

Some Like it Hot: Tales from the Firehouse
Interview with Fire Marshal Jeffery Lovan

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

day, firefighters, good, job, schedule, retired, years, truck, fire, fire department, run, firemen, house, call, growing, live, fire marshal, wife,, kids

Jen Weidner 00:04 Today is July 6, 2023. I'm Jen Weidner with the Jeffersonville Township Public Library conducting interviews for Some Like It Hot: Tales from the Firehouse. I'm here today with Fire Marshal Jeffrey Lovan of the Jeffersonville Fire Department. Thank you for being here.

Jeffery Lovan 00:17 Yes, I'm glad to be here.

Jen Weidner 00:18 So everyone has a story to tell and I wanted to give firefighters a chance to tell some of their stories. So how long have you been with the department?

Jeffery Lovan 00:25 Coming up at the end of this month will be the end of completion of my 14th year.

Jen Weidner 00:32 So what made you want to become a firefighter?

Jeffery Lovan 00:34 Well, I knew a lot about the career and when I graduated from Indiana University was like that economic downturn of 2007, 2009 So the job market was just like so, so ,so I experienced that for a couple of years and then the city was growing. And I knew that they were going to do a big hiring wave because they were going to add two new fire stations, and always kind of knew in the back of my mind, my parents really wanted me to get a degree but I survived and got one but I knew how good of a job the fire department would be with my personality. Kind of a real blue collar background. I've always worked construction and did things like that and got my hands dirty every summer of college. And you know, growing up I've worked with a lot of firemen on the off days doing Heating and Air building, you know, additions for people pouring concrete, and I really just liked that aspect of not being confined to a desk or doing something that was like the nine to five like the I kind of I knew what the schedule entailed with growing up with my dad, and how much time you know, he might miss Christmas but he might have a couple of days off during the week when I was on out of school so that

Jen Weidner 00:52 Your dad was a firefighter as well?

Jeffery Lovan 02:03 Yeah. retired. He did 32-33 years, retired Battalion Chief. So the pros and cons. The pros definitely outweigh the cons and there was a definite draw where you know, growing up playing sports and things like that you had that like team atmosphere and kind of the in college we live with a bunch of guys and in a house. It was almost like an extension like I really I really just kind of fell in love with that whole idea of continuing that that lifestyle really,

Jen Weidner 02:46 Oh, it's just like another family.

Jeffery Lovan 02:47 It is it is and I knew a lot of people and people's sons were kind of getting into it and obviously you had a path of retirement that was tangible and not just like, oh, well if you if you just save and do this or if you invest, you know, there was a pension that that, you know, you're you're gonna have to be conservative when we walk out of here but there is something at the end. And you know, if my goals and aspirations really weren't, I didn't think oh, I'm gonna go to college and I want to be a millionaire. I want to make you know, and and do that. I just wanted a stable career. Obviously, helping people and coming back to a community that I always had a really good relationship with, growing up downtown, and then kind of moving on the outskirts now and then seeing the city grow. And with my large family, I really didn't want to move too far away. You know, I got a taste of, you know, I met a lot of great friends and things outside of Jeff, but I really love and I would always bring people home like for Derby and thunder. And I would always say the city and Jeff really has the best of both worlds. You can be in a small town. You can be 20 minutes from being away in the country. You know if you want to go do that lifestyle or you can go across the bridge and have a nice nightlife or restaurants and it's just the best of both worlds. That I feel like Jeffersonville has always offered and I kind of like tapping into that and coming back here and just a nice cost of living, you know,

Jen Weidner 04:38 Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Jeffery Lovan 04:39 I had friends that moved to Indy and they were like that. I mean, they were cutting their legs off to get a house, you know in a certain neighborhood. And things like that. And, you know, my older siblings were having kids as I was graduating, and I was you know, that's I just wanted to be around my family

Jen Weidner 04:57 Are any of your siblings firefighters?

Jeffery Lovan 04:59 No, no, my sister's husband is so but my brother is, he writes for the Associated Press. So yeah, he moved away and then got on with the Associated Press branch and the courier journal. So he's done really well with that

Jen Weidner 05:18 So how many Lovan's have been or are firefighters? I know your dad was.

Jeffery Lovan 05:23 So my dad. Then my dad's sister's husband is a retired Chief, Mike Smith. And then we have Eric Lovan, my first cousin. Then that would be just the Lovan side. My mom was a Knight, and they all grew up on 7th St.

Jen Weidner 05:45 Yep.

