

Some Like it Hot: Tales from the Firehouse
Interview with Salvador Quinones

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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Jen Weidner 00:09 Today is July 13,2023. I'm Jen Weidner with the Jeffersonville Township Public Library conducting interviews for Some Like It Hot:Tales from theFirehouse. I'm here today with Sergeant Salvadore Quinones at the Jeffersonville Fire Department, thanks for being here today.

Salvador Quinones 00:24 Thank you.

Jen Weidner 00:25 How long have you been on the department?

Salvador Quinones 00:27 I am going now, August 3 of this year will be eight years. Eight years. Yes, it goes by fast.

Jen Weidner 00:35 What made you want to become a firefighter?

Salvador Quinones 00:37 Oh, honestly, it was. It was never a plan or never a thought. I did it like we were talking earlier. I grew up on New Chapel Road, and there was that Utica Volunteer Fire Department was about four houses down from my house and I still was hanging out there playing basketball with those guys but it was still wasn't a thing that I wanted to do. Then just around 2006, I started trying out for the Jeff fire. And that's the only department that I wanted to get on. So now both my brother and I are both firefighters. He's Louisville fire. But I'm over here but we never talked about it. We both ended up being firefighters.

Jen Weidner 01:10 So if you weren't a firefighter, what do you think he would be doing?

Salvador Quinones 01:14 Honestly, I don't know. So when I first went to college I went to UofL (University of Louisville). I wanted to be a chef growing up. But I also wanted to play football. You couldn't do both. There was no culinary program at U of L. So the only one I believe was Spalding I believe or maybe it was Bellarmine and somewhere it was another school but didn't have a football team. So I had to decide I was like, well, I thought I was gonna be you know, big NFL player, which I wasn't and I stopped growing once I got to high school. So I went to U of L and I walked on the football team my freshman year. But then after that it was just more like a job like it was all day football all day, every day at that level of you know, college. It was everyday. So I didn't know what I wanted to do. And obviously the chef thing was out at that point. I was like now here at U of L. I had an exercise science major, same thing as my brother. But I didn't know what I was gonna do with it. So eventually I actually didn't even end up

graduating. I went to school for three years. And then I was gonna take that gap year. It turned into a 20 year gap year.

Jen Weidner 02:17 It's okay, there's always time to go back if you want that degree.

Salvador Quinones 02:20 That is true.

Jen Weidner 02:21 So do you cook?

Salvador Quinones 02:22 I do, I do. I cook a lot. I cook a lot at work. Those guys they want me to cook every day now, my crew and everything. I do cook a lot. And like being you know, born in Puerto Rico and raised up there a little bit. There's a lot of cooking that gets done at home. Nobody really eats out over there anything everybody cooks. So my grandmother had a restaurant in Puerto Rico, which I actually while my mom was at work. I used to go to the restaurant just hang out with my grandmother and bothered her all day until my mom got home. But so yeah, so I was always around a lot of cooking and everything I do enjoy it. It's a great skill to have, whether you're a firefighter or not, it's a great skill to have. I just think it's fun. I like, you know, I like following recipes. And after I do it a few times, and I try to just try to not perfect it, but I try to make it more mine well, you know?

Jen Weidner 03:09 I do the exact same thing. To me cooking is relaxing.

Salvador Quinones 03:13 That's right.

Jen Weidner 03:14 I want to be in the kitchen by myself. So what are some challenges of your job?

Salvador Quinones 03:18 There's, I mean, there's a lot of challenges. So it's a very dynamic job, as you know, everything's changing, always evolving and changing. And there's, you know, it can be a medical run that goes wrong, it doesn't even have to be a fire everybody medical run, where you might have someone who's, you know, obviously on drugs or something might be reacting violently. Might be, you know, blood borne pathogens, diseases, everything you just never know. You know, even with as much PPE (personal protective equipment) as we use, there's still always that chance you meet. I've ended up with blood on me, you know, I'm doing CPR doing different things you just don't know. We've had some overdoses when you Narcan the patient. I don't know if you've ever seen it yourself in person, but they jump up.

Jen Weidner 04:01 So I've heard, I've heard that

Salvador Quinones 04:03 They become violent so you have to hold them down and you just never know you never know who has a weapon on them. Normally, thank God for JPD they're usually there before us. And they'll search you know, they'll pat them down, make sure there's no weapons, whoever anyone that's around but, but you just never know so many risks the new construction nowadays, they're willing to put up more homes, more apartments. And obviously everyone wants to make as much profit as possible. So they build everything a lot lighter, lightweight, construction a lot lighter. So things go up fast, they go really fast. So it's dangerous

for us to be inside certain structures sometimes because it just goes so fast because they're building everything so lightweight nowadays. It's all about profits.

Jen Weidner 04:45 It is ,it is absolutely yeah. So how long did it take for you to get used to working 24 hour shifts?

Salvador Quinones 04:53 It was kind of weird at first. It was, it took me I would say probably a couple months. My first few months on I just thought it was really hard to work you know, stay there and sleep and you know and everything and then go home the next day it was really it was different it was completely different.

Jen Weidner 05:05 On the outside, you're kind of like, oh, that might be kind of cool. Go we're gonna get to sleep. But then like, So how long did it take you to be able to sleep and not be waiting for the alarm to go off?

