

Lockdown diaries: Ignacio, firefighter on duty & Spanish national lacrosse captain

The people in my town are making handmade masks to help doctors, nurses, policemen, and firemen. I got one customized from my neighbor and it made me so happy and has made me feel safer at work.

Providers of essential public services are working round-the-clock to maintain order during the COVID-19 crisis. Ignacio, a fireman, reported that his team of firefighters is taking extra precautions to protect their health while saving lives.

Ignacio “Nacho” Farjas Gómez is a 26-year-old Madrid-native working as a fireman in Huesca and during peacetime acts as captain of both the Spanish national lacrosse team and Madrid’s local lacrosse team, the former of which has granted him the opportunity to travel for international competitions in locations such as Gloucester, Massachusetts, and Netanya, Israel. While walking his dog in the vacant streets of Huesca, he befriended a stray kitten that followed him home and joined his family. He named it Covid.

What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?



I used to live in Madrid before the lockdown. As a fireman, I work 24-hour shifts and then I have 4 days off, so I was able to live in Madrid and commute to work in Huesca, up in the Pyrenees. I used to workout 4-5 times a week and play lacrosse with my club team (Madrid lacrosse) twice per week. I also had tryout weekends with the national team.

Now everything has changed, I relocated to the countryside with my fiancée to be closer to the fire department where I work because commuting between Madrid and Huesca would be impossible during the lockdown. I adapted a room in our new house into a gym so I can keep fit for my job and for the lacrosse championships. The upcoming European cup was supposed to be next July but it has been postponed.



How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

I continue to work, as firemen have to be constantly prepared in case of an emergency. The current situation makes our already high-pressure tasks even more complicated. At the fire station, I have to be a safe distance from my colleagues so we don't get infected from each other, so we feel lonely during the shifts. During car accidents, we have to try to save people's lives and at the same time protect ourselves from potential coronavirus infection.

On a particularly rough day, we got a call from social services saying that a woman, who was diagnosed with the virus, was on the verge of suicide. When we arrived at her building we saw the woman in her window, on the phone with her

psychotherapist.

We were told that she wanted to jump off the window because she could no longer cope with isolation and the symptoms she was suffering. We covered ourselves with protective gear and were prepared to quickly scale the facade from the roof to the window in case the psychotherapist was unsuccessful in her attempt to persuade the woman not to jump.

Police got in position inside the building to give us access. The psychotherapist bought us a lot of time but ultimately informed us that she couldn't calm her patient so we had to act. The intervention started with the psychotherapist distracting the patient while we descended from the roof. When we got close to the woman we pushed her inside of the apartment, at the same time the police broke down the door. We left her to continue speaking with her psychotherapist, the police, and other doctors.

Afterward, we disinfected our equipment in the street before returning to the fire station. It was a challenge to coordinate this operation with everyone involved, as everyone's faces were obstructed by masks.

Have you noticed any acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

The people in my town are amazing. They are making handmade masks due to their shortage to help doctors, nurses, policemen, and firemen. So I got one customized from my neighbor. It made me so happy and has made me feel safer at

work.

During the lockdown, I was walking my dog and I found a kitten that liked us and followed us back home. My fiancée and I adopted it and we decided to name it "Covid."

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time in lockdown continues?

I will keep up with training and studying as I want to get promoted. It is important to remain focused when spending the entire day at home. I like to have a routine and stick to it.

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over?

My fiancée and I will have pizza at Lisanderella, our favorite Italian restaurant in Madrid. Then I will play lacrosse to burn all the extra calories I have been eating during the lockdown.

Do you have any tips for how we can help those in need?

Try to keep in contact with friends and family via Skype. Help your eldest neighbors with the groceries. Try to cheer everyone up from your window or balcony with music, dancing or playing bingo.

Who are you in quarantine with? Any advice for people in a similar situation?

I am using this opportunity to have quality time with my fiancée and go deeper into our relationship. We have plenty of time to plan our future wedding. I highly recommend spending this time to plan future trips and events to avoid overthinking.

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

If you'd like to get involved and share a compelling story from this ongoing chapter of history, reach out to Daphne Binioris (daphne@veracontent.com) and Daniel Catalan (a96039@aup.edu)