the brakes and comes to a quick stop. I had no idea that these large machines could travel like that. The driver backed into the garage with ease while the tree other fire fighters sat there having conversation with each other. They had taken the engine to the headquarters garage for an inspection.

The four fire fighters step out of the cab casually wearing jeans and t-shirts with the shield of the fire station on the chest. The lieutenant steps out wearing a blue button-up t-shirt with an official Urbana Fire Dept. tag on his chest. They acted like what they just did was routine and it was but it made me wonder if they view the rest of their jobs as such. The

lieutenant and the Fire Prevention Officer started a conversation about what the fire fighters did and where they went. The F.P.O. did not even know that they had left. As they were talking I looked into the cab of the main engine. "You can get in if you want to" says the lieutenant from behind me. I opened the door, stepped up on the step ladder and then up into the cab.

It is nothing like I expected it to be. The raised cab is very cramped once you climb inside. There is more room in the passenger seat of a four door sedan. There is a huge center console between the driver and passenger side seat. This console is covered with flips and switches that control various parts of the truck; too many for me to even begin to understand. All of the console and dashboard is black which contrasts the diamond plated sheet metal that was the floor. The inside of the cab is much more unorganized, or so it seemed, than the body of the engine. There are a few helmets that I suppose were red at some point but blackened with use. Headsets litter the cab along with handheld radios and a station cell phone plugged into the lighter input on the dashboard. The entire operation crumbles without significant communication between all of the fire fighters and dispatch. There is also a fairly new notebook computer sitting half opened on the passenger side dashboard. The steering wheel seems like a foot and a half in diameter coming up at a thirty or so degree angle from the dash.

The back of the cab is much more spacious but also less involved. There are two seats in the center with a space in the backrest for the oxygen tanks to fit while the fire fighters sit. All of the seats in the truck except the driver's are like this. Again, there are helmets, headsets, radios, and jackets hanging from hooks and sitting on the shelves that rest against the back of the front seats.

Once I step out of the cab, the truck seems a lot cleaner. The red color is a bit overwhelming at first. The tires have to be about three feet in diameter with rims the same color as the truck and half the size of the tires. The gold numbers "24" are fixed to the side and front of the cab along with "Urbana Fire Dept.". The most important feature on the engine is next to the cab. The pump panel controls the water flow through the entire system of hoses that are hidden all over the engine. The panel consists of pressure gauges for each one of the possible hose attachments. Along with these gauges are handles that control the pressure of the water flowing through the hoses. There is a small compartment right next to the panel with a headset in it for the engineer to use to control the pressure. The Fire Prevention Officer told me of a time when there was too much pressure on a hose, so much so that the fire fighter couldn't hold on to it, and it flailed around like a snake. If the nozzle at the end of the hose were to hit someone in the head it would have killed them. With all of the pressure and adrenaline pumping a mistake is bound to happen once in a while when combining a nervous rookie and the endless system of nozzles and hoses. The largest nozzle on the panel is a grey monstrosity used to attach the engine to the nearest hydrant in case the truck depletes the 500 gallon tank that it carries. At 1250 gallons per minute, it will not

take long to empty this reserve.

The sides of the truck hold a lot of equipment in many separate storage compartments such as nozzles, hoses, and rescue equipment to name a few. There are ladders hung opposite the side with the panel and ladders on top of the truck as well. An ax has its place between the cab and the rear end of the truck and a pike also sits above the ax. The back of the engine has the diamond plated edges as does many parts of the truck. There are also mud flaps hanging behind the rear tires that say "Pierce". The truck itself is a 2001 Pierce Sabre built in Appleton, Wisconsin. It looks a lot newer than the model year says.

The front of the engine has a flat nose with a large windshield that takes up the upper two thirds of the face. It is one of the most imposing vehicle anyone could see coming cruising down the street whether the sirens are on or not. There is a high powered light on the front bumper that is used in calls that are during night where there is not much light. There are multiple high powered lights throughout the body of the engine. The sirens sit atop the cab ready to be lit up and warn everyone around of the high speed monster coming towards them

When people think of fire fighters the first object that comes to mind is the fire truck or the Sept. 11 attacks. Without these engines, fire fighters would have to fight fires with buckets and nearby ponds. Fire fighters' jobs depend on these vehicles just as the civilians' safety and security depend on the fire fighters. A lot of work and money goes into maintaining the quality and efficiency of these trucks and the jobs they do. There is always new equipment coming out that makes the job safer and faster. Fire stations are expected to keep up with these technology advancements which cost money and work.

As of now, many of the advancements have to do with communication between fire fighters. This is the most important part of getting the job done for these government workers. There are more headsets, handheld walkie-talkies, and phones in the engine alone than there are fire fighters at any one time. The communications that they have in their truck can connect them to all of the other fire departments in the area in order to get the job done. When it comes to doing what they have to, fire fighters work together as a unit just like an athletic team. The trucks that they drive are the tools that facilitate that camaraderie.

Condensed Narrative

Andrei Oros

It was in 1989 and... I didn't really have a clue up until then and some guys just asked me to get on a volunteer fire department with 'em. The fire service was actually starting to pick up on the EMS end of it and I was in pre-med when I was in college so it was a chance for me to still play medic a little bit. I don't want to show up at a scene of any kind and not be able to do something so I went in, I did the EMS deal, [and] became an EMT. [Y]ou know the fact that I'm a Christian and I get to help

people cause typically they're having a bad day when we show up. I was pretty much hooked as soon as I got on.

I had been on a week... at the volunteer. [T]his [was] my first fire call and I could see it was about a mile and a half away. I could see the car, the truck that was burning. [W]e had to go to the station, got the rig, we pulled out and it was two of us. [O]ne guy, he was driving since I was brand new and I riding with him and we got there he turned to me, he goes "put that end pull" and then he stopped and he looked and saw it was me and he goes "all right". [H]e put it in pump, charged the line and then I took it and I extinguished the truck. [A]s soon as that was out... I've come to find out that it was three guys I knew, and one of 'em was a fatality.

We have a very course sense of humor. We use humor to deal with a lot of things. If somebody was standing there next to us they would just be in shock at some of the comments we make. It's not because were bad people, I think it's really a coping mechanism. You know I carried a guy's leg down the street about a block and, one of my guys says "man I got a pair of boots like that". [I]t's a coping thing because you see something like that; it's gonna imprint. I could still see every deceased face I've ever had. A lot of firemen internalize a lot of stuff; they can handle it so they deal with it inside, especially guys who don't throw their emotions on the table. [I]f you go to the hospital you know that little pain scale they got with the smiley faces? [My wife] goes "which one's daddy?", [my daughter] goes "number five". [The one with a] straight face. Part of that is I've tried to condition myself not to show any emotion. [A]t least it seems like that because guys can pick up if I'm scared or nervous on the radio, and my guys have to feel confident in my abilities. [G]uys are pretty good about being there for each other. [Y]ou can tell when somebody's gettin' pretty stressed about things.

[T]he relationships the guys have, the camaraderie ... comes through at fires [and] the pretty bad medical [calls]. Guys that bond at those kind of intense emotional [calls] see how [they] handled that. It's a different world... out there on scenes... if there's been a fatality; I don't know if it's death... there's just this feeling, heaviness. It seems like you're walking on a blanket of snow... If you took your care of business it's like you come back and the respect is building, the compassion for each other is building. [T]o be honest with you morale takes a hit when we don't have things to prove that... the closest times are after incidents where we've handled our business, everybody comes back and we've made a difference...

We come back we talk about it; we have a department, or a shift critique. Everybody that was there will come together and we'll talk about it. [At the station] we're supposed to be supervisors and they want [us] to use business models to do that. Unfortunately, most businesses don't sleep with the guys, don't eat with the guys, they're not with 'em 24

hours; you really have to get more personal with these guys. [M]y job, aside from the other stuff that I do, the biggest part of it is interpersonal. If I can't make the quality of life in this station better..., I fail as a supervisor. So... it's not easy cause they're grown men and sometimes it's like babysitting. We had a guy that was a practical joker... He would... set the sprayers on the sink and got the chief three times in one day. Finally the chief came out in a hefty garbage bag; he goes "I give up". I've seen guy's bed clothes soaked with water and thrown out in a tree... in the middle of January so it freezes. You bond that way. We don't see a whole lot of each other till supper. [F]rom supper on is... our time. Guys will hang out, watch a movie, or something you know. ... There's not too many jobs where you get to hang out with your buddies. You'll be a married male with kids and every third day you get to go hang out with the guys. Sometimes my wife gets a little jealous but uh; the problem is it doesn't happen as often as it used to.

[W]hen I first got on in Urbana... they had so much more time and they had a little more camaraderie I think. [W]e're gonna try to resurrect some of that because... it's a brotherhood in the fire service that in the old days [and] part of that is morale and the relationships the guys have; the camaraderie. Even though I've got a light blue [(Lieutenant's rank)], we're all pretty much equal here... I have a little different job to do sometimes... while they're cleanin' I'm fillin' out reports or something but other than that. You know, we talk as equals. [However] I can tell you that respect from firefighters is one of the hardest things to get [b]ecause you just, you push the envelope.

Question:

Andrei Oros

Rhet. 105

9-10-08

Every Little Boy Wants To Ride A Fire Truck

Fire fighters are considered to be real life heroes in the United States. They risk their lives to protect and help civilians from unexpected disaster. This semester I will be observing a group of these heroes at the fire station on Gregory Drive here on campus. I really don't know what to expect when I first get there. However the media and Hollywood gave me a couple of ideas of how fire fighters live their lives. I am sure that not all of these stereotypes I've learned from these sources are correct but they are without a doubt based on some truth.

Ever since the terrorist attacks on September 11, fire fighters are considered to be the unsung heroes of the country. I have no doubt that they are. But what are these heroes really like in person when they are not doing their duty? Shows like *Rescue Me* on FX and movies such as *Ladder 49* are both about the life of fire fighters but they show two different sides of them. *Rescue Me* seems to focus more on the personal life of fire fighters and the relationship they have with each other. The members of the station are always there for each other. However they are always getting on the others' nerves and making fun of their

personal lives. It seems to be more like a group of close friends that just happen to fight fires together. [Ladder 49](#) has a similar feeling but I think they deal with more of the seriousness of fire fighting. These two products of entertainment have led me to believe that fire fighters are like a big family. They look after each other and help each other through hard times not only on the job but also in their personal lives. It seems to me like that is a universal thing in each station across the country. I think that it is really appealing to a lot of people that they will be working with “family”, and that is why many people take up that job.

It also seems to me like fire fighters are adrenaline junkies. Sure they love to help people but that can't be the only reason to pick a career that will last a majority of your life. It doesn't make sense to me. They have to enjoy some aspect of the job and I think that the heightened sense of everything when they are called to action is a big reason why they love their job. Saving people might just be a bonus. How else can someone put their life on the line every shift they are scheduled?

This adrenaline rush that they get has to span back into earlier in their lives. I think that many current fire fighters were athletes in high school and college. They always liked to be on the move and enjoyed the physical aspect of sports and transfer that into their careers. Fire fighters have to carry a lot of weight on their bodies when going into a site and they also have to think quickly and make decisions that determine their next move, next five minutes, and the rest of their life. This is similar to athletes, well maybe not the life determining move but when a football player jukes he has a different choice of what to do next as opposed to running through the opposing player. That heightened sense of your surroundings can be a very intense experience and they want that to continue throughout more of their life when they are not playing sports.