Salvador Quinones 05:15 So I can always sleep. I'm a good sleeper, but it took me a while to not be scared to death when that alarm went off, because it'll ,it'll ,it'll really jar you when you're sleeping. And you have this and especially at that house, the station I'm at now headquarters. That station and the one down 62 which is our station four have red lights in the room. Those are the only ones that have those everybody has their individual room. So when the alarm goes off, not only is it loud, but then you have this bright red light that goes off, you know and lights up your

Jen Weidner 5:40 There's no way you're sleeping.

Salvador Quinones 5:42 No, no, it just it was different. Yeah, you wake up in this dark red room.

Jen Weidner 05:51 What is even happening? Yeah, yeah,

Salvador Quinones 05:54 Cuz it's still dark. But it's like, that is a super. I don't know, it's like, it's weird. It's just a very ominous looking,

Jen Weidner 06:00 I can imagine, right?

Salvador Quinones 06:02 So it took, it took a little bit to get used to that. Because I'm always I've always been, I've always slept great. But in a way, I guess I'm a light sleeper. So the smallest noises I'm near me will wake me up so that I can fall right back asleep. And you know, I won't be tired. I won't feel like I didn't get any sleep. But uh, just that loud alarm that it really gets you really gets you. So it took me a little bit to get used to that. That was ,that was, that was the main thing. I think that was the main thing that it took me a while to get used to.

Jen Weidner 06:30 I'm always thinking about that. Like, you know, I have a hard time sleeping. I'm thinking like, imagine being worried about an alarm going off at any time in the middle of the night.

Salvador Quinones 06:37 Some nights we get lucky. And we don't have any overnight. It's so nice. You get nights where you don't sleep. Yeah, we'll get back at four in the morning and it'll go off again. You're like by this point. Yeah.

Jen Weidner 06:50 So how many times is your dinner interrupted by a call?

Salvador Quinones 06:56 Happens every once in a while. I won't say it's a lot. But in the times when it does happen. It seems like as always, as soon as we spent, you know, whoever spent a lot, a lot of time cooking and preparing a good meal and call everybody in to eat or getting ready to sit down. We haven't taken that first bite and the alarm goes off and then you get back to a cold meal. You try to keep it warm as much as possible. But it just depends where you are. We've had in this one time. So we had a there was one of our one of the guy's got married. We were at his wedding reception. It was Saturday night. Obviously. We all worked that Sunday, the rest of the crew he was leaving to go on honeymoon. You know, everybody was working that Sunday on our crew. We went in and we're making biscuits and gravy. We were all starving. You know, we had been out later than usual.

Jen Weidner 07:38 Absolutely. Yeah.

Salvador Quinones 07:39 Having a good time. And we're making these biscuits and gravy. We're ready. Everybody's ready to eat. And the alarm goes off and it was a fire. We're like it was it ended up being bad when we didn't get back to the firehouse almost two o'clock. We didn't get to eat. We're starving. We hadn't eaten breakfast, hadn't had a snack, hadn't had anything. We didn't get back until 2:00 pm after working a fire. It was a it was the worst day that I can think of so far. Because I get hangry

Jen Weidner 08:10 I understand that completely. I've always got snacks somewhere. Yeah. So if you're if you're in the middle of cooking, you just have to turn off the stove and just go because you always you'd have to go on the call like there's no there's no excuse.

Salvador Quinones 08:15 Oh man. Yeah, yeah, we definitely have to turn on the stove. And at first I was like, just leave it on low whatever. But it'd be pretty that'd be sad, great, crazy story if the firehouse caught on fire.

Jen Weidner 08:35 I mean, I'm sure it's happened. But let's not have it happen in Jeffersonville.

Salvador Quinones 08:39 Yeah.

Jen Weidner 08:41 I don't wanna see that headline, I'd be like I know who did that. What are some of the best parts of your job?

Salvador Quinones 08:48 Oh, the best part outside of all the people that we meet in the around the community of people is just being able to help everyone. The best part is just the camaraderie we have. But then like a lot of the crews and a lot of the guys like really like a brotherhood. Every you know, everyone there gets along great, at least as far as from my

perspective and the people that I work with and all that. Everyone gets along great and there's nothing those guys wouldn't do for you. I mean, if you need any help on your days off with something moving, whatever it may be, you know, you can get a guy someone's going to help you for sure. And like I said, that's, that's the part from from inside the firehouse. Outside I'd say that's more obviously when you see kids out in public and they're just so happy to see just a big red truck and we have those helmets that we give out. They just love it. And I tell you about those helmets 100% of the time they'll put them on backwards. Yeah, we get the bill for us that goes in the back to protect us from embers where the kids are grabbing to put it on like as a bill of their head 100% of the time they put them on backwards even if we put them on them on for them. They'll turn it around. But yeah, this is It's always great to see the kids out in a different event. One of my personal favorites, and as long as the Halloween that we do give out candy at the Big Four bridge, that's always fun.

Jen Weidner 10:10 That always looks fun.

Salvador Quinones 10:11 It's always a good time. She's so many kids so many costumes. I always love to see the ones that come dressed up as firefighters when we sneak a little extra in their bags.

Jen Weidner 10:20 Absolutely, yes.

Salvador Quinones 10:22 Yeah, so that's always fun, though.

