

## ABSTRACT

**CREATIVE PROJECT:** Climbing the Ladder: The Transition from Volunteer to Career Firefighting in Small Town America

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Becoming a career firefighter is a long process for most prospective emergency responders. It is common for aspiring firefighters to apply to several departments before finally getting hired on or moving across the state or country to accept a job offer. This creative project addresses the struggle of achieving career firefighter status by studying the experiences of one young volunteer firefighter who serves as a representative profile for other aspiring career firefighters.

Using immersion journalism and several narrative writing techniques, this creative project chronicles the experiences of twenty-four-year-old Lt. Trevor Bolton of the Fire Department of Liberty Township (FDLT) in Clayton, Indiana, as he climbs the ranks in the fire service. This work of literary journalism touches on Trevor's life as a volunteer firefighter and include the steps he has taken to become a career firefighter up until the moment he is ultimately given an offer for a full-time firefighting position.