Fire fighters seem like a very proud group of people, not only of their job but what their job has made of them. It seems like a lot of male pin-up calendars include half nude fire fighters with large muscles. I think many people see fire fighters as these large, strapping men but the few that I have seen are a little overweight and look nothing like those in the calendars. The fire fighters I have seen are in their thirties while the actors that portray them in Hollywood seem to be in their early to mid twenties. A lot of them seem to be Caucasian, and the stations are like a middle/upper class suburban high school where the majority of the members are white with a few minorities. I graduated from a typical high school like this.

I think that firefighters' educations involved graduating from high school and then a degree in fire science or something similar from a community college. They were never really pushed academically so they didn't strive to achieve more intellectual careers. I was always pushed by my parents to do well in school. They told me that education is the most important thing if I want a happy life. Because of them I always worried about grades and got in to the university here. A couple people I worked with over the summer in a pizza

place want to become fire fighters and they study at a community college where they seem content. It's not that fire fighters don't strive for anything, they strive to become fire fighters, but I can't see myself making a career out of that. Fire fighters are very intelligent people, they have to be in order to do the work they do successfully but they gear their intelligence towards something other than I do. Maybe they came from a family that wasn't educationally oriented.

I have lived my entire life with my parents there for me whenever I needed them. Sure there were a few instances when my father was working late and left early in the morning and I didn't see him for a couple days. Fire fighters are away from their families a lot but they still love them more than anything. Every movie or show about fire fighters includes pictures of their families by their cots or in their pockets when they are called to action. Family seems like a large part of their lives but it is hard to believe when they are gone for so long and they leave their families worrying until their parent gets back whenever it may be.

The life of fire fighters is not something I know much about and I don't know how I will see them during my field work. I think getting used to the language they use in the station is not going to be an easy task. There are a lot of tools that they use that are specific to their occupation and are not common knowledge. They are also a few years older than I am our senses of humor and our attitudes we have will probably differ but they are not senior citizens so I think we will have a good amount of life experiences in common. It will be hard to figure out what keeps them at the station doing their jobs and putting their lives in danger every time they go to work. Is it worth staying away from your family for so much time and worrying them every time you leave the house? I think that those will be the most important answers I will get from the fire fighters during my semester with them.

Doing my fieldwork in a fire station will open my eyes to a lot of new information. All of the technical information about their jobs will all be new to me but the thing I am most interested to learn about is the way they think about their current positions in the station and in society. The difference in how they act with each other versus the way they act with civilians is going to be one of the biggest hints to how they think.

Plan:

Andrei Oros

Rhet 105

9-19-08

Baker, Al. "In New Orleans, Pausing to Remember." *New York Times*. 12 September 2005: B4

In this article, Al Baker writes about a group of New York firefighters that flew down to New Orleans to help out with the hurricane relief effort. He mentions how the firefighters

came from all different departments came to work together for the same cause. The article tells the reader what kind of work the firefighters did to help the community and compare the incident to the work that New York firefighters did after the Sept. 11 attacks. This article mentions that the firefighters were criticized after Sept. 11 and they changed the way they work to be able to handle disasters better and they put it to use in New Orleans. It also mentions a new system that was developed by firefighters after the attacks. This information will be useful in my research when I look for information about how firefighters adapt their techniques and how they might change their system to look better in the public eye.

Bledman, Rashanta. Chaichanasakul, Adipat. He, Yuhong.
Mallinckrodt, Brent. Medoza,

Monique. Shannon, Jennifer. Tager, David. Varvel, Sholih Jordan. "Multidimensional, Threshold Effects of Social Support in Firefighters: Is More Support Invariably Better?" *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 54 (2007): 458-465.

This article is a study of how firefighters deal with the stress they go through and how support from coworkers help. The authors of this article perform a study on a fire station in a middle sized community of about 90,000 citizens. They give the firefighters at the station a series of surveys that they can willingly complete. They take out all of the supervisors' and women's surveys because they will have different results. They focus this study on the male firefighters that don't have command over anyone. The surveys consist of questions about the amount of stress that the firefighters experience in their lives. They answer the questions with on a scale from zero to four; zero meaning never and four meaning very often. The researches then take this information that they have gathered and compile it and take the average scores to show how high stress levels are and how strong support from various people help cope with that stress. They do the same test on other groups to have something to compare their results with. The article gets to be very mathematical with many different references to the scores and how and why they were compiled in different ways to get results. This will be a good source for me to use because the stress factor is incredibly important in a firefighter's life and consistency on the job. The way that they deal with this stress is important to the culture of the station because the firefighters live together and have to support each other when problems arise.

Scott, Clifton. Tracy, Sarah. "Sexuality, Masculinity, and Taint

Management among Firefighters

And Correctional Officers: Getting Down and Dirty With 'America's Heroes' and the 'Scum of Law Enforcement.'" *Management Communication Quarterly* 20 (2006).

In this article, Clifton and Tracy combine the results of two ethnographic studies produced over the course of two years each. The studies are on a couple of fire departments and correctional facilities. The authors explain that a lot of the work that both groups do is considered to be "dirty work" by many outside of that line of expertise. They tell the reader about the work firefighters do that they themselves consider to be "dirty". They also explain how firefighters deal with calls that are not emergencies and are really a waste of time for the members of the station. They also go into detail of why one is considered to be a heroic job and the other is considered to be very undesirable for the majority of the population. It expands on why firefighters are considered to be heroic and how they are perceived by citizens that see them. The article also touches on masculinity and how that affects the people who choose to become firefighters and how masculinity is a very dominant quality for firefighters. This ties in to the sexuality of the job and the perks that come along with being a firefighter and riding around town in their engine. This article will be very useful because it covers the general feelings that firefighters have toward all kinds of call and how the general public perceives them. I don't think that I will put the information gathered on correctional officers into my own observations because they do not apply. However, the information about firefighters gave me an idea of what kind of things to look for while observing the station this semester.

Smith, Dennis. *Firefighters*. New York: Double Day, 1988

Dennis Smith was a firefighter for the New York Fire Department and he compiled a book of all of his experiences in the various stations. The book consists of six chapters about his experiences of being part of the largest fire department in the country. The only chapter I have read so far is about life in the stations. This chapter covers what firefighters do in the station and how they act with each other. He tells the author about all of his positions at different stations across the city.

The stories Smith tells in his book are going to resemble the attitudes I see in my field site this semester. In the chapter I read he tells many stories of what happened in the stations

and at emergency calls. The different people that he has met in the department are very interesting stories. He writes that there have been numerous types of personalities in the stations and they all bring a different atmosphere that makes each station different from the next. The way different personalities interact makes the down time of firefighters interesting. Smith tells the readers of pranks that the firefighters have pulled on each other and on other government workers such as police officers. From soaking each other with the hoses to stealing a police car while the officers are holding your fellow firefighters at gunpoint, the jokes and the attitude of many of the firefighters he mentions are lighthearted and fun.

Along with writing about the different personalities interacting with each other, Smith also mentions the camaraderie that the firefighters have with one another. Firefighters are a big group of brothers that always stick up for each other. Smith includes in his book that the few firefighters he went to the academy with are very important to him and they get together for dinner and family gatherings a lot. He mentions that at times there is a college fraternity atmosphere in the station. They have the same understanding of death and suffering as their brother sitting next to them on the truck. They have seen things that only firefighters see and being able to share those tragedies brings them closer together mentally and spiritually. They are like soldiers in war; they look after the guy to their right and expect the guy to their left to do the same. Smith writes that all firefighters are connected and tells an account of a few funerals of firefighters where thousands of other firemen that have never met the deceased are crying at their loss. When fellow members of the department pass away, whether from a fire related accident or not, Smith says it is like a member of your family die. Because of this feeling, the station and members of the station have priority over many of the other aspects of firefighters' lives with the exception being family. However, firefighters miss a lot of family outings for their jobs at the stations and conventions across the country. Smith brings up the fact that when firefighters see something horrific they do not need to talk about it with each other, just looking at their demeanor and eyes tell them all they need to know about what the other is thinking. The way that firefighters view each other is going to be a huge part of my observations this semester and the writings of Smith can outline what I should look for if I want to get a better understanding of it.

Smith writes about the firefighters' attitudes toward an

accidental death dealing with fire related accidents. He says that the worst death to see is a child whom they could not save. This makes them think of their own kids and how much they would be devastated if this were to happen to someone they love. Then the idea of their own deaths hits them when fellow firefighters die. Smith says they try not to think about it because if they do, there is no way that they can complete their jobs.

There is a lot of detail about the work that firefighters do in the chapter I read. It goes over what they are expected to do when they are not in an emergency situation. The firefighters are required to clean the station as they would their own house. They have to clean the windows, sweep the floor, and keep the kitchen kept. They have to do all this while cleaning their equipment too. The engines always need to be cleaned so they can work effectively. The hoses, fire resistant coats, and rubber boots need to be organized for easy access. Almost every day the firefighters are expected to do some training to stay sharp and educated on new techniques and technologies. These training shifts can happen in the station, at headquarters, a training center, or on the road. On top of all of these responsibilities the firefighters have to worry about inspections and of course, the emergency calls. The responsibilities that firefighters have when off duty are a large part of the way they act and interact when they are not on a call. Smith tells of chores that he hated doing just like little kids can't stand them.

There is a lot of information that I have gotten already from just reading one chapter and I am sure that the other chapters will just give me more things to look out for when doing my observations. The first person accounts of all of the events recorded will be very useful in getting to understand the way firefighters think. Smith was a firefighter for a few stations and this was written a while before the Sept. 11 attacks so it is nice to see how firefighters were viewed and how they acted before the attacks and how they changed. A lot of the information in the book seems very relevant even though it was written twenty years ago. The technology has changed but I am sure the attitudes and brotherhood have not.

Piontek, Anthony. Prziborowski, Steve. "What Makes a Good Company Officer? Two Views."

Fire Engineering. Jul. 2008: 91-93.

In this article the authors describe what a good company

officer should do to gain the trust and respect from his firefighters. It also tells the readers what firefighters expect from the company officers. The authors tell the readers what the firefighter had to do in order to become a good company officer. It goes over the education that they should have, the preparation that they should come into the station with, and the way they should treat the firefighters that are under their command. The article then goes over what the firefighters want the company officer to do for them in order to get their trust and respect so they can work together efficiently. This article will definitely help my understanding of how firefighters interact with their superiors, especially if one of them is new to the station. It also explains the education that firefighters have and how different education can help them get a higher ranking within the department.

Andrei Oros

Annotated Bibliography of Websites

9-29-08

"About the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation." *National Fallen Firefighters Foundation*.

<<http://staging.firehero.org/about/ataglance/AbouttheNFFF.pdf>>

This is a pamphlet stating the purpose of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and how it helps those dealing with the deaths. The NFFF is a non-profit organization created by the United States government in 1992. It helps survivors and families rebuild their lives after a deadly accident. The NFFF provides peer support for those close to the deceased such as family and members of the station. It also provides scholarship money for the children of those firefighters for education and job training. The NFFF holds an annual tribute to firefighters who have died the past year and many families travel to this. They have also implemented a program called "Everyone Gets Home Alive" that tries to lower the death rate of on-duty firefighters. This organization is a big part of the lives of people who have known a firefighter who died. This is important because there are many deaths that occur every year and many firefighters have immediate family that suffer greatly from the death. In some families, the firefighter is the only source of income and if they pass away then the family will need help.

Armadillo Attack. <http://www.station46.com/armadillo_attack.htm>.