Jen Weidner 10:25 So what are some of the worst parts of your job?

Salvador Quinones 10:28 The worst parts, obviously, is when we respond to a lot of things is somebody's worst day are usually one of their worst days, you know, so it's, we, you know, we do, there's a lot of people, you know, that pass away on, you know, certain runs, especially, you know, bad accidents, whenever, maybe fires, whatever, people are losing their personal belongings or everything they've worked for. So, that's, that's obviously the worst part or somebody, you know, somebody watching the family member, you know, die right in front of them, and we're trying to help in general, you know, do our best to help that person out. But sometimes it doesn't, you know, it's not much you can do

Jen Weidner 11:04 You have all the training in the world, but things happen. I mean, yeah.

Salvador Quinones 11:08 Exactly, exactly.

Jen Weidner 11:08 Is there one call that stands out to you more than others for I mean, whatever reason it was bad, funny, or...

Salvador Quinones 11:20 Myself, personally, there hasn't there hasn't been one that really stands out above the other, you know, some bad stuff and whatever. But I do know a lot of guys, the runs that involve children, especially infants, those are the worst and like, they just, those are the ones that really stick with you. But fortunately for myself, I have not had any incidents, which are really, really bad. My crew was on was working the day when they discovered all

those bodies at a funeral home on Middle Road last year. So that one stands out to a lot of the guys on my crew.

Jen Weidner 11:58 So you were on that day did you have to go in?

Salvador Quinones 12:00 I did not because I was off work last year I had surgery on my shoulder. So I was off work that day, I was doing the PIO (public information officer) thing, but I was not there on duty. So I did not but my crew, my extra crew where I'm at now headquarters had to go in and remove all those bodies.

Jen Weidner 12:15 That was probably one of the stinkiest calls.

Salvador Quinones 12:18 And then we had to be fully encapsulated well they had to be fully encapsulated. And they say you could still when you came outside, you could still smell it, take it off to create and plus it was in July. So it was about a year

Jen Weidner 12:27 About a year ago.

Salvador Quinones 12:28 Yeah, that was super hot. So that smells really bad. And it was really hot in those suits. So when to take them off. They were dripping sweat, and then you could smell all that and it was just those types of runs. And that's happened. When those really bad smells. That's that happened. Those really stand out to you too. Because there's a smell. You're never forget, Never forget

Jen Weidner 12:44 Never forget, you smell it again you're like that's trouble.

Salvador Quinones 12:47 Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. So no, um, even though having that surgery last year was a terrible experience, because, you know, I was off work for so long and couldn't do much. But that day, I was thankful.

Jen Weidner 13:02 You were like Oh, that's one call I'm glad I didn't get.

Salvador Quinones 13:07 That's right. That's right. That day. I was glad I was like, Yeah, my shoulders hurt guys. You know, I was I was off still. But um, yeah, that was a rough day.

Jen Weidner 13:16 I was just a bizarre incident to begin with.

Salvador Quinones 13:18 Yeah, that was one of those. Yeah, it's one of those runs you, hope something like that never happens again. That's just wild. I just never know, some guy got caught yesterday in Mount Washington with body parts. And you know, he was never know.

Jen Weidner 13:32 You never know what you're gonna walk into. No idea what police and fire go through. That's why I like doing these interviews because you find out like, what kinds of crazy stuff happens in your city that these people take care of for you?

Salvador Quinones 13:46 You never, Yeah, you never know.

Jen Weidner 13:49 I know. There's no like typical day for you. But let's say when you go into the firehouse in the morning, what are some things that you do all that every time you go in.

Salvador Quinones 13:57 So now as a sergeant, so I've just recently promoted my, my main job maintenance to make sure our truck is ready to respond. And our equipment is ready to go. Nothing's broken. So my first thing I do every morning, after I get my gear on the truck, I'll make sure I check the entire truck. Check all the departments, check with the other, get with the other sergeant who's leaving that day and make sure there's nothing that was broken or that we're missing that we need to replace. Just make sure we're ready to respond at all times the main job. This is the first thing usually on my crew like I was telling you earlier, that I like to cook so I know that I go right straight to the kitchen and start making breakfast.

Jen Weidner 14:33 Absolutely, you gotta be fueled up.

Salvador Quinones 14:36 After breakfast, do our cleanup. We have daily duties that we do on different days of the week is different things. One day is windows and one day is floors. But every day we have our minimum duties of taking out the trash, mopping and sweeping the floors. Make sure that you know no trash,

Jen Weidner 14:54 General housekeeping.

Salvador Quinones 14:55 Those are daily duties but then on a certain certain days we have other bigger duties like I said, Well clean all the windows or whatever we'll spray the windows and wipe them down clean to the all the certain compartments on the truck have to be straightened out and wiped down. So we had the cleaning. After that it's usually we'll do some kind of training. It is up to your captain or lieutenant whoever's in charge that day what training will do. A lot of the times I prefer hands-on training, I don't like to sit down in a room and watch a video. Those are the worst. Because after, after so much I don't care what the video is about, it's not gonna I'm gonna want to I'm gonna get sleepy. You know, when you're sitting in a room in a nice air conditioned room, you're gonna get sleepy.

