



Not Your Ordinary Job – Episode Two Transcript

- Jasmine:** Hello, everyone, welcome to the Bureau of Land Management, Eastern State podcast, Not Your Ordinary Job. I'm your co-host, Jasmine.
- Ashley:** Hello, everybody. I'm Ashley.
- Jasmine:** Each week, we will highlight a Jackson Hotshot team member by allowing them to speak about their experience working in the career of fire. We are very excited for you to listen to their stories. We also encourage you to head over to NIFC.gov, for the latest fire news every weekday.
- Ashley:** It's always great to know about what's going on in the news when it comes to fire. Without further ado, we would like to welcome Josh in the show. How are you?
- Josh Beard:** Good, I'm doing good. Thank you for having me.
- Jasmine:** Any time! Our first question would be, what made you want to get into the career fire?
- Josh:** So, the first time I thought about firefighting in general, was back when I was 25 years old. And then for whatever reason I, I didn't have the opportunity to do that. And I found myself in Vietnam teaching English. And I kept hearing my friend talk about all these fires are happening in California. And I thought to myself, if I ever get a chance to go back, back home to America, I might check it out. And then well, one thing led to another, I got married in Vietnam, came back with my family and I did not want to go back to the nine to five job, and I thought I might as well just put all my chips in trying to land a wild firefighter job. So here I am.
- Ashley:** That's great. And how long have you been in the fire career?
- Josh:** This is, this will actually be my first year in fire. So it's a big, such a really huge transition. Because I was first in banking and then I went to teaching English.
- Jasmine:** That's awesome. What are the biggest challenges do you feel that are faced when working in the career of fire?
- Josh:** I think, to be honest, I mean, because you know, coming into this job, it's gonna be physical, and it's gonna be mentally challenging. But for me, I think it's been being away from family, like, by far, because you're constantly on the road, you don't really know when you'll be back. I mean, things change all the time. So it's hard to really tell your family when you'll see them again.
- Ashley:** But even though that's sort of a con, what would you say would be your favorite part of working in fire?
- Josh:** Favorite part? Definitely, well there's a few actually. One that comes to mind, definitely the mental, physical challenge of it. I mean, very different. And especially me being super new to

this. Every day is a learning experience. Like I am learning new things every day, like learning as you go. So that's, that's pretty nice. And it's also the adventure side of it. I mean, we get to go to places that most people never get to see. And also another one I would say is just the different people that you get to work with on a daily basis. I mean, different personalities come coming from different backgrounds. And being able to come together to be a cohesive unit is pretty cool. So and I was gonna mention too, is like, one of the things the reason why I wanted to do this as well was the gratification aspect of it. like teaching, you know, I got gratified from like, you know, being able to see my kindergarteners, you know learn...

Ashley: The progress?

Josh: Yeah, the progress. And then I kind of got that feeling, that same feeling, inspired, you're doing something for the, for the public. And that's always you know, coming home to that knowing, you know, to keep people safe, keep environment. It's kind of nice.

Jasmine: That's great. And since it's your first year in fire, do you have any goals that you would like to accomplish in fire? Or have there been any goals that you've accomplished so far?

Josh: Well goals so far... It's definitely getting on the Shot crew my first year. I mean, it's... I mean, it's not it's pretty difficult to do that especially me having like, really no background in fire.

Ashley: And going from teaching to fire that's a goal as well.

Josh: Yeah. Accomplishments themselves. As far as future goals. I would like to get on a saw team, eventually.

Ashley: What does the saw team represent?

Josh: Beyond a saw team there's some rewards to that, you know, because they're the ones that first get in, get in on the action. They're the ones that have to endure the most on the line because they're carrying all that equipment. You're like, deep in the woods, so you're like...

Ashley: You're leading the way.

Josh: Yeah, pretty much.

Ashley: So, in this year that you been with the team, what would be one success story that you guys had?

Josh: One success story.

Ashley: I mean, to me, they're all success stories if you complete the mission, you know?

Josh: Probably the way that we all adapted to, to what was brought to us. I think the way that we handled the heat in Florida because our last two roles were in Florida, and it was pretty hot out there. And we did not complain. Like we all put it in the hard work.

Ashley: Was this in the beginning of the pandemic?

Josh: Yeah. So yeah, so I think, yeah, I mean, I'm glad that you mentioned that too. Because I think as a crew, we all took responsibility to sort of like, get really good at like trying to be safe as a unit.

Like, wearing our PPE, wearing our face masks in public. Sanitizing everything, you know, we're really on top of that. So I think that's a success story. You know, by itself...

Jasmine: What are the biggest misconceptions from the general public about fire? Because I honestly feel like there's all these, there's, like one opinion about fire.

Josh: You know, I think that's probably the one I face the most is like, 'Oh, that doesn't sound bad, all you do is spray water on the fire.' And that's not exactly what we do. I mean, I mean, there's a time and place but most of the time we're not doing that.

Ashley: Yeah, definitely not.

Jasmine: Definitely. Especially when it comes to like, you know, wildfires out in public lands?

Josh: Oh yeah. My wife. She didn't know what a wildland firefighter was. She didn't even know that like that type of profession even was there so {she was} like 'Oh so you guys fight in the forest? Not in a city.' So she didn't know that there are a separate group out there that was doing that.

Ashley: Since you've been in the Jacksons, what would you say it takes to become a great team member?

Josh: To be a great team member, be willing to help with any task whether or not it's...

Ashley: Assigned?

Josh: Menial, menial. So like if you were to take to any task to do as much as you can for your crew members, for the whole crew in general. Being able to put in work, not complain, have a positive attitude, and I think, be adaptable.

Jasmine: Definitely. Well, we would like to thank you for allowing us to interview you, Josh. We're happy we got to interview you.

Josh: Thank you. Yeah, thanks a lot. We appreciate you guys.

Ashley: Listen to our podcast every Friday to learn more about our Jackson Hotshots. Don't forget to listen to our content and share on our social media.