This is a short video of a firefighter throwing a dead armadillo into the bathroom when a fellow member of the station is using it. The firefighter who is holding the camera and the one who threw the armadillo into the bathroom are both laughing after the one in the bathroom lets out a surprised yell. This video shows that

firefighters enjoy the smaller things in life when they are not on a call. They get bored just like everyone else and they are not always working so they have to find something to do. This video also shows the camaraderie between firefighters through the jokes they play on each other. There are a few more videos and pictures on the website that have the same feeling.

Fire Department Sign, Belmont. 2008. Firefighterclosecall.com. 25 Sept, 2008

<<http://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/>>.

This is a picture of a sign for a Fire Department in a town called Belmont but I don't know what state it is in because it is hard to see the shield on the sign and there is no caption. However the sign says: "Smoke alarm \$10. Fire Truck \$375000. A sprinkler law that would save lives. Priceless". I think this sign gives a lot of information regarding some of the costs that fire departments deal with and also how firefighters believe in fire prevention items that would make their jobs easier and save lives. I think the price of the fire truck is important and good information.

Fire Fighting Occupations. U.S. Department of Labor. 18 Dec. 2007

<<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos158.htm>> .

This website gives the basic details of firefighting and what the job encompasses. It describes the type of work that is firefighting, their hours, environment, training, the job outlook, and earnings among other things. The website is compiled well with many statistics that come from a very credible source. This is a government website so I can be sure that I will not have any problems with the information I got with it. I think one of the most interesting things on the website is the salary chart; which tells the reader the salary of every level of firefighter from the high end to the low end. This information will probably end up in my essay because it is very important to the lives and aspirations of firefighters.

This website gives a detailed explanation of what it is that firefighters usually deal with. Of course they fight fires but they also deal a lot with emergency medical treatment. Some are also in the hazardous material removal group of firefighters. There are also those that work in the fire prevention and fire inspection branches of their fire department. They work in all kinds of settings across the country from dense city to farmland and vacant forests. When they are not on a call most of the time they clean the station because that is where they live for large chunks of time and train in different exercises. Their work environment is very different from any other professions'. A lot of their time is spent in the station. This is where they live for their twenty-four hour shifts. When they are out on a call they are exposed to a lot of smoke and fire which can damage their lungs and heart

greatly. They also come into contact with poisonous, flammable, and combustible chemicals that require them to take precautions whenever these are present and also wear masks.

In general, firefighters only need a high school diploma to become a firefighter. However, more and more departments are looking for education that is above a GED. Today, many have studied fire science or fire engineering. The firefighter process begins with an academy that future firefighters must participate in for a couple months. Then they become probationary firefighters. This probationary period could take up to four years. Many firefighters are also required to become certified EMTs. Training continues for the entire course of their careers to learn new techniques and stay fresh on those they have not used in some time.

In 2006 there were upwards of 360,000 paid employees working in fire service. There are also a significant number of volunteer firefighters working throughout the country. Volunteer firefighters do not get paid to do this. They have real jobs outside of the station where they make their living but choose to volunteer for many different reasons. Paid firefighters make an average of \$42,000 a year while the average earnings of higher ups are about \$62,000. The highest paying position in the department is the fire chief. They make between \$70,000 and \$95,000. Overtime is also allotted to those who decide to work more than they are required. They have medical and liability insurance, as well as sick days, paid holidays, and vacations. Usually they are rewarded pension after twenty-five years of service.

This is the general outline of a firefighter's life. This website does not incorporate any emotional or personality issues which makes it very indifferent and unbiased. It just gives the facts. Learning the emotional part will come with observation. The information from this website gave me a good basic understanding of what firefighters "do". It doesn't go very in-depth because all fire stations and departments are different, but the statistics are really useful in understanding how many people work as firefighters and the benefits from doing so.

IAFF History. International Association of Fire Fighters.

<<http://www.iaff.org/about/history/ourhistory.htm>>.

This article gives the history of the International Association of Firefighters. It dates back from the first firefighter unions to World War II to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. The IAFF is a union of firefighters for the United States and Canada. Over the years this union has introduced many new life saving techniques to the firefighting industry from improved equipment to regulating hours and crew sizes. Firefighters used to work more than eighty hours a week in the early 1900's until the IAFF was created. This

specific union was founded in 1918. During World War II, Canadian members of the IAFF were sent to Great Britain to help with fires in civilian towns. The United States members worked overtime to compensate for all of the firefighters who joined the service and tore apart old fire trucks for scrap metal. The IAFF also helped those soldiers returning home by giving them back their jobs at the stations and finding other jobs in the fire service industry for those who became injured during the war and could not continue their previous routine. Then, in the eighties, the IAFF began instituting safety measures at the stations. It created minimal excepted standards for a firefighter, minimal training regiment, and equipment requirements. All of this information is important because the station that I am observing is a part of the IAFF and I can use a lot of this history information to build a background on how the station got to be the way it is.

Firefighter Training House Explosion. Firefightercloscalls.com. 31 July, 2006

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dSpoUUFBBM>>.

This is a video of a firefighter training house that exploded. The firefighters were trying to start a controlled fire in the abandoned home as a training exercise. One of the firefighters walked up to the building with a wick to light the fire but as he threw the wick into the fire starter (I am not sure what they used to start the fire) the house exploded with a few firefighters standing just feet away. There is debris flying across the screen. Near the end of the video there is a shot of an ambulance in front of the smoky scene. This video is a good example of how dangerous even the training can be and can support my belief that firefighters put their lives on the line whenever they are working.

Oxholm, Kristy. "Lessons Learned" Online Posting. 11 Aug, 2008. Firefighter Nation.

<<http://www.firefighternation.com/profiles/blog/show?id=889755%3ABlogPost%3A1100968>>

In this blog, Oxholm tells her readers of three lessons she has learned in her time as a firefighter. Her first lesson is that firefighters should not run. Running at the scene of a fire causes stress and a lack of organization. She also means that firefighters should slow down and take everything in stride. Trying to learn too much, too soon will only lead to problems. Her second lesson is that firefighters need to give each other space to operate. They need to "keep back" and look at the big picture. They have to open their minds to different techniques and ways of handling things. Her last lesson is that firefighters should always take more classes. Oxholm says that there are many new technologies and techniques for getting the job done in a safer and more efficient manner and firefighters need to keep up with this as much as they can. She also says that learning is a huge part of the

relationship between firefighters. They should always teach each other new things and work together. This blog says a lot about the way experienced firefighters look back on their careers. It also outlines the mentality that they should have on the job. I also found it interesting that this is a women firefighter (or so I assume by the name) that got respectful comments and also became president of the Vermont State Firefighters Association.

Test of Courage: Firefighter's Diary. PBS.

<<http://www.pbs.org/itvs/testofcourage/life2.html>>.

This has a few excerpts from the journal of a probationary firefighter in Oakland. He kept a record of all the things that he went through and this gives a few of them. He writes in his journal that his first fire as a firefighter was a "great first fire". It was very involved and took a lot of work. He also mentioned a few calls that included elderly people who were choking, having a stroke, or overdosing on heroin. The few deaths he does mention in these small excerpts from his journal include children. One was a young boy who stopped breathing and when the firefighter performed, CPR blood started to spill out of the boy's nose and mouth. The other was a young girl who was trapped in the back seat of a crushed car. This shows the variety of calls that firefighters go on and even some of the emotion that comes with different calls. For example; he said that his first fire was a great one. This obviously means that he was excited. He also mentions being sad when the little boy dies and also taking a gift basket to the family of the girl in the crushed car.

The United States Fire Administration Announces the 2007 Firefighter Fatalities Report. 11 Aug. 2008

<<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/media/press/2008releases/081108.shtm>>.

This website gives a quick description of the 2007 firefighter fatality report. This report was written by government officials describing what kind of firefighters they were and how they died. This report includes only those fatalities that occurred to on-duty firefighters. There is a list of different scenarios where firefighters have died in the past year and a specific number to go along with those. There were 118 firefighters who died in 2007 and this list groups the deaths into categories.

Two Volunteer Fire Fighters Die Fighting a Basement Fire. Fire fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Report. 31 July, 2002

<<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face200108.html>>.

This is a report of a case where two volunteer firefighters died while fighting a fire in Illinois. The fire station was called to the house because the residents reported seeing smoke coming from the bathroom. The first fire engine arrived and inspected the house to see where the smoke was coming from. There were a

few small fires in the ceiling and attic which caused a small collapse. This minor fire was quickly put out and the firefighters continued searching the home for the cause of the fire. Small fires kept popping up throughout the house and were put out quickly and efficiently. Then the firefighters went into the basement to inspect it. There were three firefighters in the basement and another came down later to bring supplies. Then a large fire erupted that engulfed the whole side of the house. Only two of the firefighters in the basement got out in time. The other two volunteer firefighters were pronounced dead at the hospital. This article gives a very specific description of what happened at the house that day. At the end of the article it also lists recommendations to keep such an instance from happening again. This article really shows how fires can change drastically and be much unexpected. Firefighters have to be ready for everything but that is impossible to ask of any human. The threat of death is always around the corner for firefighters and these unexpected occurrences really exemplify that.

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Field notes

9-18-08 Fire Truck artifact

- Pump panel, discharge, pressure gauges for all lines, control 1250 gal/min pump- needs monitoring because over pressured hoses can flail around and kill someone
 - Box for mics near panel
 - 500 gallon tank in truck
- Big grey intake is for hydrant connection- 6 in diameter
 - 24 on main rig
- Crimson with white stripe running down sides
- Nozzles on hoses act like garden hose attachments
 - 2 ft or so tires w/ rims same color as body
 - Powerful lights all over
 - Pike on top between cab and body
 - Many radios in cab
 - Seating for 4 people
- Tight cramped interior w/ switches and flips, fans, headphones with mics, handheld radios lying around, lab top on passenger side, cell phone plugged into charger
 - Med pack, helmets, jackets, fire masks
- Seats with open backs for O2 tanks, except for driver seat- see drawing
 - 1.5-2 ft diameter steering wheel
 - Diamond plated floors
 - Fire radio connected to fire com. System
 - 2001 Pierce Sabre from Appleton Wisconsin
- Ox box- opens boxes on buildings for unlocking doors
 - Alarm keys hanging from roof
 - Seating for 2 in back
 - Same open back style

- Axes, flashlights, and headsets

9-25

- Very clean building
- 2 watching USA network on lazyboys—4 lazyboys in tv room
- 10 VHS tapes
- Bookshelf stacked neatly with firefighting books and magazines-6 shelves-Diesel Power, Harley Davidson catalog of parts
- Both guys watching tv were on overtime, replacing 2 on training
- Blue Urbana Fire Dept. polo t-shirts, blue pants, bears crocs, black athletic shoes
- 24 on 48 off-10 days a month
- Part of the International Association of Firefighters local 1147
- When raises come into play, everyone gets one, not just certain people
- See map of building
- Kitchen- 3 fridges, fume hood over stove, empty cans of fanta and popcorn bag in trash, half full bottle of Gatorade on table, a few water bottles on counter, Coffee Mate coffee jar on counter next to coffee maker
- Garage- line of green lockers on both sides, grill and pop machine in front corner, 2 engines, 2 pick ups, 2 trailers- national security and hazmat, body dummy lying in back with a rope around feet, garden hose in back, 18 residential extinguishers on ground, tiki touch by garage, large American flag on garage door closest to parking garage, garbage bin full of road salt, room in back for filling O2 tanks, room for tools, room for washing jackets and rest of worn equipment has a large washer and dryer
- In the tool room a white board with writing: "IF YOU USE THIS ROOM CLEAN IT UP" "why?" see drawing
- Dining Room- oval table with 6 chairs, tv, flyer for 6th Annual Ambulance Chase 5K run/walk
- Bedrooms- 3 of them each with 2 cots, personal belongings
- Bathrooms next to bedrooms- 3 of them

- Small fitness room with free weights, weight machine, treadmill, precor stepper
 - Conversation
 - o "There's a hierarchy"
 - o Love their jobs-"I show up half an hour early"
 - o "Whatever the cops don't do, we do"
 - o "Smitty Dong 3 5 8 9, phone call"
 - o Three of them talking about one of their trucks- mention miles, year, price, and conversation buyer had with seller(haggling)
 - o No one really prefers a certain job over another such as engineer, firefighter, driver, etc
 - o Really strong brother atmosphere
 - "I want to know about my brother's family"
 - "It's like a frat house at times"
 - o Very family oriented
 - Family comes and eats dinner with dad
 - "If they're talking on the phone, it's probably with their wives"
 - Firefighters always eat dinner as a family in the station
 - There are a lot of birthday parties, family gatherings that they have with each other
 - Go to funerals together as well
 - o told me that they swear a lot in the station but once outside they become "professional"
 - o Fire prevention officer (Mr. Bishop) used to be a firefighter but was diagnosed with a heart condition----dedication
- 10-1 3: 30-5
- Mr. Adams greets me and is re-doing the charts for the morse code box thing?