Jeffery Lovan 05:46 Corky Knight retired. Then my mom's sister Dale Popp, Mary Teresa, my mom's sister. He's retired, and I think

Jen Weidner 05:57 Isn't his son a firefighter?

Jeffery Lovan 05:59 His son is a firefighter. He is probably five or six years on now. Gary Popp. So and then, like I said, we talked before we started the interview, my uncle's retired assistant police chief. So we we've we've definitely been involved in the community and, you know, both sides, large Catholic families and we were here. I mean, no, I think of the 11 brothers and sisters. My dad has only one of them who lives out of Indiana. And I think really only one lives out of the other one lives in New Albany, which makes him you know, yeah, actually.

Jen Weidner 06:40 Exactly. Exactly. So if you weren't a firefighter, what do you think you would be doing?

Jeffery Lovan 06:46 Um, definitely some construction related. Something you know, maybe some type of large construction project foreman you know, I've always liked and gotten along with the blue collar crowd. It was, you know, my roommates from IU (Indiana University) went into investment banking and did a lot of the the white collar stuff but I've just always liked genuine people doing you know I guess just down to earth people, you know, that we have guys that that have, you know, side businesses and do very well for themselves. We got guys that you know, live modest lifestyles and you know, stay within their means and, and enjoy our days off right now. And that's kind of where I try to fall and you know, live life within our means. When our kids were born, my wife was a teacher, and she's, we just realized how hectic our schedule was. I don't think people understand she is a single mom 10-11 days a month.

Jen Weidner 06:46 Yep.

Jeffery Lovan 07:38 That's without a day of overtime. You know, so she stopped teaching and she's just the school bus driver. I mean, the amount of things that she's asked to do is incredible. So I always tell the new guys you know who are single I'm like, I just want to give you a little bit of advice. Find someone that allows you to love this place and doesn't make you feel guilty for going to work and who is very independent. It's cuz some guys can have a real miserable day. If they got to be on the phone with their wife who's mad that she had to take off work because the kids sick or I mean, it's just endless. So more

Jen Weidner 08:47 So know what you're getting into

Jeffery Lovan 08:48 My wife allows me to make this job like I get to love it.

Jen Weidner 08:56 What are some of the challenges of your job?

Jeffery Lovan 09:00 This schedule, like being away, you know, my dad would miss birthday, you know, I'm getting emotional about it.

Jen Weidner 09:15 It's Okay. This is real. This is I mean we want everybody to know what it's really like.

Jeffery Lovan 09:23 I think it's really not, I don't even know why, it's really not that bad. It's really...

Jen Weidner 09:44 I've never made anybody cry.

Jeffery Lovan 09:46 You just live a different schedule than everybody else. So when you like if one of your buddies that works a nine to five or something. They're like, hey, can you meet me here do this, do that. You're like, I just miss my family the whole day before. So it's not that I don't like want to meet you guys to do this or that but it's made me a lot more family oriented in a good way. But it is different. And you know, if your dad or I have to work Christmas Day, then Santa is coming on Christmas Eve. But we we've all like especially before our kids got in school. We took advantage of our time off during the week when there were no crowds. I think it's made me like especially since COVID like I hate crowds now we took we've always taken full advantage of the good things of the schedule and kind of overlook the bad but, you know, there's times when you just , people know that you just gotta miss things, you know, like, Oh, hey, we're doing a get together here and it's like, well I work, you know, so everybody else gets off at four or five, six o'clock

Jen Weidner 11:10 And like, everybody's off like Fourth of July or whatever. And you're like, Oh, right sorry, I'm working but

Jeffery Lovan 11:16 I grew up with it. knowing the good. So it hasn't been, it's not that bad. But it also I'll be honest, it gives you an excuse to not go to some things that you know, like, my wife can just tell her friends like no , Jeffery has to work and nobody really knows our schedules

Jen Weidner 11:37 And nobody's gonna be like, Oh, can you just take off because they know like, yeah, just Yeah, easily.

Jeffery Lovan 11:44 We are literally paid to be away from our families.

Jen Weidner 11:47 Right

Jeffery Lovan 11:48 I guess is the best, you know, there's days when not much goes on. And then there's days that you don't get to contact your family until in the evening or vice versa or you feel torn because you do have a sick kid and you know your wife's like struggling with a deadline or something that she's got to do or just when you are down to work that day. You you that's 24 hours where you are, you're dead to the world when it comes to your family. Now the good thing is, is when they were little they'd come by and see me.

Jen Weidner 11:47 Right I was gonna say how they lifted those restrictions.

Jeffery Lovan 12:29 Once you get to a certain time in your day and you take care of your business, you basically just fall into like, okay, we're just on call now.

