

*Some Like it Hot: Tales from the Firehouse*  
*Interview with Andrew Conlin*

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

firefighter, Jeffersonville, firefighting, work, day, fire department, logistics, today, wife, indianapolis, fire, homeland security, department, cancer, misconception, people, dad, talked, firehouse, ems

**Jen Weidner 00:06** Today is June 20 2023. I'm Jen Weidner with the Jefferson Township Public Library, conducting interviews for Some Like It Hot Tales from the Firehouse, I'm here today with firefighter Andrew Conlon of the Jeffersonville Fire Department. Thank you for being here today. So everyone has a story to tell and I want to give Jeffersonville firefighters the chance to share their stories. So how long have you been with the department?

**Andrew Conlon 00:29** I've been with the department for seven years.

**Jen Weidner 00:31** What made you want to become a firefighter?

**Andrew Conlon 00:33** My dad actually retired from the fire department after 35 and a half years at Jeffersonville. So growing up with it, that's kind of where I always knew I wanted to be at and that was kind of a home.

**Jen Weidner 00:43** Did your dad still with this?

**Andrew Conlon 00:45** Oh, yes, yes.

**Jen Weidner 00:45** Maybe we should interview him too.

**Andrew Conlon 00:47** Yeah, I'm sure if you do phone call interviews. I'm sure he will.

**Jen Weidner 00:51** Absolutely,yeah. If you want a firefighter, what do you think he would be doing?

**Andrew Conlon 00:56** Here lately, probably some kind of Homeland Security, something like that. That's kind of that's kind of what I've strayed towards, as of lately.

**Jen Weidner 01:06** Okay. So what are some of the challenges of your job?

**Andrew Conlon 01:14** Separating home and work, not taking work home. Definitely like having the having that ability to shut it off. My wife is a 911 dispatcher. So her coming, her coming home and me coming home. . We kind of, kind of connect those parts. But then we it's really nice to have that ability.

**Jen Weidner 01:35** Definitely you're both are in very high stress jobs.

**Andrew Conlon 01:38** Yeah.

**Jen Weidner 01:38** Jobs and to be able to be like, okay, that stays outside that that absolutely,

**Andrew Conlon** 01:43 Definitely.

**Jen Weidner** 01:44 So how long did it take you to get used to work in the 24 hour shifts?

**Andrew Conlon** 01:48 Not very long. Because prior to being with Jeff I was with another department and we worked 24 hour shifts there as well. And I did that before I met my wife so and when with my of course with my dad doing it, it was, it was kind of a normal, like it was a normal schedule to me as opposed to other people that have like a nine to five job. I know my dad worked 10 days a month and he was gone. So

**Jen Weidner** 02:10 You grew up with that so you knew what you're getting into? Yeah. What are some of the best parts of your job?

**Andrew Conlon** 02:18 When people you know when you know that you're helping people, you know, you get called on their worst day and don't get me wrong, it might be your best day. But you know, when you're saving people or anything like that, you know, but then later on in life, you might need them or you know, having that ability that's, that's very, very rewarding to know that people depend on you on their worst day.

**Jen Weidner** 02:47 What are some of the harder parts of your job?

**Andrew Conlon** 02:51 That kind of goes full circle, knowing that you show up on some runs and there's nothing that you can do. And you see these people that are having their worst day and they're suffering and you know, you you're going to do what you can do, you're trained to do, but you know, in your mind that there's not anything that you can do that that's very hard, especially when you're dealing with kids and things like that. So that's that. They kind of stick with you.

**Jen Weidner** 03:23 And what things do you do to help you with that stress? That's those kinds of things.

**Andrew Conlon** 03:28 I enjoy my kids as much as I can. We go camping a lot as a family. I I love the outdoors. So if I can instill in my love for the outdoors and my kids. That's, that's huge for me. Fortunately, you know, working at Jeff, they've blessed me to be able to do a lot of things and we got a camper and we get to go on vacations and things like that. And that's really fun. We garden just like I said being outdoors.

**Jen Weidner** 04:00 I think it's very important for any job, especially a very high stress job.

**Andrew Conlon** 04:03 Yeah,

**Jen Weidner** 04:04 To be able to go outside and decompress and enjoy nature, right?

**Andrew Conlon** 04:08 Yeah,

**Jen Weidner** 04:08 Yep. So there's so many firefighting shows on these days. What are some of the misconceptions or things they get wrong about the real world?

**Andrew Conlon 04:19** My wife always, always gets at me about that because like, we'll sit there and watch a show and I'll nit pick it and she's like, she'll just totally turn it off. You know? Being able to see when you go in something as simple as that, if that's not always the case. You know? I mean, we could sit here and nitpick shows all day long, you know, but yeah, that's a big one is the misconception of being able, like, you know, every time that you go into a fire, you're gonna be able to see something then there'll be a piece of wire here or a piece of wire there it's it's not

**Jen Weidner 04:53** That's pretty much everybody else's said like you cannot see when you go into a fire. No, that'd be really boring though.