Jen Weidner 15:36 And a lot of people learn by doing not like watching a video,

Salvador Quinones 15:39 Right. It doesn't matter what. And that's why when I studied different I studied for differently like promotion and leisure. I had to be in a quiet super quiet room because if there's noise in the background, I'm reading something. It's gonna take about three times reading that because my mind can't just focus and now I want to know what's going on. Yeah, so that kind of training. So usually that goes on the training goes on from say we're done with clean up and eating breakfast, maybe by 9. So it's usually like 10 to noon around noon. You know, some guys have lunch. Some guys work out, you know, just depends on what you want to do. Or it just depends being at headquarters now we have a lot of tours like kids come in and things so we might have that going on that day. We might have a special detail that we need to do. And all these things obviously are if we have no runs you know it was a slow day.

Jen Weidner 16:31 Exactly

Salvador Quinones 16:31 Yeah. It doesn't go that well. But But um, yeah, so after that, you know, guys after 1p baring there's anything going on like giving tours or anything at the firehouse that day you can kind of relax like you can change into your workout clothes and you can be you know me have on shorts and whatever you want to do your workout shorts. And you can just kind of relax and whatever. You can go back into your room if you want to watch a movie or something. But a lot of the guys especially on my crew now, we were talking about Stith earlier, he's on my crew. He's always training for the Police and Fire Games and Cam Cameron did the Police and Fire Games. They're both on my crew now I have a great, wonderful crew. So we work out a lot on my crew. And then usually we we have dinner kind of early on this crew that I'm on now. It's like we always joke around we're like man, how old are you guys? You know he's like It's like 5:30 dinner

Jen Weidner 17:25 Are we the old people now???

Salvador Quinones 17:29 If it's not done by 5:30 You see people start circling around like looking was almost done we had lunch like at one Yeah.

Jen Weidner 17:43 I'm really not hungry yet.

Salvador Quinones 17:43 My crew eats really early. Oh, usually by 5:30 which then leads to the next thing. So after a lot of us will walk after dinner. No, it's always good to do you know we can get that digestion going and everything. So we'll walk but after that everybody showers and they're in bed, it seems about like eight o'clock, 8:30 or they're back in their rooms only. It's normally just me and one other guy will be up watching if there's a game on. Yeah, and we'll just be watching that. But yeah, it's just it's crazy. How different like every crew is that dynamic of every crew. Some crews I was on a crew before. With like Jeffrey Lovan, We were talking about the Lovans earlier while I was on a crew with Jeffrey Lovan and Marcus Renn those guys. And we will be up till midnight watching games, you know, you know, there's no runs or whatever, we'd be up late. Now this crew I'm on now is like, eight o'clock. They're like, look at the time. Gotta get to bed now. I'm usually just like getting home this time when my days off

Jen Weidner 18:40 How many is on your crew?

Salvador Quinones 18:43 We are four on our truck. We have a truck company. So there's minimum staffing is four. But being at headquarters, the fire marshal and the battalion chief are also there. So there's six of us that eat together or we'll be there a lot most of the day.

Jen Weidner 18:56 Now as a sergeant, do you drive the truck?

Salvador Quinones 19:00 I do. I do drive the truck and operate all that. So that's always fun. And I've always liked it. I have a CDL so on the side I used to drive so I've always been used to drive and bigger vehicles

Jen Weidner 19:11 So your're like fire truck this is nothing.

Salvador Quinones 19:15 And and as I was so happy that I was promoted here recently. It was a tough process. But I was I did I did well, I did well another year or so. And yeah, I just I couldn't be happier. I think myself I'm going to stay as a sergeant for a while a lot of guys just look into the next step to move on and move forward and be an officer and all that and that's fine. You know, that's good. That's just eventually I will be Yeah, but I just like I just enjoy it especially just now getting to it there. I think I'll stay as a sergeant for a while. I just enjoy that type of work. It's up to me. I know. You know as soon as that alarm goes off, then I have certain things that I check off in my mind like I especially with a fire I need to know where there's a hydrant and to relay that to my captain, I needed to know the best route to get there, we need to know if there's any construction or anything, and then like the layout, so we take a separate, you know, different. So I have all these things in my mind, I just enjoy that process that part of it.

Jen Weidner 19:16 Do you all have GPS in your truck?

Salvador Quinones 19:17 We do not. So what I do, luckily, and this is different will, you know, back in the day, and not even back in the day, when I first got on, we had they do have the CAD computers only officers can see it, obviously. But the driver cannot. So you got to know where you're going. As soon as that alarm goes off, you don't have time to check your phone a lot of the times. I mean, you can but especially before the GPS, though, before we had the app, it's called Active 911 now it'll tell you exactly where you're going. You can look on there, but sometimes that apps off. I've had times where that's it, they pinpoint the wrong

Jen Weidner 20:43 Not a 100%

Salvador Quinones 20:44 Exactly, exactly. You need to know your streets. And back then you have some called a Box Book, I don't know if you've ever heard of it or not. So actually was one of our retired from what I was told one of our retired captains. He was a Battalion Chief Dennis Dierking, he created it. So every district has a number, it's like say district one is being 100. So obviously, District Two in the 200 is 300. So every block, or every block in that district, or so many streets is a box number. So say, we're going to start at st and district five. So I would have looked up and tell my captain, all right, it's a box, box number 513. So when my captain gets in the truck and we get on there, I know I already have to know how to get to that street. So when he gets in the truck, he flips the book, the box will go up into 513. There you can see where we're going, where the nearest hydrant is, and all that stuff. It was all on paper, though. Now it's all on an app that we have. So what I do, though, is that apps then off, sometimes I always double check. So I always go, as soon as I see an address, and I go to Active 911, and I want to see where it's at some a lot of times because I'm pretty good with the streets. I worked with a city before I got on with the fire department. So I did I was on the drainage department. So we had to get work orders. So I already knew where a lot of places were. A lot of streets. So but now I'll double check. I'll put it in my in my Apple Maps, and on my Google Maps, double check the address to make sure it is all on

Jen Weidner 22:13 Well there's so much new construction. How does that affect you all?