- o Gets a call from his kids that there is a mouse in the window well
 - § “call me back when you get a kill”
 - § Find a longer broom and lift up the grate
 - § Has a few young girls---3? One is 10 for sure
- Mr. Ryan is running on the treadmill watching the history channel
 - o “What’s up brother”
 - o Tells me of the building walkthroughs of 3 university buildings, inventory, studying for captains test, and housework
 - o Says that when the cubs game is on, the is not doing anything else
 - o Tells me how the job causes weight gain because of the low stress change times turning into really high stress situations instantly
 - o Guy stopped by from the DI earlier
 - o Average 12-15 calls a day but they haven’t had any yet today
 - o Tells me how they got all of the equipment in the gym—department pays for anything that will better the firefighters and the government uses a fire tax to pay for some
- Rhonda was a 5’5 blonde, pretty, seems to be stronger than a majority of women, working overtime for someone
 - o Cleaning tools in the tool room
 - o She loves her job too
 - o Seeing people stare at the passing truck—“sense of empowerment”
 - o One of 2 women in station but one was on military leave
 - o Tells me of how being the only women in the training classes lead to instructors and peers making her do more work than the other men, had to prove herself more(men still don’t trust women firefighters?)
 - o Told me about the importance of fitness and how there are not many big guys in the dept. I asked her more about the bigger firefighters and she told me that most of the time they are the ones that drive the engines, not the ones that go into the buildings
 - o Said that the adrenaline rush is a big part of why firefighters love their

jobs and when they get to a call and it is not as intense as they expected it they get a "dumping effect" where all of the adrenaline leaves the body

o Her cell phone rang and the ringtone was the "go cubs go" song. She ignored the call as she was talking to me. Twice today I heard a reference to the cubs coming from the firefighters- today is the cubs first playoff game.

· I was talking to Mr. Ryan in his office and Rhonda walks in and asks when she should start dinner, Mr. Ryan said now. Then he mentioned the cubs game at 5 and how all he wants is the tv in front of him

10-13

I walk in to interview Mr. Ryan and he says "whats up trouble?" as hes shaking my hand. He shakes my hand everytime i get there and everytime i leave.

Q: When did you first realize that you wanted to become a firefighter?

A: It was in 1989 and just, I didn't really have a clue up until then and some guys just asked me to get on a volunteer fire department with 'em and I was pretty much hooked as soon as I got on. And I was, the fact that it was, EMS was just starting to gain in the fire service at that point, cause before that it had been, had been a lot of EMS service and staff. The fire service was actually starting to pick up on the EMS end of it and I was in pre-med med when I was in college so it was a chance for me to still play, you know, medic a little bit.

Q: Did you have any reasons for deciding to become a firefighter, other than the fact that you didn't know what you wanted to do?

A: Well to be honest with you it kind of, my father is not in very good health and at the time I lived caddy corner from him and you know, the heart attack kind of thing like that and I, I think that its happened the same way throughout the fire service. I don't want to show up at a scene of any kind and not be able to do something. So I went in, I did the EMS deal, became an EMT so I could help my dad if something happened. It just happened that we had an ambulance service attached to a fire department in town an uh I got on that and youre already part of the fire department too, and after a couple fires the Ram, Rambo thing kicks in and uh cause I'll be honest with you man. I I, it's a cliché of this is one of the last noble professions just like I respect soldiers and what they do, um, we're a paramilitary outfit, and, and getting to help people, you know the fact that im a Christian and I get to help people cause typically theyre having a bad day when we show up. And aside from just the skills that they've taught me to tell deal with it, we could just, a word here and there, or a, you know, you can comfort them emotionally also. So I, I enjoy that, I like helping people. It sounds corny but uh I think that's

what separates, not saying im a great firefighter or anything, but it's the guys who have it in their heart that way are better than the ones that are here for a paycheck. Because you just, you push the envelope.

Q: Could you describe the process of becoming a firefighter?

A: well there's volunteer departments where its basically, I think a lot of 'em have a resume thing and that you have to be a certain age to get on.

Uh and then like I say it's another thing but you could be a volunteer which they're important volunteer organizations out in the rural areas because of the response time for anybody else showing, you gotta have somebody there to fight a fire. Um as for a paid firefighter that's a tough nut to crack. There's uh, so many people, I think we had five or six hundred to test in Urbana was last time. I went to Columbus, Ohio and there was almost 5000 testing because its, its really good pay. Uh it is like being a big kid, you get to hop on the big red trucks and drive around you know, and uh then again I'll go back to the fact that I like to help people. Its, a lot of guys like the shift work, every third day kind of thing. But to get, on some departments then again with EMS are going (there) share paramedic or something, you can almost walk on some departments, they're, they're dying to get paramedics. Like in Urbana I think uh, I don't believe you need anything they, we will put you through academy, you'll get your firefighter 2 and there's just a age requirement and a residency, you have to live within 15 miles. You know, but that could be after a year after you're hired, you can move in. you know what I mean? You can be from Chicago and by the end of that year you need to be within 15 miles. Uh but other than that you go through a, a written and an orientation, and you have a written test and then there's a physical agility test. You go through a psychiatric evaluation and then an interview. So you're sinked in pretty good and at any one of those points if you show up late for one of those you can be kicked. I've seen that happen. So. Yeah its really competitive so they can kind of, you know once they go through the testing though they come up with a list supposedly, personnel sees this that we know but they come up with a list that uh, they have to go up, they pull the top thirty people and interview them. And that's their pool. Um, they cant go down, supposedly not go down any farther than that, but that's the system.

Q: So it's kind of like recruiting?

A: Well they did recruit a lot, to tell ya actually, firefighter Phill, the African American guy that's on my crew, he went down to St. Louis, part of their recruiting deal, they went to St. Louis, Chicago, they went on BET because they were really pushing for minorities. the minorities aren't testing and then sometimes they don't, you know they just don't do as well or I don't know. Were really trying to make the whole system such that uh minorities have a fair shake and just try to get them to even apply.

Q: Your first call as a firefighter, what went through your head?

A 😊 (laugh) Well uh I was, I had been on a week, and this is at the volunteer, this is my first fire call and I, I could see it was about a mile and a half away, I could see the car, the truck that was burning. And that, you know, it was that far away we had to go to the station, got the rig, we pulled out and it was two of us. Um one guy, he was driving since I was brand new and I riding with him and we got there he turned to me, he goes "put that end pull" and then he stopped and he goes, he looked and saw it was me and he goes "all right" he put it in pump, charged the line and then I took it and I extinguished the truck. And as soon as that was out, I mean the tires were blown up, it was fully involved, was out in the cornfield, I've come to find out that it was three guys I knew, and one of 'em was a fatality. So my first call was uh, you know, ending with a fatality and uh I could still, I could still see every deceased face I've ever had. And I remember this guy. I was actually workin', doin' some construction for his family at the time. Yeah I was pumped but its, its uh, you get that surge of adrenaline I was so new at the time, a lot of new guys are so new that you don't really know what you're getting into.

Q: How do firefighters deal with death?

A: Its uh, a lot of people wouldn't understand this. We have a very course sense of humor. We use humor to deal with a lot of things. If somebody was standing there next to us they would just be in shock at some of the comments we make. Its not because were bad people, I think its really a coping mechanism. And, I could give you examples but its just, I just think that the training is se... I dunno, I dunno if this job conditions you for that because I've been to a, we found an elderly gentlemen, he had been down for a while and we found him, he had been out long enough that the lights were off and stuff in his house and it was night so, you know, we're looking for him with a flashlight. You could tell he was in there, and uh, ten minutes later we're at the deli getting supper, you know? You know I carried a guys leg down the street about a block and, one of my guys says "man I got a pair of boots like that" you know its just, it's a coping thing because you see something like that its gonna imprint.

Q: Have there been cases where firefighters can't cope with it that well?

A: Well, I'm sure there has been, and in the big cities you, they'll call that burnout. And the guys would just get tired of it. Here we see that but it's not on a steady, you know, a steady run. And uh we're a little bit between so we got some time to get it together, you know, afterwards. And guys are pretty good about being there for each other, when we have a big call with uh, critical incidents stress debriefing team, if its severe enough of an incident they will call in peers who are on pretty much the state, they'll call other firefighters, medics, whatever, they'll come in and meet with us and whoever was involved in the call, and usually just talk about it; your

feelings and try to deal with, and then we, we train on things to look for, if someone is about to crack, you know, you can tell when somebody's gettin' pretty stressed about things.

Q: What kind of relationship do firefighters have outside of the station?

A: Um ,to be honest with you, just like anybody's life, guys are getting busy, 'course we're getting older too, the guys, the single guys they'll get together, party together things like that. But the married guys, we all have families, a lot of guys have second jobs, we don't get together quite as much. There's a few guys who have boats on the lake, things like that. But you know, they used to play softball and have a team of that. They really don't anymore, we're gonna try to resurrect some of that because well, it's a brotherhood in the fire service that uh in the old days was stronger than it is now and for our department, part of that is morale and uh the relationships the guys have, the camaraderie. Its gonna sound bad but that comes through at fires, at the pretty bad medicals and things like that because its just like a soldier being under fire. Guys that bond at those kind of intense emotional, because its an intense emotional thing so the bond is a little more intense and it time for the guys to see how you handled that. If you took your care of business it's like you come back and the respect is building, the compassion for each other is building. And uh, to be honest with you morale takes a hit when we don't have things to prove that. It sounds, we have, it's the, well the best, I wouldn't say best, but the closest times are after incidents where we've handled our business, everybody comes back and we've made a difference, you know?

I mean if you lose a structure or something because you screwed up that's different but guys grow closer under fire.

Q: When you come back from the bad accidents, do you talk about it at the station? Do you go over what happened?