Jen Weidner 12:36 You just waiting for Yeah.

Jeffery Lovan 12:39 But the schedule is what you make it you can dread it and you can talk about how bad it stinks, or you can really take advantage of it. And I think choosing to for my wife to step away from teaching, let us take full advantage and it didn't become such a pro and

con it was just basically all all good. You know, go to the zoo on a Tuesday you got to yourself. Go to the Charlestown State Park on Wednesday. It's yours I mean so everybody is confined to that weekend. Well, we can do it on the weekend. We're not so we I'd say that's the best thing we've done in our in our marriage and our now since we've

Jen Weidner 13:24 How long have you been married?

Jeffery Lovan 13:26 10 years on the 12th

Jen Weidner 13:28 And she knew what she was getting into?

Jeffery Lovan 13:29 Yes and I was very honest. Like, this isn't for everybody. And I'm vested when we got I think it would be really hard for a husband and wife who were married for him to get into it. She met me when I was on the fire department already, but she also kind of her parents lived out in the country so she would go stay all night with when we were married. When I had to work a Saturday she goes down with her mom and dad and that was you know, she didn't you know a lot of people get married and they're like, Oh, we don't see our daughter anymore. Well she got to see them you know three Saturdays in a row, if she wanted to. So and then I will drive up the next morning and hang out. So we've, we've definitely made and she's made the fire department for me easy,easier than than some always love her for that.

Jen Weidner 14:27 Obviously, Yeah. So how long does it take to get used to working the 24 hour shifts?

Jeffery Lovan 14: 34 Your whole career (laughing)it's, my job is the flexibility that I have now has changed things. But the days can they they drag on or they can fly by this it's you never know. You're never gonna have the same day Jeff Fire Department that you had, you know, you'll never, which I've always liked. I've always tried to really enjoy my 24 hours whether it's okay let's let's get our cleanup done. Let's get our you know, let's get our trucks in order and make sure everybody's ready to respond in a professional manner. And then take care of our you know, what are we gonna eat for dinner tonight, you know, do take care of those things. And then Hey, y'all in play some Euchre, do you want to play? Get a game of basketball going? When I was stationed right behind your library here, we did we'd get together two o'clock every day, everybody get their workout stuff on and do a 30-45 minute workout and then we'd sit outside if it was nice and just enjoy the camaraderie I'll I really like getting to know people. And you know, when you get on people say Oh, you don't want to work with that guy. You don't want to work with her, you know? And I've always tell people make your own opinion of everybody and try and find something in common that you you're there for 24 hours. It's not a fun place when you you just want to hate somebody or not get along with them or have this bad energy. So I've always tried to get along with everybody find something that you have in common. And but I will say like in the last five, six years. People are just more private. You know, people can go like the the change of the fire stations, some of the,the newer fire stations, everybody has their own bedrooms, so you can get away from people. I've always tried to sit at the kitchen table or the main TV room and and, you know, just make the day go by whatever that may be.

You know what, we've, we had some older captains and we'd go down to down into Claysburg and open up a fire hydrant for the kids and let them run. I mean just the smiles

Jen Weidner 17:00 The fun stuff.

Jeffery Lovan 17:01 The fun stuff. Yes. That's that's always rewarding. Yeah. I'd say that's the best way to word that. People love firemen that not me in general or anything but they when they see a big red truck, it puts a smile on their face. The kid wants to jump up and we carry a little plastic helmets in our in our trucks and people are happy to see us. You know you grow up most kids grow up with a little you know, fireman's outfit and

Jen Weidner 17:35 Little fire truck toy.

Jeffery Lovan 17:37 Right. So I've always tried to do a good job. You know, have a really good public interaction when we can, you know, obviously, we're on the scene and we have to be you know, a little bit different with our communication but you know, when we go the grocery and our three kids in the parking lots there and as grab a couple helmets and make their day, turn the lights on for them.

Jen Weidner 18:01 So I know there's no typical day.

Jeffery Lovan 18:05 Yeah

Jen Weidner 18:05 But like what is something that you do like every time you go in like.

Jeffery Lovan 18:08 Every time you go in, you need to make sure you have all your gear ready. So the things that are asked of you so you get your gear on the truck. You would have a little conversation with the guy that was you're taking his place. He can't go home until you take his spot. So anything out or are we missing anything? Did you all break something on the truck the day before? When you open up compartment, that whatever was there the day before should be there you know? So just your housekeeping and then you make sure your air bottle is your pack will come on and that your air is full. Your bottle is going to give you anywhere depending on how big you are, 30 to 45 minutes of working time you know, so that's our most that's our lifeline. We, I can't go into the heat filled toxic environment if I can't, if I come become succumb to some of the hazards, so I have to have all my things in order and able to help someone and then, you know, we go over the truck so you take care of your seat.