Salvador Quinones 22:16 So one of the worst districts to work in right now is down in District Four, which is out towards like the industrial park. Those, there's new stuff popping up everywhere down on that end of town. So a lot of times the maps Yeah, you'll you'll look at the map and they won't not even be any homes on there. It'll just be an open like open field on the map. But it's got a pinpoint of address. Yeah, especially at where I grew up on New Chapel Road. There was nothing when you got towards the end where it is now Crystal Springs.

Jen Weidner 22:50 Yep, it was all just fields.

Salvador Quinones 22:52 Yeah, we used to run through all the fields as a kid I mean, brought a bikes up and down New Chapel Road on the hills and then when we got to the fence, there was a farm was all field. Yes, we just run through the woods and play manhunt and all that type of stuff. But now even in Old Stoner, in the very back. It's all new homes going on. We just We actually just had a run up there about a month ago when I was working overtime up at fours. Man, I didn't know this stuff was back here. There's putting up homes.

Jen Weidner 23:15 Yes, I was up that way at that new park that New Chapel Park. And I was like, Yeah, well, I'm just gonna go out this way see what this is. And I'm just like, This is ridiculous. Like I had no idea. I don't think the citizens of Jeffersonville realize how big Jeffersonville really is.

Salvador Quinones 23:29 Yeah

Jen Weidner 23:30 And why we need another fire department out that way.

Salvador Quinones 23:33 Yes, definitely. And then, yeah, and then we're like with River Ridge, sorry, I said Industrial Park earlier. The name slipped me but yeah, with River Ridge we respond or Station 4 responds to a lot of medical calls. Because there's so many employees there, you know, working in that area, a lot of medical runs out in River Ridge, and that doesn't include any other fires that there has been at some of those factories. The nearest truck, which would be us truck 42 We respond to everything, any fire related or active alarm with Station 4, coming from 10th Street, really, you know, the 2200 block, right right by the Arby's and Northaven Elementary. That's a long run. That's a long way to go. And there's a train going across 62 no telling how long

Jen Weidner 24:21 That's what somebody else said, like if there's a train

Salvador Quinones 24:23 Gonna be waitng there for Engine 44 is going to be on this fire by themselves for a long time until Station 3 gets there. Maybe they can get around another way.

Jen Weidner 24:32 I was shocked that Station 4 goes all the way to Charlestown State Park. Like to the boat ramp there. I was shocked because that's quite a long way.

Salvador Quinones 24:42 Because I've responded over in Utica, with, with Station 4 you know, in the back some of the back roads there. Yeah, they go along. They go a long way sometimes. A year ago. If it's a big enough incident They'll call us anyway.

Jen Weidner 24:57 Nothing against Utica.

Salvador Quinones 24:58 But yeah, that's a lot smaller department.

Jen Weidner 25:02 So what are some of the misconceptions about firefighting? There's so many fire shows out there and what do they get wrong?

Salvador Quinones 25:09 I don't know if they will the misconception when you watch a show like that, it's nothing like it. You'll see obviously, for entertainment purposes, you'll see these fires where the room is clear. And you can see everybody you can't see anything in a fire. tell you that much right now. You can't see your hand in front of your face, sometimes you're just going off training. And just instinct. Yeah, I mean, in your, in your voice with your with whoever you're in there with as well. I would never go into a fire alone, it's always two in two out. You always do everything in teams, because you never know what could go wrong. And it's just like, Yeah, but that's that might be one big misconception. Another thing and this is not a misconception, but another thing is, every time I go out, anytime you're out in public, somebody will always come up and like thank us for our service. You know, it's like, I just don't always, you know, always say know, thank you, you know, but I just always feel so awkward. And that's because I'm like, I just some that I've signed up to do. It's my job. Yeah, it's my job. And if, like, I would rather sit in the firehouse and do nothing, not because I'm lazy, because that's far from it. We all work out and do everything every day. But because I know that when we're not responding to something, then someone's not having their worst day ever. I would rather sit in the firehouse and not respond to another run at all. Yeah, I was like, if I could do that, it would be great.

Jen Weidner 26:05 It's your job.

Salvador Quinones 26:28 It would be a perfect world where nothing happens. That'd be great if I didn't have to do anything, but I always feel so awkward. Somebody's like, oh, you know, thank you for your service. I think that's like a military thing. Like, that's a very, you know, a very brave thing. And we, and we get into some crazy situations, you know what I mean, but I just feel I don't know. It's just like, I just Oh. And like I said, I think I took this question the wrong way. I don't think it's a misconception. I just, I don't know. It's one of those things that sometimes just want to be like, man, if I could just sit at the firehouse and not do anything that would be my perfect day as a firefighter.

