



c-Shift

House of Stags

28 April 2005

Firefighters of the University Fire Department,

There is nothing I can say, write, or express that hasn't been said, written, or otherwise expressed before me. The letters, notes, pranks, and wisdoms contained within this book have been written by far better men than I. I don't have a brick on the wall, I never reached engineer, and to be fair in a few years no one will know who "Pops" was.

Here are a few of my favorite quotes and proverbs. Take them for what they are, but allow them to affect you, that's what they are for.

"Tradition lives because young firemen come along who catch it's romance and add new glory to it."

You love your job, it has and will shape who you will become. In the history of the firehouse, you can see your reflection. You are not unlike the early volunteers that fought over fires, or the burnt moustaches of the seventies. The job might have evolved, but the men have not. Let's keep it that way!

Young wide eyed boy: "When I grow up I want to be a fireman just like you."

Old crotchey fireman: "Sorry son, you can't do both."

Keep your heart young. If you do so, life will be a lot more bearable.

**"If you gave me six hours to chop down a tree,
I would spend the first four sharpening the axe."
Abraham Lincoln**

**"If you're not going to wear your turn-out gear properly
you need to establish a '*good-friend agreement*.'
I just hope you have a good enough friend who will wipe your ass for you
while your burns are bandaged up for six months."
Battalion Chief John Salka, FDNY**

**Power tools need regular daily maintenance and checking...get off your lazy ass
and go check your tools.**

Take care of and know your tools, equipment and gear, and they will take care of you, a dirty and unkept tool reflects its user!

**"Let no man's ghost return to say his training let him down."
Fire Service adage**

Always be in pursuit of knowledge. Be passionate about it, for it is the one thing no one can take away from you. Your chief, captain and fellow firefighters all have a wealth of knowledge. Take from them what you can and offer what you know to others. My father once told me, "Son, just cause I taught you everything you know, that doesn't mean I taught you everything I know". After he said this I thought to myself "You stingy bastard!" – don't be the bastard.

**"From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered:
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother..."
Shakespeare's *King Henry V*
From King Henry's St. Crispin's Day speech**

**"Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless
facing them."
Author unknown**

**"That's the life, being a fireman.
It sure beats being a ballplayer.
I'd rather be a fireman."
Ted Williams - Boston Red Sox – 1940**

I love this quote. Americans love firemen. We are after all every young boys hero, and every grown man is intrigued by where we go and what we do. Next time you are driving your rig down the road and see a couple walking down the street, watch the male...he's jealous and it shows!

In decision making, dumb and angry often go together

I have learned this the hard way. Don't let your bad attitude affect your judgment and decision making process. A split second decision can cost you a lifetime of regret.

**"Pitty on the man who betrays his brother,
by betraying one he will find himself with none."**

We are a close knit family, respect your brothers. Do not make rude or inappropriate comments about each others' loved ones. Doing so will create uneasiness in the mind of the offended.

**"A friend is a person who will have a beer with you,
a best friend is one who will be puking in the toilet next to you at the
end of the night,
but a brother is one who will follow you through the gates of hell,
right behind you and do all the above when it is all over...."**

Love your brothers, when they are down, pick them up. Simply put, be there for each other. One day the tables will be turned.

Beware of the firefighter who "doesn't need any more training".

This person is the biggest risk to the operations on the fireground and most importantly they are the biggest risk to your well being!!

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his brothers"

The Bible - John 15:13

Every year we lose over 100 brothers in the line of duty. Take a moment each day to remember our brothers who have passed. We owe them, at the very least, that much.

Career Firemen? Volunteer Firemen? Paid-On-Call Firemen? We have all seen great ones and clueless ones on all sides of this business. The labels mean nothing...it's all performance based.

We all have bad days, come to work prepared to give your all. It is your responsibility to set and maintain the tone in the house. Others are watching you!

Make sure your apparatus is so visible and loud that it annoys people.

Also keep you rig clean, let the public see you washing your rig, and do it with pride cleaning every little detail.

When you are told to open up a roof, make sure it is big enough to drive a small car through.

If you are assigned a task by your company officer, make sure that you get it done well enough that it only needs to be done once. Doing this will save you from a trip to the emergency room to get your butthole sewed back on.

Train and act as if motorists are blind and want to hurt you while on the highway.

Protect yourselves, your family depends on it (by family I mean your biological, and your brothers in the firehouse).