Jen Weidner 19:18 So do you have the same seat every time?

Jeffery Lovan 19:21 You should. So there's, there's vacation schedules and things like that. There's guys that might ride in two or three different seats, but for the most part, when you come in you see who's off and you know what seat to fill, and that's the easiest way to put it. So then once you're you've taken care of all the your specific things in your seat then you go over the truck, then you probably come in have a cup of coffee, somebody's brought breakfast in normally the crews I've been on we just kind of rotate so guys are hey, I'll get breakfast next day. Okay, so I'll get it Saturday or vice versa. But then we normally have breakfast might talk for a

minute and then do general cleanup. So mop the floors, make sure that all the dishes are put away, vacuum the carpets, vacuum the bedroom areas, bathrooms, obviously if the truck is they went out the night for and it was a rainstorm or something like that will wash the trucks. That is the sergeant's responsibility. But normally we all jump out there and take care of it and then it's kind of like you know I've had really detailed crews where we have a training scheduled for the whole year where you can look ahead and know. Oh, September is vehicle extrication. So we're gonna get some vehicles brought here to the station or we're gonna go to a lot and cut cars up and simulate car wrecks and do different medical packaging within a vehicle. Or we've got

Jen Weidner 21:07 So you're not just sitting around doing nothing like no people have that misconception like oh, they're just sitting in a recliner all day because they're not out.

Jeffery Lovan 21:15 Right. So we have a schedule and try to follow you know, we are asked to do one to two hours of training per day. Now that gets Saturdays and Sundays it's optional, but Monday through Friday. You should, be you should be knocking stuff out. Now we've it with the technology we have. We might watch a YouTube video on something the first day, try to set that scenario up the second day, and then the third day might be a critique of okay, they did it better than us or we found out that with our equipment, this is our this is our best way to do it or our manpower or we have a network that the city that the department pays for. It's basically online training with this just an abyss of different things to tap into, and we also send guys a lot to outside training. And then when they come back, they're asked to share that knowledge with the department and let us learn from other outlying agencies and things like that, but no, you and then get to your lunch early afternoon. Then we kind of start to take care of we've taken care of most of our business, and I say okay, well let's do a 45 minutes of some type of fitness workout. Which is really cool when crews do that, I think that's probably just the best camaraderie builder that you can have.

Jen Weidner 22:57 Well that physical fitness is so important to your job.

Jeffery Lovan 23:00 Right, especially for the longevity I mean if you're gonna hang out and do this for 25-30 years, you should take it serious because really when you retire, you want to do something with your life. You know, I mean, you want to everybody talks about, you know, the breakfast table always like when I retire when I retire. When you retire I don't think you're gonna if you haven't backpacked Europe in your 30s 40s or 50s

Jen Weidner 23:26 You're not when you retire,

Jeffery Lovan 23:29 Unless you might surprise the heck out of me but I don't see that happening.

Jen Weidner 23:35 So is there one call that stands out to you more than others?

Jeffery Lovan 23:42 I don't think so. I mean, I think when someone mentions it, it probably pulls up out of my memory bank, but I have a very good memory when it comes to scenarios or something that I've done. I wouldn't say I've ever laid in bed and thought, you know, a continuing memory of a specific, you know, in the short term, yeah, there's there's times where we've had, you know, some fatalities and fires. And you know, you kind of lay there like, what if we would have done this got there quicker, you know that there's things like that that you think about but they do I guess with as much as you do see that you probably go deeper and deeper quicker as I mean you're you know, you're when you're I've ever when I got hired, I was just like man, I just want to feel like I got a year onl like I don't my heart rates not so high when the initial buzzer goes off. I mean it was my the buzzer went off and I was like Is it me? Is it me? I mean, it might not have even been my station that went out but that heart rate starts to drop. And probably some of the vividness of the memories probably subside. A little bit too but I don't think I don't think that anything really sticks out. Definitely the the ones where you've genuinely helped people. I hope that those are the ones that that when I'm out of here, you know, those are the most vivid but you know, we've we've helped people and there's people that you know, we didn't get there in time.

Jen Weidner 25:40 You go on all kinds of runs, it's s not just fires.