Jen Weidner 27:05 It's like they're constantly going to fires, big fires go into the craziest medical runs having all these issues within each firefighter. It's just like, I don't really think it's like that.

Salvador Quinones 27:15 Oh, no, no, none Jeff and I don't if Louisville, And I talked to my brother they're super busy in Louisville. But no, even then, like they still get some downtime, you know, and and all that and yeah, it's just No, yeah, the show is for entertainment purposes, obviously. They, they they want to make it as every every scene as bad as possible.

Jen Weidner 27:37 Because who's gonna watch it? It's just a blank screen because of smoke, or you're all just stitting there workign out or whatever, it just doesn't transulate.

Salvador Quinones 27:46 If you talk to anyone in JPD that would tell you that we just sit in a recliner all day.(laughing)

Jen Weidner 27:52 Yeah, I've heard that and then I'm always just like, Yeah, but I've talked to a lot of firefighters and yeah, yeah.

Salvador Quinones 28:03 I wish we could sit in a recliner all day that would be the perfect world.

Jen Weidner 28:06 You get to go on a call and then hopefully have some downtime, whereas the police don't get that same downtime, which I think could be detrimental to your mental health, your physical health.

Salvador Quinones 28:18 Yeah, Yeah. That we some days we get some, like, some days not a lot of there's been a few days where we didn't have a single run at the station. I was at, you know, like, we went a whole shift.

Jen Weidner 28:31 Wow!

Salvador Quinones 28:32 It's very rare. But yeah, we've had some of those. I'm just and I don't even care. I love when it happens at night, though. Like if we make it through the night without a run. That's like, that's a great night. That doesn't happen very often either.

Jen Weidner 28:46 Right. So a lot of firefighters have jobs besides firefighting. Do you have a side job?

Salvador Quinones 28:52 Yeah, I do. And like I said, I have a CDL. And I did that for a while driving trucks locally here are different different things. And I actually have worked with a lot of the firefighters that own businesses on the side. I've worked with them with us, you know, is we all they understand my schedule,

Jen Weidner 29:09 Right, exactly.

Salvador Quinones 29:10 So they know, that's easy. So I drove trucks, one of our fire marshals John Obermeyer, and the old chief Hedrick, they own a business called HamHed I worked for HamHed for a while.

Jen Weidner 29:17 Oh, I've seen that around town.

Salvador Quinones 29:23 I worked for them for a while driving trucks and things and I've helped Macus Renn. He has business with another firefighter Nick Stone. I've helped them with their business, they have a dumpster truck business. I've helped them with that. I've done side jobs with a couple guys like Jeffrey Lovan, and we've done some side jobs with them and all that build retaining walls, doing whatever it can be, you know, you're always gonna have a way to make some extra money because you had some so many days all throughout the month. But yeah, it's great. It's whenever you see the salary, okay, everyone's like, Oh, you know, as a

firefighter you start out at \$50 some thousand dollars It doesn't sound like a lot. It doesn't sound like a lot. It's more than enough for me, whatever. But you can make so much more money on the side.

Jen Weidner 29:23 You work like, what, 10-12 days a month,

Salvador Quinones 30:12 About 10 days a month?

Jen Weidner 30:14 Yeah, so you have all this other time. So you might as well make some money.

Salvador Quinones 30:18 You can make \$100,000 If you want.

Jen Weidner 30:20 Oh yea there's something. So how does firefighting affect your home life? Or does it?

Salvador Quinones 30:26 It does, for me personally, it does not. So I don't have any kids. And one of the few that don't have any kids and my girlfriend and I, she travels a lot. For she works for Jim Beam. She's a research and development for Jim Beam so she travels a lot so it doesn't affect us. She's used to on the nights that the night that I'm not home, at the firehouse. She just brings her you know she'll do more work. She'll work later and whatever. And then sometimes, so she's gone traveling, like last week, she was in Japan for work. So when I'm like, well I'm like three of those days I'm in I'm in the firehouse it doesn't matter.

Jen Weidner 31:00 So what does it matter? Yeah, like as long as you're on the same page, and she knows this what you do for a living and it can be a weird schedule.

Salvador Quinones 31:09 We don't have any pets either. She wants to get a dog. We don't have any pets right now, for that reason, because I'm gone 24 hours, and she travels a lot. But eventually, if we do have a child or a pet, then we would have to adjust, but I don't think it would be hard. I'm sure some guys who especially ones that were married, or had kids, and pets or whatever, before they got on once they got on it was a huge adjustment. But now I think I've been on long enough and I'm ready. I know.

Jen Weidner 31:38 It's just your life.

Salvador Quinones 31:39 Yeah, so I can make those adjustment adjustments easier than probably most.

Jen Weidner 31:44 So, So what advice would you give anybody that wants to become a firefighter?