A: Some guys do. It kinds of depends on the crew. Some, it depends on the guys that you have when you can tell if they need to talk about it. A lot of firemen, a lot of guys I work with, are, they internalize a lot of stuff, they just uh, they can handle it so they deal with it inside, especially guys who don't throw their emotions on the table. My daughter, if you go to the hospital you know that little pain scale they got with the smiley faces? (laughs) Her mom goes "which one's daddy?", she goes "number five". Straight face. Part of that is I've tried to, to condition myself not to show any emotion, at least it seems like that because guys can pick up if I'm scared or nervous on the radio. And my guys have to feel confident in my abilities, you know, that's what I want to convey to them. Plus anybody else within hearing, you know. But uh, you know if it's something really really bad there's usually a college you could call to critique or debrief you know whatever, the guys will some together, um at the scene. An old officer taught me one time, he goes "there's different types of critiques and one of them if you approve at the scene while it's fresh, while you still see these things" and you know, if, if everybody can kind of get that

initial contact on the step for whatever and he said: "you'll see if there's somebody who doesn't deal with it who has an issue with it" and that is, as a supervisor I have to follow up on that. We come back we talk about it, we have a department, or a shift critique. Everybody that was there will come together and we'll talk about it. It's supposed to be like tactics and things like that, but those are all some of the time that people are having a hard time dealing with things. Most of these guys can deal with a lot. Um I've never been to CISD deal, that critical instant stress deal, and I've seen some things that have messed me up, you know, usually ill deal with it, with my wife, she doesn't really care to hear about a lot of it.

People can't really understand what we do, completely. It is a different world, I mean out there on scenes, bad car wrecks, and it'll be at night—and it's just a weird feeling because you'll be standing on a road where typically you couldn't because there's cars comin' so that's a little eerie.

But it's a dead calm and I've tried to explain it before, that, you really, you know, if there's been a fatality, I don't know if it's death, I don't know what it is there's just this feeling, heaviness. It seems like you're walking on a blanket of snow, it's quite, it's just kind of weird. Um, but the thing is a lot of time, the guys, it'll just be, there's crews that I've worked with, the relationships we build before that incident help because ill just look at one of my guys and we've got a relationship so it's like, you know. You try to make it as good as you can in the station. You know Dwayne and I?

Guy in the office right here? Hell, we used to have so much fun they broke us up, we were taken off shift because we were cutting, cuttin' up, we were, we had a ball. But I tell you what when we rolled out the door we were ready and we did our job. And for some reason they didn't like us so happy. Different people now, they wouldn't do that now, they actually want that.

Q: How would you explain your relationship with the guys in the station?

A: that's another interesting setup because uh we're supposed to be supervisors and they want to use business models to do that. Unfortunately, most businesses don't sleep with the guys, don't eat with the guys, they're not with 'em 24 hours, we can't deal with it that way. You really have to get more personal with these guys. It's hard if you have an individual that you have no relationship with and you're in this station for a third of your time, a third of my life's here, and if I got somebody that we don't get along and can't work together it's a problem. And either you need to work it out or see if you can get a transfer for somebody. But, I mean you get to know, unless a guy is really tight lipped you get to know everything about their, his family, his marriage, his kids. And uh you know, you try to emphasize with that, you know be aware of that. Like the guys they bring their families in whenever they want and visit and stuff. You just, you know, you do get to know them. so my goal, my, my main goal isn't tactics, it's not any of that stuff, it's my guys and its uh, trying to get a relationship with them when we trust each other and my goal too is when we're all up on a scene I want the other

crews goin': "254 can handle their business". You know? So there's a lot to it but most of it is interpersonal so my job, aside from the other stuff that I do, the biggest part of it is interpersonal. If I can't make the quality of life in this station better, it's going to affect their home life too and I, I fail as a supervisor. So, and its not easy cause they're grown men and sometimes it's like babysitting kids and uh, you know, I'm not perfect but some of its like "What are you thinking?"

Q: Does rank change that relationship?

A: That's another interesting part of this job because it needs to; in the station we're pretty much just planar. Even though I've got a light blue, we're all pretty much equal here. And I have a little different job to do sometimes with stuff like this while they're cleanin' I'm fillin' out reports or something but other than that. You know, we talk as equals. I don't think they call me sir or anything like that. But, the problem you run in with that is the guys; you need to have enough of a relationship with your guys that the respect kicks in; that when we on a call maybe sir. You don't have to call me sir but you better; you know unless I tell you to jump off the roof, if I give an order you need to follow it. At that point, questioning's over; you know I take input from my guys cause I got a pretty sharp crew, but at a certain point I make the call and you got to do it unless it's a safety issue. And some guys have a hard time; some of the young guys have a hard time getting away from that. There's a lot of young guys come in thinking they all this and that. You know you gotta just kind of look. I will respect if you can give me just a little bit of information but there's some dues to pay. But it is different because I can tell you that respect from firefighters is one of the hardest things to get. You uh, everyday, everything I do either builds that or destroys that and I'm very aware of that. Every little thing that I do, I can't let my guard down at all. And as it should be; they should, you know; I put myself to a higher standard but then it's a mutual respect thing too. I uh expect certain things out of them. I told 'em before; you know I wanted to correct some behavior and the way I did it he, the individual was in tickle so I'll tell you what: 'then don't leave my ass hanging out'. I said: "I will support you to the pope, but if you screw up after I've given you some direction, don't give me an undefendable position, cause there's nothing I can do with that".

Q: I've seen in movies and read in books that firefighters like to pull pranks on each other and joke around a lot. If this is true, can you give me an example of it that you have seen?

A: Oh when I first got on it was (smirk); we did a lot more than we do now. But I've seen guy's bed clothes soaked with water and thrown out in a, in a tree; you know their pillow blankets and stuff, in the middle of January so it freezes. I've seen car keys frozen into a cup. The guys, they used to fill; we used to fill up socks with shaving cream and beat the snot out of a guy. Cause I'd come into a cubical and there's shaving cream

hanging all over the ceiling. And they would top off this cubicle; you know it was half this size and they would shove all the weight benches and recliners, and throwing stuff over the top; for some reason our door, our wall stopped about a foot short of the ceiling. So I mean they're just packing stuff in. And uh, they used to have a lot of fun in the old days too. They had a, an open dorm where like everybody on shift was in one big room and they had this tile floor and the last guy to bed had to shut the light off. The other guys would take cast iron plates; weight plates; to bed with 'em and as soon as he shut off the light and he's walking to his cot and you could hear: 'shhhhhhhh' wingin' those at him and he can't see and uh they'd smash your toes so. Yeah and you know spray guys with hoses and stuff. We had a guy that was a practical joker; I mean he would sit from me to you while he was talking to you while he was sewing the sleeve of your sweatshirt shut. And you know, you'd put your sleeve on and you know, short, short-shirted. He would hook, set the sprayers on the sink and got the chief three times in one day. Finally the chief came out in a hefty garbage bag; he goes "I give up". Well uh, well that particular guy I nailed. We were checking trucks and the engine was pulled out and the truck was pulled out. While my driver was on top of the aerial, he goes: "Whish", I looked up and he goes, he pointed. The stick was over and there's a big nozzle that went straight down right over these two guys working on the engine. Ok, so I fill it up. Well it's a four inch waterway, so I'm turnin' it real slow and nothings coming out, nothings coming out and when it did charge it just goes: "pshh" and like a five or six hundred gallon a minute nozzle on it just goes: "pwash". He was soaked from head to toe. It nailed him just directly. So little things like that. Nothing, nothing to injure or anything like that. And flour, I put flour on a guys pillow one time and I forgot that he was, he was allergic. He got up in the morning; his eyes, he was like (imitates blind man searching for his way) and his eyes looked like; he couldn't see anything. So, oh and another big thing, this tile (points to the ceiling) they used to be thirty, forty feet of tubing, oxygen tubing, and hook 'em to an IV bag and squeeze them and they would have them right over your cot while you were sleeping aimed at different places squeezing; you don't even know what's happenin' till you're soaked. So yeah.

Q: What is the general attitude in the station?

A: they keep us pretty busy. I mean; we have basic stuff like, basic housekeeping things. They, they clean the fridge and the whole kitchen, there's weekly, there's weekly chores but there's daily stuff so we sweeping, vacuuming, cleaning toilets everyday. So that keeps the guys busy but then we also walk through buildings, we do inspections, we run the medical, we run the fire calls, we doo P&E things; prevention education. It's very busy. So the guys are usually always doin'; plus like me with this promotional thing; I study whenever I get a chance. Those guys, there's things they're working on so you know. Pretty busy. We don't see a whole lot of each other till supper. You know we'll eat together for the other meals but you know; from supper on, is kind of our time.

You know I try not to make sure we don't have anything scheduled and that the time that we kind of bond. Guys will hang out, watch a movie, or something you know. Usually we'll make it through it hear. But you know it's uh, it is all hanging out together. It kind of, well it's, it's; there' not too many jobs where you get to hang out with your buddies. You'll be a married male with kids and every third day you get to go hang out with the guys and maybe go watch a movie or whatever. Sometimes my wife gets a little jealous but uh; the problem is it doesn't happen as often as it used to. I mean we're up to; when I got on we ran about 2400 calls, we're at 4400 now and uh, here a lot of 'em are at night and you know; the times that we would hang out are getting smaller. Um I also, depending on my crew, we like to work out; I haven't worked out for months now but we get a good crew and I, I try to really make time for that. It's fun to work out together. You bond that way. You just look for those little snippets of time to do that. Um when I first got on in Urbana and before I got on they had, they had so much more time and they had a little more camaraderie I think. Yeah, they played whiffle ball, they played basketball; you know, they spent time together that way a lot. Course it was only nine of 'em on a shift at the time too or something.

10-19

- Vagisil commercial – Mr. Ryan says toMr. Adams “you ever had that problem?”

- Talking about daughters Mr. Ryan says toMr. Adams “you’re starting a taco stand”

- Talking about haloween

- oMr. Adams says his wife wants to be sarah palin

- Watching a murder documentary on TLC

- They are all wearing blue pants and blue shirts

- o Mr. Phillips is wearing boots

- o He is 6'2 and muscular, buzzed head, arm band tattoo on upper right bicep

- I asked about violent crimes and if they have to deal with any

- o Lt Mr. Ryan – “There’s so many shootings but its nice to know its coming”

- o They have about 5 or 6 shootings a year but very few are fatal

- o “Those guys in Urbana are bad shots” – Mr. Phillips

- Shelves are a lot more organized than the last time I noticed
- Asked about my assignment and were worried about what I was writing
 - Mr. Ryan says brother a lot and does his hair back too
- Mr. Ryan gets a phone call and talks about changing widows with them. maybe another ff
- There was a woman on TV and Mr. Ryan says that Mr. Adams would look good like that
- Speed, Swat, The Mexican, Forest Gump, Titanic, Tin Cup, Gone in 60 Seconds all in the entertainment center
 - Talking about food and their "supper"
 - o The huge chicken fingers at giovantis
 - o Mr. Phillipss experience with the Italian beef they have there
 - o Mr. Phillipss experience with buffalo wild wings carribbean jerk sauce
 - Container of Kodiak chewing tobacco on the coffee table next to Mr. Phillips
- Mr. Ryan asks if I went to church today and the other guys laugh a little
 - Going on a fire truck ride to get dinner
- o Told me not to get hurt because they didn't have the proper paper work filled out
 - o They would hide the body if anything did happen
 - o "If anything happens to you, we'll hide the body. We know how to now"
 - § Watching the murder doc caused this joke
- Group of girls walk past the garage and Mr. Ryan – " Those girls were really staring us over"
 - Went to Fat sandwich company but they were closed
 - o They talked about where they should go now
 - § Mr. Ryan suggested giovantis
 - § The others said they didn't care

- Mr. Phillips- "I'd eat the acid out of a skunk"
- o We went to giovantis and they asked if I wanted anything – I said no
 - o They all ordered the chicken fingers
 - o We waited a while andMr. Adams went exploring downstairs of the restaurant
- o Mr. Phillips and Mr. Ryan talked about the new apartment building going up across the street
- § Mr. Phillips – "Can you imagine if someone jumped onto green st. if they decided to jump?"
 - o They got their food and we left

The ff told a lot of jokes today and were laughing and smiling most of the time. The atmosphere in the station is a lighthearted one and the firefighters are really comfortable with each other. They are just like "macho men" with a soft spot. They talk about their families a lot. They have to love them a lot to make them the topic of so much conversation. They are always thinking of possible problems they could run into on the job like when they were talking about the new building going up. When Rhonda was there she cooked dinner for them but she wasn't and they went out.