Jeffery Lovan 25:43 A lot of trauma, a lot of medical car wrecks, motorcycle wrecks,

Jen Weidner 25:47 Overdoses

Jeffery Lovan 25:48 Yes, overdoses about six, seven years ago was I mean, it was just four or five daily. I was wondering a few weeks ago and what is really caused that trend to not subside But definitely go down

Jeffery Lovan 26:08 Numbers have changed.

Jen Weidner 26:10 Because we are not seeing it in here. (the library)

Jeffery Lovan 26:12 Right

Jen Weidner 26:12 At all anymore. It used to be like once a week we'd be calling 911 or having to ask someone to leave because they were caught doing drugs.

Jeffery Lovan 26:20 Yes. Absolutely.

Jen Weidner 26:22 So what are some misconceptions about firefighting? We have so many shows on TV now.

Jeffery Lovan 26:30 I mean, there, there is the downtime and this job is what you make it. You can, you and I could have walked in the same day. And we could both put in 20 year careers and you could have put forth the best effort every single day. And I didn't have to and we're still gonna get paid the same. I mean, that's the that's the realest answer I could probably give you it is, it is what you make it you can you can show up with a smile on your face. bring a

good attitude to work every day. Be fun to work with, genuinely care about the community you're serving. Or you can just collect your paycheck and go home. I strived for the first example. And I hope when you know, when I walk out of here I had the same mindset because I'm probably halfway through you know, a little over halfway through my career now. I do I love it. You know, my wife wanted to quit teaching and she said you know it was stressing her out and that I said I don't know how to tell you to go to a job that you don't like, because I really I like going to work. I like being around the firehouse so I want her to find the same and I hope everybody you know has has that feeling I know we don't and in our society they you know people. People work in crummy jobs for little pay and I wish everybody got the feel the satisfaction that I get to have. But, you know, you get you, you really have to fight to have that approach to because there is people that hate coming to work for whatever reason, you know, it's maybe it's past their time. Maybe they should have left seventeen, eighteen....

Jen Weidner 28:30 Or they have issues at home but they're not disclosing

Jeffery Lovan 28:33 Exactly like what what could you really don't like about coming in here? Helping people you're, you may not turn a wheel that whole day.

Jen Weidner 28:45 I mean you work what 10 days??

Jeffery Lovan 28:48 Typically 10 days a month. When we, when we come to a point where like we had our biggest hiring wave retire, our biggest retirement wave, and now we're waiting on guys to get hired. So we have this just onslaught of extra shifts available until we get the new guy trained and use really see guys kind of overworked. So you know, you can't turn down the overtime shift. But what when you go to work your regular shift. You just you're sick of stuff

Jen Weidner 29:24 You're tired

Jeffery Lovan 29:25 Yes. Which I can relate. I know I've been there you know when when I got hired and and then they hired a big way behind me that it was like gosh, I really don't want to be there on Saturday. You know, I want you know, but you know, they kind of you can't turn it down.

Jen Weidner 29:46 You get paid well and..

Jeffery Lovan 29:47 Yeah, I mean, yeah, it's an extra shift extra, extra pay. So but I don't even remember the original question, the misconceptions.

Jen Weidner 30:00 The misconception?

Jeffery Lovan 30:01 Yeah, so the misconceptions are just that I don't have a tangible answer.

Jen Weidner 30:11 There's always something going on. Like I know the show.

Jeffery Lovan 30:14 There is. And so we have a like a CAD system that we can see in our watch room. And you just see the city or like it's all of Clark County and it's just a domestic disturbance. I mean, we can see the police

Jen Weidner 30:28 Oh you see every all the 911 calls everything okay.

Jeffery Lovan 30:33 So you know we do have downtime. I mean, you really just it's like, just following something at the wall and seeing what sticks. I mean, we you never, storms you're gonna be out all night. And then you have we've had heavy storms where we didn't get a call. It's just like it's weird. Whatever you expect to happen that day

Jen Weidner 30:57 That doesn't happen. Then you have Fourth of July where people's garbage cans are on fire. Yes. I saw a lot of those

Jeffery Lovan 31:03 Dumpster fires.

Jen Weidner 31:05 Literal dumpster fires

Jeffery Lovan 31:07 Yes. But as far as misconceptions, well, you don't go into a burning building and see what, you can't see anything.

Jen Weidner 31:18 That's what everybody has said so far.

Jeffery Lovan 31:20 They couldn't make a TV show on real fire because it'd be black. I mean, your, your face is on the ground and you're calling through a building and you're feeling with your hands. And if you're not on an air bottle, you die instantly, and as rewarding as it is. It's also really sad. When you ask them if they had renter's insurance as a fire marshal, and they say no. It's \$10.00 dollars a month or something like that. I mean, I wish the apartment complexes would just put it into their rent and just have them sign the waiver for to be cut.