Salvador Quinones 31:47 Um, the first thing would be, obviously, like, we just talked about the schedule. And I know some guys that, as it has, they turned the job down, because of that for that reason, but you have to really want it has to be something you want to do. You're going to, you know, the schedule does get used to, like I said, if you're already married and you have

children is definitely a big adjustment, you're gonna you're gonna miss out on stuff you're gonna miss out on, on games or practices or certain things you know, with your kids, you're not gonna be home every night with them tuck them into bed, you're not gonna be able to see them off to school every morning either. It just depends what time you know, they go in. So that's the big adjustment that has to be some you want to do. For young guys. We'd like like, you know, if I can come in, they come in like me with no, no kids, and nothing is definitely just hope it's something you really want to do. And I just hope everyone's just like, you just gotta be mentally prepared. Because you don't know what you're gonna see. But I promise you, you're gonna see something, you're gonna see something that you probably never thought you would see that you did that you know, stuff that you see in movies,

Jen Weidner 32:52 Right.

Salvador Quinones 32:52 You will see some crazy. I just hope, fortunately for myself, it has what I've seen at work has never affected me. I've never had a nightmare. I've never, you know, I've never really dwelled on it and never thought about stuff once I leave work. But some people are not not as fortunate as far as that. So use it has definitely is a career, you have to be you can't just come into it like, Oh, I'll try this out.

Jen Weidner 33:15 You have to be committed to it.

Salvador Quinones 33:17 You have to come into it and make sure it's something you really want to do. Because it's, it's definitely different. But it's amazing. I wouldn't want to do anything else now. I'm just mad at myself that I waited so long before I even started trying out you know, try to get on I wasted a lot of time.

Jen Weidner 33:33 It's a lot of time it's not the first time you try, right, it takes some time.

Salvador Quinones 33:36 It took me nine tries to get on

Jen Weidner 33:38 Okay.

Salvador Quinones 33:38 Yeah.

Jen Weidner 33:39 Okay.

Salvador Quinones 33:40 It's not because I'm not physically or mentally capable. It's just very competitive and at the time, at the time time when I started trying out it was a different system was a merit board or whatever. It was more like the mayor, just picks whoever they wanted. And you know, guys, just, you know, it's all about who you know. Yeah. So it's just

Jen Weidner 33:59 Small town, yeah.

Salvador Quinones 34:00 And also, a lot of guys weren't retiring back then either. They had no incentives to retire now they get to keep their insurance and things like that, you know, they got a lot of incentives to finally just go ahead and walk away. And retirement, it's a bigger thing

now, where people were putting more money away for retirement. back then. I'll be honest, I didn't even start where I started working for the city in 2011. I had never opened up a retirement account. Or it started putting money away. Yeah. So a lot of guys just weren't financially able to just walk away whenever they wanted. And so they had to stay longer. So it was hard to get in because those guys had those jobs sewn up for a long time. So it took me nine years but finally I got on right before the limit. I was 33 when I got hired, at the time the cut off was 36 I wouldn't have one I would have one more try after that year. I was gonna come back. And gonna keep coming back until they tell me I can't come back anymore, Finally, and then I finally got the call and it's been worth it ever since. Just be prepared to try a couple times. Yeah. And it's very competitive right now. It is a great time to get on. We have a lot of people retiring. We just had five guys retire this total firefighters retire this year. Two more next year. I believe there's like three more the year after that, that already signed up to go. So a lot of retirements happening, which is a huge shift, for the department is getting way younger.

Jen Weidner 35:26 Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Salvador Quinones 35:28 It goes in waves, like eventually, we're going to be the old guys. People will be waiting for us to get out. But yeah, so I'm hoping I don't have to work til I'm that, that old, you know, I always plan, my girlfriend and I eventually will get married. But our plan is we want to buy a house, I was born in Puerto Rico, I want to buy a house in Puerto Rico. And go at least for the winters, because I hate cold weather. I would like I wish it would only be cold on Christmas week. And after that.

Jen Weidner 36:00(laughing) I actually agree with you there. Yes.

Salvador Quinones 36:05 But that's my plan is to go back, go back to Puerto Rico, at least during the winters and just enjoy, hopefully enjoy the beach and whatever just hang out. But honestly, and I don't say you just got to do it. I do. I do really think it is one of the greatest careers you can ever choose. You're giving back to people helping out. Just like I said, helping you know, working with children.

Jen Weidner 36:30 I've heard from so many of you all that you like, there's nothing else you would want to do.

Salvador Quinones 36:33 No nothing else. It's just like, I don't feel I've never once felt like I'm at work. When I go in. Like I'm not like "I'm at work again"

Jen Weidner 36:41 You're like I'm at the firehouse yay

Salvador Quinones 36:43 yeah, it's just got no, we're gonna laugh and joke around all day, we're gonna go out on our runs if you know,

Jen Weidner 36:49 Be serious, we need to be serious.

Salvador Quinones 36:51 And then we're gonna come back to the firehouse, we're going to eat and joke around at the dinner table, work out together, you know, watch games, or movies

or whatever it may be whenever we get time to do that. And it's like a family. It's just like being at home with your family. Or work family. But yeah, it's the same, it's the same feeling like, it's different

Jen Weidner 37:10 It's different than a nine to five job because like you guys, were there 24 hours together, and you have to have each other's backs no matter what, like,

Salvador Quinones 37:17 I spend more time with the guys at work. And I do with my own girlfriend, that's a true story. Because, you know, even on the days when I'm off from the firehouse my girlfriend would be at work till 5:30. Like today, she don't get home till 5:30. So we'll have from about 5:30 to about 10pm You know, before she gets tired, and want's to go to bed, that's about all the time we have together most most weekdays, you know, whenever I'm off work. So I do spend a lot more time with the guys at the firehouse way more time with them than I do with my own family.