**Andrew Conlon 04:59** Yeah,

**Jen Weidner 05:00** If all you saw was black or gray Yeah. So I know a lot, a lot of firefighters have jobs besides firefighting. Do you have another one? Others?

**Andrew Conlon 05:08** I have a few. I currently serve as the, I'm with the fire department. Of course, you know, like we said Jeffersonville. I am serving with them as logistics Section Chief for thunder (Thunder Over Louisville) And then I also work for Clark County Emergency Management Agency. I'm a volunteer for them. I am the county logistics coordinator. And then I also am with Indiana Task Force One, which is out of Indianapolis. We respond to any natural or manmade disasters. We're under, we're under FEMA. So we respond out to the disasters and then whatever, whatever the situation may be. I serve in the logistics section with them. I'm slowly starting I'm slowly they're wanting me to to transfer over as well. And secondary and comms communications. Have all those certifications to do that. So that's, that's a nice ability to have that as a secondary. That's kind of where I went back with earlier talking about my homeland security interest and things. And so if we get a state deployment, I have two hours to get to Indianapolis with all my equipment and then I'm going from my family for anywhere from two to 22 days

**Jen Weidner 06:26** However long they need you, Okay, and the fire department's like cool with you just being like hey, I gotta go.

**Andrew Conlon 06:32** Yeah, they are really cool about it. They actually, the way it works is the department signs an MOU. So they actually lend me out

**Jen Weidner 06:43** MOU?

**Andrew Conlon 06:44** It's like a memorandum of understanding. It's like a mutual aid agreement.

**Jen Weidner 06:46** Oh, Okay.

**Andrew Conlon 06:47** So they they lend me the firehouse lends me out to Taskforce One, essentially. And that's, that's the purpose that I started with them with this logistics as well.

**Jen Weidner 06:56** So do your firefighting training and skills come into play?

**Andrew Conlon 06:59** Yeah. A lot of my FEMA training comes into skills with that one. I don't I don't do the rescue side of it. There we have different, different categories that they're broken up into. We have like rescue, logistics, communications, planning. It's all kind of into that work chart. idea.

**Jen Weidner 07:16** Okay. So I think we already talked about this a little bit, but how does being a firefighter affect your home life or how was it when we were firefighter before you got married?

**Andrew Conlon 07:26** Yes, yes. Oh, well, yeah, I was with New Chapel EMS at that department, it's a combination of departments, EMS and the fire service. So I've done I've done both, but I still work 24 hours a day. 10 days a month, type schedule. So

**Jen Weidner 07:40** So when you first started dating your wife and got married, like she was kind of already knew what she was getting into

**Andrew Conlon 07:46** She very knew what she was getting into; her dad was a firefighter as well. So her dad had a little bit of a different schedule. Her dad had a 24/ 48 schedule so he'd work a daytoday and he was off two days. He was actually over in he in, he worked for Buechel re over in Louisville

**Jen Weidner 08:03** Okay. So what advice would you give anyone that wants to become a firefighter?

**Andrew Conlon 08:14** Probably get really good at separating like, you know, home and work. That I can't stress that enough. You know, don't don't bring your work home with you. You know, and then clean your gear, take care of yourself, physically fit, you know, it's very much important that you wash your gear. That's that's I can't stress that one enough is washing gear.

**Jen Weidner 08:36** And that is because ?

**Andrew Conlon 08:38** Cancer risks, You know, we had Deputy Chief Bruce DeArk that passed away. My wife's father passed away from cancer, he has a line of duty as well with cancer. It's very, very important. Make sure you get your physicals, make sure your screens. That's a big thing for me

**Jen Weidner 08:57** Take care of yourself. We all should be doing well for you all to be more important because you're dealing with carcinogens anytime there's a fire, like all this new building material is poisonous.

**Andrew Conlon 09:06** Yeah, it is. It is.

**Jen Weidner 09:08** Absolutely. So do you have anything else you'd like to tell us or share with us about your experience with firefighting?

**Andrew Conlon 09:14** I mean, that's like, like we talked about, you know, like something that I knew that I was gonna do when I was little, and I really don't know anything else. Like that was just

**Jen Weidner 09:24** That was what you're gonna do.

**Andrew Conlon 09:25** What I was gonna do. I already had my mind set up.

**Jen Weidner** 09:27 Do you have a call or any calls that stand out to you more than others for any reason?

**Andrew Conlon** 09:33 I mean, yes and no, I don't. I don't like to talk about them just because it's, it's things that are big but the general public, they don't they don't do the job. So don't

**Jen Weidner** 09:45 Understand.

**Andrew Conlon** 09:46 They don't understand it. And it's not something that you should succumb to or yeah, give them you know, like, that's just not something that they went through the training to prepare themselves to do.

**Jen Weidner** 10:01 Okay, well, thank you for being here today.

**Andrew Conlon** 10:04 No problem. Thank you for having me.