Jen Weidner 32:02 Well we saw all those apartments burned what, five, six years ago. Now?

Jeffery Lovan 32:06 Yes

Jen Weidner 32:06 I mean, yeah, that was by me. That was so tragic.

Jeffery Lovan 32:09 Yes. And fires are just devastating. I mean, to lose their pictures in there. I don't know that, whatever could be in your house right now that could just be gone.

Jen Weidner 32:26 It could not be replaced.

Jeffery Lovan 32:28 Wet drywall, mud and insulation and to walk through post fire. It's that that stinks.

Jen Weidner 32:37 That's what you do now for your job right as Fire Martial?

Jeffery Lovan 32:40 But you still do it. When you're online because you're making sure there's no fire extending. We've done all commend our department. We've done a really good job in the last four or five years of covering things up with tarps where the ceiling doesn't fall down on it. I've we've we've done good. I mean, I've seen guys carrying veterans' American flags out and their wedding pictures and you know, they're just being mindful that someone lived here. And they their house was

Jen Weidner 33:15 It was somebody's everything

Jeffery Lovan 33:16 If you can bring them a handful of items that they just get to cling to and hotel until they're put somewhere else. It's just to still be a human like you asked about the memories like you know, not to just become heartless like yeah, there was a wave of overdoses in the last seven, eight years that were just like, oh my gosh, is the same person we Narcaned. You know, and you hear people saying well, I mean, how many times are we goign to Narcan them, well, is there's many times where they call because that's our

Jen Weidner 33:50 That's your job.

Jeffery Lovan 33:51 That's our job. And that's what we have to do. So. It is you just have to always take care of the person that calls whether nothing, God forbid you didn't like them or you you make they've gotten you out of bed for

Jen Weidner 34:10 Whether you like them or not you're still gonna do your job.

Jeffery Lovan 34:13 Yes, probably the hardest thing to do, but when you really sit back and look at it, there's guys that really do a good job.

Jen Weidner 34:24 You have your little ladies that call for everything because they want to see some firefighters

Jeffery Lovan 34:27 We've had a lady that. I mean every time the address comes in, you know what it is? But this is a little lady. She lives alone. She can't get from her bed or wheelchair. And just your tone with her makes all the difference. She's not the friendliest lady in the world. She doesn't like some of us. She mightI think she's racist, but we're there to serve. ou're

Jen Weidner 34:56 You're gonna do your job. Right.

Jeffery Lovan 34:58 And, you know, we just, we have a key to her house to get in. And I've always known you know, one day she's not going to call and she's not. I don't know how much more time she can live on our own. She's obviously fighting like hell to stay there, And you know, so what if it didn't interrupt your breakfast? Or whatever, like it's,

Jen Weidner 35:24 it's just the humanity of it.

Jeffery Lovan 35:26 And I said one day I go, you know, she sits there and probably fights to get in that wheelchair because she would, she would call when she was in between. And I mean daily, every day. And she tries her best she doesn't call until she's damn near given up and just to always have that mindset, that's, that's a person.

Jen Weidner 35:49 It's like, what if it was your grandparents, or something? Right, you know, you just got to think of it that way.

Jeffery Lovan 35:55 Like yeah, and there's, you know, you ,you get on runs where I will do other first responders aren't acting professional. And, you know, I think now when you're asked about how long I've had on like, I think I have enough time on now. To kind of give my honest opinion to somebody like, hey, we don't do that. Like that's disrespectful. You know, we're, you're in somebody's house,

Jen Weidner 36:21 Why are you laughing or joking about...

Jeffery Lovan 36:23 Whatever it may be, Yeah, and I think some people that's their coping mechanism

Jen Weidner 36:27 I was gonna say like, yeah, that gallows humor

Jeffery Lovan 36:31 Like a death investigation or something like that, but but, you know, and I always said, when I was a really young firefighter, I mean, I can't wait till I get the time or I can just let like, not walk around and just, you know, shoot from the hip, but but, hey, let's be professional here. Or you can even step outside. We don't need you in here.

Jen Weidner 36:54 Because I mean, you all have your own coping mechanisms. This is a very stressful job. This is a very anxiety producing job. And then you guys have to go on a horrible run and then go back to the firehouse and get ready for whatever next,

Jeffery Lovan 37:07 Whatever, I mean

Jen Weidner 37:09 I mean, do you feel like the department gives you have enough resources if you need to take care of mental health?