Jen Weidner 37:43 So was there anything else you'd like to share with us about your time as a firefighter?

Salvador Quinones 37:48 So far, It's been great. Just all the people, all the guys that I work with, even like on our admins, like the chief and the deputy chiefs, and everyone, just everyone, I get along great with everyone. There's not a person I've ever had an issue with at work. And like I said, we really it truly is like a family atmosphere. And I really enjoy it. And just as like, I like I've said several times, I don't think I would rather do anything else in this world. And there's a lot of jobs that I always thought a career that I always thought I wanted when I was young. I was like, I still don't think that would be as as cool. Yeah, like as the what we're doing now.

Jen Weidner 38:26 I mean you have a great schedule. Let's be honest. I mean,

Salvador Quinones 38:29 That's right. And I wanted like I said, I don't stress out about the stuff at work that I see when I'm at work. So when I leave work, can I can turn that off, which is not an ability that a lot of people have, I don't think that I can just turn that off. I'm like, I'm not talking to my girlfriend about work or about what I saw or anything like that. I just completely turned it off. isn't home life now.

Jen Weidner 38:53 Yeah, Just go and do something else and not have to worry about

Salvador Quinones 38:57 I'm also one thing I am very proud of. And as far as I know this. I am the first Hispanic, the first definitely the first Puerto Rican that's ever been hired by the Jeffersonville Fire Department. So some, and it's nothing that's ever been. It's never been put out on anything. I just I just I enjoy knowing that,

Jen Weidner 39:16 Right? So that's awesome. Yeah, maybe in the first of anything that's

Salvador Quinones 39:21 I'm very proud of that. And being that I grew up here was born in Puerto Rico, and grew up in Jeffersonville, Indiana. And I'm very proud that I was able to get on, because I tried out for New Albany, and I made it forward in their process a few times. But then I

wouldn't show up for like, I made it through the physical and then I wouldn't show up for the test I didn't really want to get onto all of it. So I was like,

Jen Weidner 39:43 You wanted Jeff

Salvador Quinones 39:43 Yeah, I wanted Jeff I wanted to get on. My brother got on Louisville, And that's a way bigger departure than obviously bigger city, but I'm like.

Jen Weidner 39:52 Have you reached out to the Hispanic community to try and get more Hispanic firefighters?

Salvador Quinones 39:56 I've have Yeah, so I'm on the Human Relations Committee. Like I said, I work and several other things. I was doing the PIO thing last year and I have went on some recruiting and trying to get more females, minority, whatever, you know, Hispanic, whatever it may be just a lot of and we love going this year when we start doing our recruiting later this year, early next year, we're going to hit a lot more military like the Army Reserves and everything. I bet there's some great candidates there, whichever maybe you don't mean just we we definitely enjoy the guys in the military background obviously. They they

Jen Weidner 40:30 They're used to the structure

Salvador Quinones 40:32 And everything so but yeah, I would love to get some more. There's another there's been one more after me. I don't know if you've met him or not William, William Maza, a great guy. Yeah. He's got he's, he's of Mexican descent. So yeah, he's another Hispanic that he's the second one they get on right after me. Probably but on about four years now

Jen Weidner 40:51 Because when we are becoming a lot more diverse in Jeffersonville?

Salvador Quinones 40:54 Yeah, definitely.

Jen Weidner 40:55 I could just see it just at the library that different people that come in and

Salvador Quinones 41:00 Quick story, we went on a run. It was actually last week, on a run a guy fell through his roof in his garage and stepped wrong, was up they're working step in the wrong spot, fell through went to the concrete he was, he was definitely concussed in a way he didn't know where he was at or anything. So we're walking up. My lieutenant was the first one. And JPD was there like, this guy doesn't speak any English. Like we have a language barrier. My lieutenant was like, well, you're in luck. We have a guy who speaks Spanish right here. (laughing)

Jen Weidner 41:35 You're like, let me translate for ya.

Salvador Quinones 41:38 Yeah. So I had to. And it really didn't matter that when the guy was so concussed, he couldn't really he would not understanding anything.

Jen Weidner 41:47 We have, we have a lot of more native Spanish speakers in our area to have people that they can turn to.

Salvador Quinones 41:55 I even had the ride in the ambulance when he started, he answered a few questions on the way he went to take him to U of L hospital, he was so bad off. But he had a huge gash in his head. You know, he was he was bad. But um, so I had to ride in the back of the ambulance for that just in case you know, they kept asking questions that he answered a few of them but yeah, it was so they do as far as growing the Hispanic population, especially as growing vastly. It's all over the US never know where you're gonna run into

Jen Weidner 42:22 Right.

Salvador Quinones 42:22 If you're gonna have people that speak English or not so, yeah, it's a very proud of it, and I'm glad I can be. You know, I can be valuable in that sense to be the only bilingual

Jen Weidner 42:36 Right I mean, that's important. Yeah.

Salvador Quinones 42:39 So that's always I'm very proud of that at least. So. That's good.

Jen Weidner 42:43 Well thank you so much for being here today.

Salvador Quinones 42:50 Thank you.