10-22

- Mr. Phillips is filling out sheets for his EMS class
 - o Wants to be able to help people on calls
- o 2 days of calls a week plus hours to fill on ambulance and in the ER and the forms he has to fill out when he goes on calls as a ff
 - He has 2 kids and a 16 yr old stepson
 - o His 2 kids are both boys under 7
 - Has been on the dept for 2 years
 - o His brother has been on for a longer time
 - o Says he has seen a change in the way people see ff after 9-11
- § His brother and him "wanted to know who the hell we should go bomb"
 - Old school came on and we watched it

- Mr. Phillips and Mr. Ryan talked about Mr. Ryan's daughter and dating
 - o His daughter wants to see an 17 yr old and she is 15
 - o "Whatever you do to my daughter ill do to you"
- Talked about what they want to be for haloween
 - o Mr. Ryan wants to be the terminator
- o Mr. Phillips wants to wear a Jason mask and hold an ax to his face when they drive around on haloween and scare the kids standing in line at the bars
 - oMr. Adams doesn't know what the wants to be
 - Talked about when they started drinking
 - o Mr. Phillips started when he was about 18
- § He told us how he went to buy a 12 pack on his 21st and they didn't card him and he said he wished he knew that earlier
 - o Mr. Ryan said he dint have a drop until he turned 21
 - § "I don't remember the next few years but..."
 - o This led to talking about losing their virginity
 - § Mr. Ryan- "I was a late bloomer but I made up for it"
- They would talk about girls and their ways a lot, especially Mr. Ryan saying things like "they'll do that to you"
 - No calls so far and im disappointed
- Mr. Ryan told me that they are not supposed to go into detail about calls they got but they do anyway
 - o A 30 year old man died from a cardiac arrest
 - o A 60 year old man fell down a flight of stairs and cut his brow
- Mr. Ryan picks up the tempe 12 calendar and says "so august likes..."
- In old school when there was a couple that woke up in the morning next to each other in bed naked Mr. Ryan tells me "if you have any questions we're here for you" and "bet that's happened to you"

· Frank the tank comes on and Mr. Phillips and Mr. Ryan talk about a guy they saw doing a beer bong tailgating a football game and they “laughed our asses off”

ff are no different than any other man. They have a very crude sense of humor that many men have when they are hanging out together. They have similar backgrounds and have gone through the same things as teenagers and young adults. Their training is something that takes up a lot of their time and they are continually going through. Again family makes up a large part of the conversations that they have with each other.

Discuss:

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Andrei Oros

Rhet. 105

I was incredibly nervous to start my first ethnography research. I thought it was just a glorified writing assignment. Little did I know that the people

I met and the things I learned would change my view regarding the topic and rid me of my ignorance. I visited a fire station during the course of first semester of my freshman year. From the street in front I could see through the clear doors into the garage and the engines and pickup trucks that were parked inside. I went inside not knowing what to expect at all and met with the fire prevention officer. We talked a bit about my project and he showed me around the station. After exploring the station and engine for a while I met two of the members of the shift I would be observing who just got back from a training exercise. Mr. Ryan was a Caucasian male of average height with short graying hair slicked back. He had a wide build and looked to be fit for his age as he was approaching his fifties. "What's up brother?" he said as he firmly shook my hand. The other, Mr. Adams is again a Caucasian male, a little taller than average with graying dark hair. He is also the engineer on the shift.

I had been observing the group of firefighters for a few weeks by now and my project shifted from observing them to spending time with them. We relaxed around the station and watched some television since the firefighters always get their chores and training done in the morning and I usually walked into the station at around four or five. There was a commercial break that started out with a Vagisil ad. "You ever had that problem?" Mr. Ryan says to the two firefighters. They both smile and laugh. Mr. Adams has a trio of little girls. "You're starting a taco stand" said Mr. Ryan to him. Mr. Phillips told them about his twin brother (who is also on the department) babysitting his kids that night because his wife had a prior obligation. Mr. Phillips has two young children and a teenage stepson. He got a call from one of his kids talking about the night and what they have been doing. Mr. Phillips was talking on the phone and laughing at times because one of the younger ones told about the two bloody noses that already happened. Family is everything to these firefighters. Even though they are away from them two or three days a week, the firefighters have their family visit and call all the time.

Family is the topic of many conversations held in the station. Mr. Ryan told me that "...unless a guy is really tight lipped you get to know everything about their, his family, his marriage, his kids... [T]he guys bring their families in whenever they want and visit..." (Wisher). The support and love that comes from firefighters' families helps the firefighters handle the stress that they face on the job. The authors of *Behind the Brotherhood: Rewards and challenges for Wives of Firefighters* write:

The support of family is paramount to reducing the impact of highly stressful work on emergency responders. In research conducted on emergency service personnel, social support of others, including family and friends, was significantly negatively correlated with scores on both trauma symptom scales and depression scales (King, King, Fairbank, Keane, & Adams, 1997; Leffler & Dembert, 1998; Regehr, Hemsworth, & Hill, 2001; Weiss, Marmar, Metzler, & Ronfeldt, 1995). Further, those who

had higher levels of family support were less likely to take mental health stress leaves from work following a traumatic event (Regehr, Goldberg, Glancy, & Knott, 2002). Yet family members are not immune from the stresses encountered by loved ones who place themselves in the line of fire. (Bright, 2)

In an interview, Mr. Ryan said: "...[I]’ve seen some things that have messed me up... usually I’ll deal with it, with my wife...". Firefighting is one of the most stressful and emotional jobs because of the things that are dealt with and are witnessed by the firefighters. In an interview with Mr. Ryan, he said firefighters usually have a very coarse sense of humor that may surprise some people but that is the way that firefighters deal with the stress in their occupations. "...[I] carried a guy’s leg down the street about a block and one of my guys says: ‘Man I got a pair of boots like that’" (Wisher). The things that firefighters see would be very stressful to those that haven’t taught themselves to deal with it. "The reality of it is that a lot of firefighters, and for their families, this has come to be perceived as a riskier operation, and it’s having mental health consequences, marital consequences, drug and alcohol abuse consequences, you name it" (Finn). There are cases of firefighters not being able to handle the stress of their job. This is called burnout and it can cause a lot of problems in the firefighters’ life like those mentioned earlier of alcohol abuse and so on. All firefighters develop a system to relieve their stress and get over the intense emotions that come with the job.

These intense emotions really come over firefighters during emergency calls. Close to the end of my time at the station; I asked Mr. Ryan about the large fire that destroyed a corner building in downtown Champaign.

He told me that he was there and explained the fire and how it progressed. He pulled up a couple of pictures a fellow firefighter e-mailed to him on the computer in his office. It was a three story building that was engulfed in flames and eventually collapsed. I rode past it on the buss a week prior to him telling me this and there were only a few burnt beams left between the charred sides of the neighboring buildings. It was one of the biggest fires they have had in a while Mr. Ryan told me.

I started going on calls with the firefighters after two months. The first one that I was in the truck for was a small "box fire" as they call it. We drove to the corner of Oak and Gregory to see an unattended fire pit that was still burning. One of the firefighters grabbed some kind of fire extinguisher that has to be pumped out of one of the compartments on the truck and put it out. As he was putting it out the other two poked around the contents of the pit with a pike and a shovel to clear out all of the embers. The whole process took from five to ten minutes. I was also in the station when the alarm rang at nine thirty and a women dispatcher’s voice said that there was a possible fire at a fraternity house over the intercom. I walked into the garage and got into the truck with Mr. Ryan. The two other firefighters went to sleep and walked out of the

bedrooms into the garage. "This might be something" said Mr. Phillips as he pulled up the pants of his fire suit.

Here on a large college campus many of the calls that the firefighters get; deal with students or other members of the university. There is a system that the department has set up where the firefighters walk through certain buildings every few shift to familiarize themselves with them. Mr. Adams was telling me about their walkthroughs earlier that day as we walked outside into the garage and looked out onto the street. His kids called him on his cell phone and were asking him what to do about an animal in the window well. Mr. Adams told them to do something about it, asked about mom, and told them to "call me back when you get a kill". His conversation with his kids continued as the department chief pulled up in a department pick-up truck and handed Mr. Adams a can of spray paint. I introduced myself and told him what I was doing there. He told me who he was and asked if the members of the shift have been giving me any trouble. "Not yet" I said laughing. Mr. Adams told him what was going on at his house and the Chief put in some of his own advice before leaving. I had already met about six or seven members of the department by this point.

I met yet another member of the department working. She (Kelly) was a pretty blonde at about five foot five. She one of the two women on the entire department; however, the other woman is on military leave. She was cleaning and doing some maintenance work on the axes and pikes from the truck. She told me that the only real challenge she faced as a woman firefighter was during the academy. She was used as an example more so than everyone else in the class who were all males.

In their essay called *The Effect of Working With Women on Male Attitudes Toward Female Firefighters*, Craig and Jacobs conducted a survey on women firefighters. They wrote that the first woman firefighter was a woman named Judy Livers who became a firefighter in 1974. They also mention a study done by T.M. Floren that said women believe they are given easier assignments and feel pressure to work harder. According to the International Association of Women in Fire and Emergency Services' website, there are about 6,140 women currently working as firefighters in the U.S. In Illinois there are 183 women spread over 66 departments and one female department chief. Women have a little harder time becoming firefighters because of sexual harassment and recruitment in general. The number of women firefighters has risen over the years but is nowhere close to equal. We spoke for a little while and her cell phone rang playing the Chicago Cubs song.

The firefighter Kelly was working for is Mr. Phillips. He is about six foot two with the build of a football player. He has a buzz haircut and a tribal band tattoo on his right arm. At this point all three of the shift members were sitting on the recliners in the living room watching TV and talking as I sat on the last empty recliner and watched a murder investigation

documentary on TLC. I asked them if they dealt with many violent crimes in the area. Most of them are shootings and there are about five or six incidents which are non-fatal more times than not that they deal with each year they told me. "Those guys in Urbana are bad shots" said Mr.

Phillips. Firefighters deal with almost every medical call in their designated area. They assist the paramedics in many cases such as violent crimes, cardiac, arrests, personal injuries and anything else one can think of. The firefighters told me that they are not supposed to give out many details but that earlier that day they had a call about a thirty year old man that passed away of a cardiac arrest and an older gentlemen that fell down a flight of stairs. That is why many firefighters and fire departments want or require EMT training.

EMT certification is an important qualification that many firefighters and departments want. There are three different levels of EMT certification according to the US Department of Labor they are: EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate, and EMT-Paramedic. "At the EMT-Basic level, coursework emphasizes emergency skills, such as managing respiratory, trauma, and cardiac emergencies, and patient assessment. Formal courses are often combined with time in an emergency room or ambulance. The program provides instruction and practice in dealing with bleeding, fractures, airway obstruction, cardiac arrest, and emergency childbirth. Students learn how to use and maintain common emergency equipment..." (www.bls.gov).