Jeffery Lovan 37:16 Absolutely,they've sent a number of firefighters away to be educated on like, we had a run last summer where we that was that can we speak about a specific thing or

Jen Weidner 37:30 Don't use names perse

Jeffery Lovan 37:34 A run where it was like, Oh, my gosh, mass grave site. Well, I'll just say

Jen Weidner 37:39 The funeral home we can say the funeral home .

Jeffery Lovan 37:40 Yeah, and after that run, several firefighters who had been to that training reached out and said, Hey, are you doing okay?

Jen Weidner 37:50 Were you on that run the initial run? Because I remember when that

Jeffery Lovan 37:54 Yeah, and it wasn't. I mean, I don't want to say you've seen one, you've seen them all. But it wasn't something that like, stuck with me like it was, it is what it is.

Jen Weidner 38:07 The smell may have stuck with you.

Jeffery Lovan 38:09 But so, but reached out very open and just said, what do you need anything and then two weeks to the day called again said hey, you doing okay? I'm like, hey we're fine.

Jen Weidner 38:25 You Ok processing this.

Jeffery Lovan 38:27 Just a really good outreach. And that's cool. And we've come a long way. You know, working with a bunch of meatheads

Jen Weidner 38:35 That's what I was going to say, like nothing against men, but men are not generally good

Jeffery Lovan 38:39 Even society people are realizing that you know, people need to,

Jen Weidner 38:42 it's okay to not be okay.

Jeffery Lovan 38:43 Know the warning signs on things, And we have hired a lot of very smart people. And they can apply it or they can, you know, choose to use it for other things outside of the fire department. But we do have, we do have some genuine people that, that and the people that they sent are good people,

Jen Weidner 39:09 The ones that should have been

Jeffery Lovan 39:10 Yeah, yeah.

Jen Weidner 39:12 Like if they weren't doing firefighting, they should have been therapists or something.

Jeffery Lovan 39:14 Yes, yeah absolutely.

Jen Weidner 39:17 So I know a lot of firefighters have jobs besides firefighting, do you?

Jeffery Lovan 39:21 Yes. I've always done I've done construction poured a lot of concrete, landscaping. Try to balance that between being like overextending yourself and being like, oh my gosh, it seems like when I leave the firehouse I gotta go to Lowe's and pick up lumber to form this concrete and or, yeah, I try and scale it back to like friends and family. But then I just started some firefighters bought a dumpster company. And we they hooked up to this large remodel company and we're doing like big additions and bathroom and kitchen remodels. And I basically get three or four firemen on our off days and I go over there and and run a job site for them. So they I make the remodel company and we go over what needs to be demoed. And so

this wall is coming out and then the guys that are on the dumpster company, set it all up, they get the dumpster there, we tear out the cabinets, sometimes, some of the stuff goes like Habitat for Humanity and stuff like that salvage what we can. But once again, somebody lives on in a million \$2 million house over in the Eastend of Louisville. When five off duty firemen show up, they feel safe. They know that you know not that they like when we show up clean cut guys, you know, talk can communicate.

Jen Weidner 40:54 You're not gonna do a half assed job because you don't do that

Jeffery Lovan 40:58 Put dust through their house steal their jewelry box like that, that it's just been a really good partnership with them. And it's allowed me to set my schedule up where I'm kind of not overextend myself because when I was doing everything on my own, I had to Okay, I gotta go meet this lady. Okay, she wants a price. Okay, that price is too high. I need to, you know, just all I just like to show up,

Jen Weidner 41:21 you just show up and do the work.

Jeffery Lovan 41:22 I just show up and work. That's my personality. Um, if I've one good thing in life is just I could put my head down and just do just go to work. Let's do it. I don't have to think this job is completely different. It's a lot of my new fire department role is just more emailing and documents and things like that. So I'm getting used to that. But yeah, that's, that's, that's what I bring to the table is if I show up on a fire scene, and I know my seat assignment, and I know the tools that I carry. I can guarantee you that task is going to get done.

Jen Weidner 41:57 Now in this new position are you still doing 24 hours?

Jeffery Lovan 42:00 24 hours Yeah. So I do the inspections and things like that nine to five ish. And then after that, I'm just on I'm just one of the firefighters is going to show up. Now I don't go to the like the single unit medical runs that that's just them. But serious incidents. I show up as a safety officer. So hazmat, a really bad car wreck where you got multiple units coming and I kind of take care of accountability like okay, we got our on fire scene. We got three firefighters in the rear we've got and I'm kind of eyes and ears for our battalion chief.

Jen Weidner 42:40 You're making sure that everybody's where they need to be, everybody's safe.