When you hear "We have less fires today!!?? Tell'm "then we MUST have even MORE quality, realistic and aggressive training." Training is NOT handing someone an American heat video and tell'n em to watch it...those may be INTERESTING but training must be physically "doing".

I pray that you get the chance to work under a captain like I did. A captain that understands that no fire is routine, that no alarm is false and that no firefighter has an excuse for "not knowing". A captain that drives for excellence, and competency, a captain that is firm and hard-nosed. He is not a friend but rather he is mentor both in and out of the fire service. I only pray that you get as lucky as I!

**"The hero is commonly the simplest and obscurest of men."
Henry David Thoreau**

The hero is the one that called 911, the one that started CPR before you arrived. You are trained, and trained well. You are who the hero calls for help!

**Searching is half the fun: life is much more manageable when thought of as a scavenger hunt as opposed to a surprise party.
Jimmy Buffett**

Always be looking, scanning your surroundings. Know what it is you are looking for and find it. Chances are it is not going to find you.

**You may call for peace as loudly as you wish, but where there is no brotherhood there can in the end be no peace."
-- Max Lerner (The Gifts of the Magi, 1949)**

**"United we stand, divided we fall."
-- Aesop (620 -560 B.C.)**

It is good to dream, but it is better to dream and work. Faith is mighty, but action with faith is mightier. Desiring is helpful, but work and desire are invincible. -- Thomas Robert Gaines

"We must all hang together, or, assuredly, we shall all hang separately." - Benjamin Franklin at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

"When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself as public property." - Thomas Jefferson, 1807

Yes this means you. You belong to the public, act accordingly!

A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.

You will make mistakes, learn from them. Better yet, teach from them. It should be nauseating watching someone make the same mistake you made.

Adam and Eve had many advantages but the principal one was that they escaped teething.

Yes probies are fun, they don't know anything about anything and they make crappy coffee. Just as you showed them how to make a pot of coffee the captain would approve of, show them the brotherhood. Some will not get it; however, no one will get it unless it is extended to them.

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.
Mark Twain

Getting pissed off is fine, but letting anger go is mandatory. Do not let anger destroy your day, because it will do so much more than ruin just one day.

Apparently there is nothing that cannot happen today.
Mark Twain

Be prepared for anything. Busy days become slow and slow days become hell...like a good boy scout, be prepared!

**But the greatest love -- the love above all loves,
Even greater than that of a mother...
Is the tender, passionate, undying love,
Of one beer drunken slob for another.
Irish ballad**

Drinking with the brothers is expected, be responsible in doing so. I have watched good men lose all hopes of a career in the fire service simply by "oh this is my last one". Protect your brothers; it isn't worth losing the greatest job in the world for a special on Pabst blue ribbon.

**It is the good horse that draws its own cart.
Irish proverb**

If you pull your own weight, others will follow!

**A friend's eye is a good mirror.
Irish proverb**

Listen to what you brothers have to say. They do live and put up with you 240 hours a month. Granted it may be harder to take than being caught with your pants down at an Easter service, but chances are they are right.

Is gaire cabhair Dé ná an doras.

Virtute et Valare Luceo Non Uro

These you have to look up on your own!

Also **EAT WITH YOUR COMPANY / SHIFT!** The dinner table provides a family gathering where everyone is equal. Shift communication will improve. It helps instill a sense of belonging and transmits family values and traditions.

For A and B shifts: Come up with a shift patch/logo, and follow through with having it made. What an awesome thing it would be to return 20 years from now and see members of the department wearing your patch.

In conclusion:

As you are responding code 3 down University Avenue with lights and siren wailing. Take a moment to look into the store front glass of Wells Fargo. If you look hard enough at your reflection you will see every fireman that came before you, and the future firemen not yet of this world. It is up to you to carry on the traditions, tell the stories, and for Heaven's sake, wave at the kid on the street corner. He could be you in 20 years!

"Tradition lives because young firemen come along who catch it's romance and add new glory to it."

Stay safe, remember your training, wait on an assignment, have your tool, know your job, it's not your emergency, have fun, slow down, and most importantly EVERYBODY GOES HOME!

Thanks for the brotherhood!

JEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!!!!!!

Pops, Pappy, Fab, Roarke, Roark, Rourke, Rouarke

C-shift 2/04-5/05

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Virtete et Valare Luceo Non Uro