I was sitting at the dining table with the firefighters watching the TV about midway through my time with them. As Old School started, Mr. Phillips pulled out a stack of forms to fill out for his EMS class. He has to fill out forms with the details of all the medical calls and has a certain quota to fill in order to get his certification. He also has to attend a class twice a week, log in hours at an emergency room, and in an ambulance under the supervision of a certified EMT. He was talking to Mr. Ryan about the forms and how a lot of the questions on it were hard to fully answer such as pain level. He was filling out a form for a man who had a cardiac arrest and was dead before the truck even pulled up. "Pain level? He was dead".

Heart problems are a common occurrence that firefighters not only get called for but deal with themselves as well. I walked into the gym where Mr. Ryan was running on the treadmill watching the history channel. Perpendicular to the living room was a hallway with about 8 or 9 doors off to the sides. There were three separate bedrooms each with two cots in it, three small bathrooms and a fitness room at the end of the hall. The fitness room is a small one made up of a small rack of free weights, treadmill, elliptical, a multi-purpose weight machine, and a TV. Physical fitness is an important attribute that firefighters have to put time into since they go through some of the most strenuous activity in the working world. They can be at a call that lasts for five minutes or five hours. They are required to keep fit by the job itself and have to be ready to put that

fitness level to work at any time.

He told me about the daily activities they did like building walkthroughs, inventory of the truck, housework, studying for a captain's test that was coming up. Continuing education is a large part of being a firefighter. The members train on almost every shift and if they don't, they participate in building walkthroughs. There are also many training classes that firefighters take to learn new techniques that would make things safer and quicker for the firefighters. There is a whole bookshelf in the lieutenants office filled with binders and books from various training practices. Going up in rank requires studying and taking classes which Mr. Ryan spends a lot doing to preparing himself for the captain's test. This test is a strenuous and highly critiqued assessment that takes the course of a few days. According to the US department of labor website, in order for firefighters to increase their rank they must: "...acquire expertise in advanced firefighting equipment and techniques, building construction, emergency medical technology, writing, public speaking, management and budgeting procedures, and public relations" (par. 18). In an interview, Mr. Ryan told me "...like me with this promotional thing; I study whenever I get a chance".

He was sitting in his office showered, with his hair slicked back. We spoke a little about training and he showed me a thick binder full of pictures and descriptions of a procedure involving a very intricate system of ropes. He told me that they have to know the purpose for each one of the many ropes that were all braided together. He slipped the binder back among the many that crowded the bookshelf in his office and sat back at his desk when Kelly walked in and told him that she was done cleaning the tools and asked when she should start cooking the shift's meal. Mr. Ryan said he doesn't care when but "the Cubs are on at five, so all I need's a TV". Then Kelly and Mr. Ryan told me about fire prevention week that was coming up and how the station goes to Lincoln Square to teach young children about fire prevention. Mr. Ryan told us about one time when he took part in the presentation for the children and at the end one of the mothers of one of the children told Mr. Ryan that her child was in awe of the firefighters and asked if the child could give Mr. Ryan a hug. Then a whole group of children came over and gave him a hug. Kelly had a large smile on her face that was missing only an "awww". "It was awesome" said Mr. Ryan. I did not see anything worth noting about a difference in relationships between men and men and women. Kelly asked about cooking their meal and that fit into the stereotype of women cooking for men but she seemed genuinely happy to do it. They are all family so anything one can do to help the others is something they are happy to do. Dinner is brings the entire station together every shift. The firefighters leave any chores or paperwork they are doing and come together to eat dinner. They either go to the store to buy ingredients so they can cook their own meals or go out for takeout together.

I was in the living room of the station with the three firefighters when Mr.

Adams said "Alright boys, I'm hungry". All four of us got into the truck and got ready to go out and get dinner. As we were walking out they told me that I better not get hurt because they didn't have the correct papers on file. They told me that they would have to get rid of the body so they don't get in trouble and I said: "You know how to now after watching that show". They laughed, agreed, and said that the show was good preparation. Mr. Adams was driving since he is an engineer while Mr. Ryan was in the passenger seat of the cramped cab and Mr. Phillips and I were sitting in the back. Mr. Ryan was the only one to put on his fire jacket but Mr. Phillips and Mr. Adams took their radios off and strapped them across their chests. Before we even left the garage a group of four college girls walked across the garage and Mr. Ryan said: "they were really staring us over...It's probably Andrei though". He looked back and smiled at me laughing as the truck left the garage.

Being in the truck for the first time was an experience like no other. Everybody looked our way and the sirens weren't even on. Talking with the crew there has yielded many references to driving the truck and the looks they get; saying things along the lines of it's nice to see everyone looking at us, every boy wants to ride in a fire truck, and it is empowering. We got stuck at a stop light and I turned to Mr. Phillips and asked him if he is ever tempted to just turn on the sirens; he smiled and said that he personally does, especially when they get stuck in traffic. We stopped at Fat Sandwich Company and Mr. Phillips got out of the truck to go check to see if it was open. While I waited in the engine with Mr. Adams and Mr. Ryan we saw a couple on the sidewalk across the street and Mr. Adams says: "they're gonna lean in for a kiss". Immediately Mr. Ryan and I looked over and waited for them to do so. They went their separate ways without filling Mr. Adams's prediction.

As an eighteen year old boy, my eyes tend to wander towards my fellow peers of the opposite sex. My friends and I base many conversations on this topic. The sight of women has sparked many conversations between the firefighters also; especially when we are on the truck. I have no doubt that if some people were to hear these conversations they would be offended. The firefighters know this too. They have told me that the conversations they have and the language they use is often very coarse and offensive. I cannot put into word how happy I am that they are comfortable enough around me to have these conversations and even include me in them. They were a bit awkward at the beginning but as I got to know them and build a friendship with them, which happened quite quickly, it became normal and expected.

I walked into the station one night and there sat on the table three or four Tempe 12 calendars titled: Girls of the Big Ten. "Got some reading material for you" said Mr. Adams. They ate their dinner and we started to watch Old School on the TV in the dining room. Mr. Adams went into the living room to watch Ocean's Twelve. Mr. Phillips and Mr. Ryan began to tell me about the day they had before I got to the station. They already

had upwards of five calls on the day so there was a good chance that there would be another one for me to tag along on. I was having a conversation with Mr. Phillips when I noticed a large American flag on the wall above the TV that was a memorial flag for the deaths that occurred on September 11. I asked him if he noticed a change in the way people view firefighters here in the Midwest and if there was a lot of emotion going through the department. He told me that he has only been on the department for two year but his brother did notice a change. He said people became more aware of the danger that firefighters face and became more respectful. On the topic of emotion, well he told me he was not an emotional person and "My brother, like me, just wanted to know who the hell should we go bomb". I had a conversation about 9-11 with Mr. Ryan and the statement that stuck out the most was: "343 brothers died". Firefighters as a group consider themselves family. Even though Mr. Ryan did not know many, if any, firefighters that died he still considers them brothers. Many of the firefighters told me that the station is like a frat house and they are all family; a family with rank. "There's a hierarchy" said one of the first firefighters I met as he was laughing.

Fire departments are ranked kind of like the military. It is a little less complicated with a smaller number of ranks but follows the same pattern. Firefighters come into the station for a probationary period which lasts from six months to a year. After that they are certified as a firefighter and there are different levels of firefighter that can be worked towards. To increase the level of firefighter one must take different classes and participate in more involved training practices. Engineers are the ones who drive the truck and handle the pump panel at the call. There are a few lieutenants, captains, and one department chief in the department. In an interview, Mr. Ryan told me that rank only changes the relationship between the firefighters on calls because the lieutenant is in charge and makes the decisions but in the station everyone is equal. Firefighters don't see each other as being more important than the other because of rank. There is always someone to answer to but they are best friends. They do not let rank get between them.

Near the end of my time at the station, Mr. Ryan got promoted to captain. He will be moving to the downtown station in January. The first member of the station I met was the Fire Prevention Officer. He is a tall African American man who has been in the fire service for a good portion of his life. He used to be a firefighter but a heart condition had him moved to a position that did not expose him to anything that could be detrimental to his health. The next couple of members I met were active firefighters and filling in for two of the original members of the shift that was chosen for me to observe. They were both Caucasian males wearing blue Urbana Fire Dept. polo shirts and blue pants. They were sitting in the living room watching the USA network. As soon as I introduced myself they immediately started telling me about firefighter life and answered any questions I had.

When I asked them how they felt about their occupations they said "I love it", "It's the best job in the world", and "I show up a half hour early". They showed me what happens when they get a call and the alarm that sounds. It sounds kind of like a fire alarm, not what they show in the movies. There is a loud buzzing noise followed by someone from dispatch giving a quick description of the call and where it is. Then they began to tell me about what their job consists of. "Whatever the cops don't do, we do" they told me. They continued to tell me about the details of firefighting such as the union, raises and the department as a whole. The Urbana departments, along with many others in the country are part of the International Association of Firefighters Union local 1147.

According to the IAFF official website, the IAFF was created in 1918 to help firefighters who at the time could work seven days a week (par. 3). After the IAFF pushed for the Public Safety Officer Benefit Act for eight years; it was finally signed by President Ford in 1976. This act helped the families of fallen firefighters financially (par. 29, 30). In the early 1980's the IAFF really started pushing for safety standards to be universal among firefighters across the country. They succeeded in implementing requirements for training, organization and equipment that the firefighters use (par. 38). The union also helped develop the Personal Alert Safety System that helped firefighters find each other in dense fire and smoke with an alarm that goes off when a member needs help (par. 43). The IAFF also took a large part in the 9-11 rescues. 343 members of the IAFF died while trying to rescue civilians from the ruined skyscrapers (par. 50, 51). The IAFF continues to keep firefighter conditions as safe as can be and continues to honor the fallen firefighters and help their families get through the tragedy.

Knowing of all of the risks and sacrifices they make; all of the firefighters seemed very comfortable and happy with their job in the station. They smiled and told jokes when they spoke with each other and with me. In one of the rooms connected to the garage where tools are cleaned, there was a white board with the statement: "If you use this room clean it up" in a rectangle on the side of the board. Outside of the rectangle, there was the word: "why?" quickly scribbled on the board. I smirked at the first notion of the personalities in the station.

The rest of the garage holds the two station engines that were parked and ready to go. Engine 24 is the primary "rig" they use and the 222 is there for back up. The garage is also equipped with two pickup trucks and two different trailers for national security trailer and the other is for hazmat.

Here on campus, hazardous material can pose a large problem for the firefighters because of the many different labs. At this time in our society, hazmat training for firefighters is required. There are so many different chemicals that can be involved in fires and different accidents that firefighters get called to. Journalist Linda Weller writes in a local Illinois

newspaper called The Telegraph about a group of firefighters from Illinois going to a hazmat training camp in Alton in Madison County. These firefighters train in chemical spills and how to deal with victims exposed to chemicals among other things. This five day training will certify the participants and allow them a greater responsibility when it comes to hazmat accidents. The Illinois Terrorism Task Force provided the financial support needed to hold the training. They learned how to decontaminate the suits they wear in order to keep the problem from spreading. According to Maury Daubs, the lead instructor of the University of Illinois Fire service Institute, the participant will walk away from the training with about 9 different certifications in hazmat (Weller, 1).