Jeffery Lovan 42:42 Yes safe. Just that that's it like am I watching the building, is there a rapid change in the in the structure or things like that I'm kind of the eyes and ears maybe in the rear from the battalion chief, it will be out in the front. So we've got, you know, full view of everything. But it's a it's a great learning experience. Getting into with the amount of time that I have on and kind of that we're you've you've been doing the same thing for 8-10 years, and it's like, Oh, I'll try something new.

Jen Weidner 43:16 How long have you had this new position?

Jeffery Lovan 43:17 About two months? Three months.

Jen Weidner 43:19 So you're still learning everything

Jeffery Lovan 43:21 Yeah yes.

Jen Weidner 43:22 Okay

Jeffery Lovan 43:22 And I mean, every day I have to call the other fire marshal be like, hey, somebody called with this question. Like, I don't even there's no shame. Like, I'm not gonna give you the wrong answer.

Jen Weidner 43:32 You don't know, you don't know.

Jeffery Lovan 43:33 Right? It's okay to come from my wealth, knowledge or lack of wealth of knowledge. But no, it's it's good.

Jen Weidner 43:41 So what advice would you give anyone that wants to become a firefighter?

Jeffery Lovan 43:44 Probably where starting from the beginning is your family has to be that's to each their own I mean, it's it's it's not fun for some guys. You know, don't have what I've been blessed with, but try to have a real good pace to your career. So we get guys that come in when they want to go to every class, they want to go to Indy and do this and this this is and you're like, you get all this training up front. And then you're kind of done. So just set a real good pace. You know, because you don't want to be burned out and you're sick. You know, but you still want to know year 10, I still got things to learn. So that's kind of what led me to want to take this role was like, this is a good this is a good change. You know, maybe I was did that was I gone through the motions two years ago because I had been a sergeant for you know, one of the oldest sergeants on and I was like, I really didn't want to move up to the next rank, because I just didn't. I liked what I was doing, but I was I was getting complacent. I guess it's the best. So just what are your aspirations, and if, you if your goal is to get right to the top, that's fine. Just know that that don't don't be like a firecracker. And fizzle out in the beginning and then you got six years on you got to get 14 more years out of this. You got to squeeze that out. And, and you're, you don't like it anymore.

Jen Weidner 45:29 You've already burned out because yeah,

Jeffery Lovan 45:31 Yes, someone gets someone I think was my brother in law said You know, you really just gotta set your pace and even use it on him like I'm trying to I'm just trying to set my pace for for this.

Jen Weidner 45:43 Just what is your what is your endgame?

Jeffery Lovan 45:44 Yeah.

Jen Weidner 45:45 What do you want to be?

Jeffery Lovan 45:45 Do you want to be chie? Do you want to be or do you want to stay in Indiana the in the whole rest of your career? You know, do you just want to be a worker busy bee? Actaully everybody you talk to man when I was a firefighter, so much fun, you know, and then and then as you get more roles and responsibilities, I think that's where it weighs on you a little bit more.

Jen Weidner 46:06 So now, could you go back to being online?

Jeffery Lovan 46:09 Yes.

Jen Weidner 46:10 Like if you don't like this, it's not for you. It's not the end all be all.

Jeffery Lovan 46:15 That's the greatest thing about it is like, Oh, you can take this and you know, they could take it away from me two years from now, and all that training in it, but, but like, I didn't not like what I was doing. I didn't take this because I was I hated it. I took it because I couldn't pass it up. You know, it's that good of a role is that especially, you know, with the flexibility of not being confined in the fire station. I mean, that's like, a new lease on life. I mean, you know, like, I tell my wife, like I forgot, I forgot my lunch meat. Can you bring me a sandwich? Because I mean, if you need to go anywhere, you gotta beg to take everybody with you on a rig. And then you're like, Ah, I'm just gonna wait till dinner.

Jen Weidner 47:03 You're gonna carry all your equipment. With everything that

Jeffery Lovan 47:06 Right? Especially with a lot of kids were babies. I'm trying to sneak out and not open a refrigerator door, knock something over. It's like, you know, there's a lot of times where you're like being in through your locker looking for peanut butter and jelly, but nobody really minds to go. I mean, nobody's gonna let you starve. It's just a matter if you want to inconvenience somebody.

Jen Weidner 47:25 Or do you want to ask? Do you anything else you want to share about your time as a firefighter?

Jeffery Lovan 47:30 Oh yeah. That I wish everyone everybody leaves they would say I'll never really give the give the city what that job gave to me.

Jen Weidner 47:48 Well, thank you so much for being here.