



Not Your Ordinary Job – Season Two, Episode Five Transcript

- Jasmine:** Welcome everybody to Not Your Ordinary Job season two podcast. I am Jasmine Brown public affairs specialist with BLM Eastern States.
- Ashley:** And I am Ashley Muriel, public affairs officer for Eastern States.
- Jasmine:** And without further ado, we would like to welcome Lead Forestry Technician Jermaine Kelly, on the show. Jermaine, how are you?
- Jermaine:** I am doing fine. How about yourself?
- Jasmine:** Doing well, thank you. So, tell us a little bit about yourself Jermaine, how did you get into the career of fire?
- Jermaine:** Okay, as I started off, like I said, I gonna start off... I was born and raised in southwest Mississippi. I graduated from high school and went off to college and started majoring in agriculture. So I was trying to find... I wanted to do forestry. But at the time, my school didn't have forestry. So I majored in agriculture. And then that's when I got introduced into wildland fire. I started working with the fire service. And from there on, I did three, three years with the fire service and wanted to get closer back to home and I heard that there was a crew in Mississippi, and so I was like let me try that out and I came back to Jackson in 2010. Started working with the Jackson Hotshots, and I have been with Jackson ever since 2010. So that will put me down for what 11, 11 seasons here in Jackson.
- Ashley:** What do you consider have been your biggest challenges?
- Jermaine:** The biggest challenge was because of age. So, I try to come back the next year, in the same or better shape than I was the year prior.
- Ashley:** And how are you feeling this season?
- Jermaine:** This season is going pretty good. Like I said, I came in in good shape. And looking forward to working with the new guys that we got in.
- Jasmine:** Well, that is great information. So this would be like your 11th year as a Jackson Hotshot crew member?
- Jermaine:** Yeah, this is my 11th season.
- Jasmine:** Wow. So, I know it has been a lot that you have learned during your career with the Jackson Hotshots. Is there any kind of advice that you would give to anyone that's looking to get into the career of fire or interested in joining the Jackson Hotshots?

Jermaine: Yeah, I would, I would tell them to coming in, to come in willing to work, willing to work hard, willing to put in the effort, and willing to listen and willing to learn. And then if you willing to do all those things, and then the season or the the work experience won't be tough on you, it won't be hard, it'll be a easy go if you willing to come in, do your part and listen and learn and work hard and everything got to work itself out. My advice to them, I was like, of course, go to schools and get all the knowledge that you can about, about the job, so you can know what you're getting into before you get here. And also, if they offer any type of fire classes, or fire jobs or whatever job to try to get into that and get information about it. So that way, once you get into this job, or once you come here as a Jackson Hotshot, you are going to have an idea of what to do or what to expect.

Jasmine: That's some great advice. So, I know last year, I know we were dealing with a lot when it came to COVID. We're still dealing with a lot now. So, what are you most looking forward to when it comes to this year's fire season?

Jermaine: Last year, we had to be more... I would say so secluded because of the COVID. So, this year, I'm looking more to be able to branch out more. Last year, we had to be secluded and we couldn't move around too much. We had to stay within our confined space, that way we can keep down the COVID situation.

Ashley: What do you consider is your success story when out in the field?

Jermaine: I will say for me being, like being from southwest Mississippi. You never you never get the chance to go out and leave the city to travel. So, with me being, being able to do this job, I would, I would tell people because I get to see a lot of different things, like a lot of scenery, a lot of different places, that I would never have had the chance to see if I had not been doing this job. So, I always like to tell them this, enjoy the travel aspect of it.

Ashley: Of course. And would you say your team is diverse? What makes your team so great?

Jermaine: We got a different perspective in each crew member, if that makes sense. Everybody different in their own way which makes it unique, and it brings a good diversity to the crew.

Jasmine: Absolutely. So, I know with this being your 11th year with the Jackson Hotshots, there is a lot that you have accomplished. Are there any other goals that you would like to achieve?

Jermaine: Yeah, probably become... since I have been around awhile, probably become a crew boss, or a superintendent after a while. I think I'm on that path to become a head superintendent one day.

Jasmine: Well, that's great Jermaine, and we would like to thank you for allowing us to interview you and we're looking forward to seeing all of the great work you and your team members will be doing this fire season, as well as seeing you expand in your career.

Jermaine: Yeah, I came a long way, I remember when I started to now in its entirety, but I enjoyed every moment of it.

Ashley: Thank you for allowing us to interview you and we are looking forward to hearing all about the great work you and your team members will be doing this season. Listen to our podcast every other Friday to learn more about our Jackson Hotshots.