"I love this movie" said Mr. Ryan when Old School started. "It's one of my favorites" I told him. Mr. Phillips and Mr. Ryan had their feet up on the chairs in front of them turned towards the TV when Mr. Phillips's phone rang and he spoke with his wife for a few minutes mostly about the kids being babysat by Mr. Phillips's brother. He hung up the phone and told us that his wife said that as soon as she got home, Mr. Phillips's brother had his boots on and was out the door. Mr. Ryan laughed and they began to reminisce about past experiences they had with each other and their families. They told me a story about a time they let a jack russell terrier have his way with a fellow firefighter's wife's pillow. They put it back after about ten minutes. They both had large smiles on their faces and smirked throughout the telling of the story. "That was bad" Mr. Ryan said in between his smirks. Mr. Phillips told us some more about his twin brother babysitting his kids. He would call and ask Mr. Phillips if he could drink some of Mr. Phillips's alcohol when he was babysitting. Mr. Phillips told him that it was fine with him and he deserved it.

Later in the night there was a party scene in the movie and this started a conversation about their experience with alcohol. Mr. Phillips said: "I went to buy a twelve pack on my twenty-first birthday and they didn't check my ID. I was like: 'I wish I knew that before'". Mr. Ryan said he didn't drink a beer until he turned twenty-one. "I don't remember the next... years" he said; making Mr. Phillips and I laugh. I was waiting to see if there would be a reaction to the sex scene in the movie and there was. "If you ever have any questions we're here for you" said Mr. Ryan. "Alright" I said through a smirk.

One day I was sitting in the station with the firefighters when Mr. Ryan told Mr. Phillips that his fifteen year old daughter wants to date an older guy who has a car and is two or three years older. "I was that age once" he said. "You know what you say to the kid? Whatever you do to her I'll do to you" he said. Mr. Adams has a trio of little girls. "You're starting a taco stand" said Mr. Ryan to him. Mr. Phillips told them about his twin brother (who is also on the department) babysitting his kids that night because his wife had jury duty. Mr. Phillips has two young children and a teenage stepson and he got a call from one of his kids talking about the night and what they have been doing. Mr. Phillips was talking on the

phone and laughing at times because one of the younger ones told about the two bloody noses that already happened. Family is everything to these firefighters. Even though they are away from them two or three days a week, the firefighters have their family visit and call all the time.

The movie ended and Mr. Ryan picked up one of the calendars and said: "So August likes...". Both Mr. Phillips and I pick up one of the two remaining calendars and look through it. "It's all yours brother" said Mr. Ryan to me. It was about nine thirty and the firefighters said they were going to bed. I said: "Yeah I have to get back too". "Have a good night brother" said Mr. Ryan to me as he firmly shook my hand

The entrance to the fire station looked just like one of a small office building. I walked out of the main living area of the station and was surrounded by a narrow hallway with white walls, dark blue carpet with specks of gold and red. There were about six doors that opened up to offices down the length of the hallway. They each had a wood finish and a grey handle. It was very bland and it does not compliment the enormous amount of personality and life inside of the station at all. I passed a display set in the wall with picture of all of the members on the department that looked like a graduating class picture. I also saw the call box where I had to hit "3#" to be patched through to the members inside to get in. I got past the last two doors and looked at the large, red brick building. There was Safe Haven sign next to the door.

I walked onto the dimly lit street and headed home. I had a smile on my face and was laughing to myself on the way back. The members of the shift I spent time with are down to earth, macho, family men to put it simply. Jokes and laughing run rampant through the station just like conversation with or about family members. Their movies, build, adrenaline, attitudes, and ability to suppress notions of weakness regarding calls and tragedies are traits that many people associate with men. Their lighthearted attitude regardless of what they go through was completely unexpected. I am so fortunate for have met these awesome men and I have nothing but respect and care for them. They have taught me so much about not only firefighting but also human resiliency, importance of family, and selflessness

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Reflect: Andrei Oros Rhet. 105 Reflective Essay Over the course of the semester I went through many different feelings about the ethnography project. I was really surprised by it at first. I did not expect to be doing something like this my first semester of my freshman year of college. I spoke with students in other sections of the class and they had to write papers based on certain prompts their professors assigned. My first reaction to the project was thinking that I am not a journalism major and this seems a little excessive. By the end of the semester I realized that it was a project that required me to think and I couldn't B.S. papers like I did in high school. I had a lot of fun with the project and I am very happy that I wasn't in one of the rhetoric classes that did most of their work in front of a word processor or a book. Although it was challenging and frustrating at times, it the best writing class and project I've had to this point. I was really nervous when I had to choose a sub-culture to study. I was new to this campus and I had no idea what possibilities there were. In the list we had to make I came up with mostly RSO's such as Illini Pride, Snowboarding club, and habitat for humanity. A majority of the topics on my list were organizations that I wanted to be a part of. I saw a cup from the Carroll volunteer Fire Dept. that I got on quad day and I put that on my list. I ended up choosing the station on Gregory because it is close to my dorm and the firefighters are career firefighters. I have never really shown much interest in these government jobs that keep citizens safe

such as firefighters and police officers. I have always seen myself as using my mind for a living. However, I have seen a few movies and shows depicting the life of firefighters and the characters always had a relationship with each other that is hard to have unless they work together as firefighters. This relationship is the biggest thing I focused on during my research. I knew this once I decided on my sub-culture because it was the thing that interested me the most. Before I started my field visits I thought that I would focus a good amount on the affect that 9-11 had on the firefighters. In the short assignment on my assumptions of firefighters I mentioned 9-11 and I even did so in my final paper. I wrote a little information about it down in a web on Sept. 23. I thought it would be an important piece of information about the firefighters but as time passed I got less interested on the affect of 9-11. I'm not sure why but I felt that the incident didn't really change the relationship the firefighters on the shift had for each other. It just made them more aware of what could happen. The second I walked into the fire station all of the members I met were very receptive and seemed happy to have me there. Not once did I have a problem with one of the members of the sub culture. During my first few visits I focused a lot more on the informational side of things. I asked questions regarding the station, and the department overall. In my first few pages of field notes wrote down information about the union, the department, the truck and so on. After a while, listening to the firefighters talk about all of the technical stuff got really boring but I was unaware of the change that was coming over the way I interacted with the firefighters. Instead of just asking them questions about their jobs I just spent time with them and the conversations became much more personal. These personal conversations became the backbone of my final essay and they gave me the most information about the relationship in the station. In my later field notes I have almost no technical information but all conversation about family, past experiences, and a lot of jokes. I also took less and less notes on the details of my surroundings because at one point I stopped caring and it became hard for me to see anything new except for what they were watching on TV. I don't think many of the details about the station I wrote down helped me in the final paper much. Even in the in class webs we did I mentioned a lot more technical details about the station and their jobs in the earlier ones. I began switching over to experiences I had with them around the third or fourth web into the semester. I felt like the specific details about the truck, union, mostly everything else to do with the department as a whole was not the best way to get the information I wanted. It felt more like I was just researching the topic of firefighters like I do on the internet. I just had a bunch of questions asked and that was it. Once I started paying attention more to the conversation I began to be more interested and excited about the project. Looking back on it now, I should have taken more notes while I was in the station. The notes I have are good but I forgot certain conversations or occurrences that would have fit into my final paper perfectly. I just got bored with writing down everything that happened and everything everyone said. I think that if I did that I wouldn't have been able to have conversations

and bond with the firefighters. The hardest part of this assignment was writing the paper while not offending the firefighters. I have nothing bad to say about them but at times their own conversations cause a problem depending on how they are put into the paper. A lot of these conversations consisted of jokes and crude humor. Their sense of humor is very similar to the sense of humor my friends and I have with each other therefore this did not offend me at all but I think if someone else who was a bit more serious was in my place then they could be. I think the firefighters felt comfortable enough to tell these jokes around me and when I think about it; it makes me happy to know that they can tell these jokes around me without hesitating. This made the process a lot easier, more fun, and important to the final piece. I felt it was a problem putting their humor into my paper because I could have put it in a way that was offensive to the readers and the firefighters especially. I didn't want any readers to get the wrong idea about the firefighters and think that they are just a bunch of perverted jerks. I also don't want the firefighters to think that I see them that way either. I think that was the hardest thing to put into my final paper but there is no way that I would have been able to write a paper about the relationship of firefighters without including it. In my field notes I wrote down a lot of conversation that included their family. Family is a big part of the firefighters' relationship and at times it was hard to express that while combining their personalities and sense of humor. A lot of their jokes had to do with women and sex. They would see women on the street and make comments to each other and it was hard to put that into the paper next to the importance of family. I had to be careful to make sure that the readers did not come to the conclusion that even though firefighters say family is important, they don't truly believe it. It is true that the firefighters' families are the most important part of their families because they talk about them with pride. I had the impression before I even started the project that the firefighters held their families very close. The only information about firefighters I had before came from Hollywood. It surprised me that a majority of it is right. I didn't see any of the firefighters fighting with each other or any pranks being pulled but otherwise the similarities are there. It made it much easier to research the sub culture because I kind of knew what to expect going into the station. In the end when I thought about it, the guys in the station are kind of stereo typical firefighters. Their jokes are crude, they consider themselves "brothers", and they love their families. Field notes • Talking about food and their "supper" o The huge chicken fingers at giovantis o Matts experience with the Italian beef they have there o Matts experience with buffalo wild wings caribbean jerk sauce • Container of Kodiak chewing tobacco on the coffee table next to matt • Wisher asks if I went to church today and the other guys laugh a little • Going on a fire truck ride to get dinner o Told me not to get hurt because they didn't have the proper paper work filled out o They would hide the body if anything did happen o "If anything happens to you, we'll hide the body. We know how to now" Watching the murder doc caused this joke 10-19 • Vagisil commercial – Lt. wisher says to smith "you ever had that problem?" • Talking about daughters Lt. wisher says to smith "you're

starting a taco stand" • Assumption essay Shows like Rescue Me on FX and movies such as Ladder 49 are both about the life of fire fighters but they show two different sides of them. Rescue Me seems to focus more on the personal life of fire fighters and the relationship they have with each other. The members of the station are always there for each other. However they are always getting on the others' nerves and making fun of their personal lives. It seems to be more like a group of close friends that just happen to fight fires together. Ladder 49 has a similar feeling but I think they deal with more of the seriousness of fire fighting. These two products of entertainment have led me to believe that fire fighters are like a big family. They look after each other and help each other through hard times not only on the job but also in their personal lives. It seems to me like that is a universal thing in each station across the country. I think that it is really appealing to a lot of people that they will be working with "family", and that is why many people take up that job.

Analysis of Fieldwork This bond is the most important thing in the fire station, on the truck, and at the scene. This bond is how firefighters are able to do their jobs. Without a successful team atmosphere it would be impossible for the firefighters to act as efficiently and safely as possible. Firefighters communicate every move they make to someone else. This communication is learned during the academy but perfected on every call. The bond that firefighters have with each other increases the quality of communication that goes on between them in the field. After living and working together for so long the understanding between them becomes greatly improved.

Condensed Narrative [T]he relationships the guys have, the camaraderie ... comes through at fires [and] the pretty bad medical [calls]. Guys that bond at those kind of intense emotional [calls] see how [they] handled that. It's a different world... out there on scenes... if there's been a fatality; I don't know if it's death... there's just this feeling, heaviness. It seems like you're walking on a blanket of snow... If you took your care of business it's like you come back and the respect is building, the compassion for each other is building. [T]o be honest with you morale takes a hit when we don't have things to prove that... the closest times are after incidents where we've handled our business, everybody comes back and we've made a difference...