# Title: Contractor John Nolan is Unsung: A Hardworking Series by Shell Rotella T

**Transcript:** The weather today is 100 and rising. Hot, hot, hot. My name is John Nolan. I recently retired as a lieutenant on the New York City Fire Department. We're in Breezy Point, Queens. It's the southern most point of Queens. This area is unique because it's a peninsula that fronts the ocean and the bay and Manhattan is off to our right. When super storm Sandy hit, this community was destroyed. Everything that you see throughout this whole area was all homes. It's amazing. The water level was so high that the ocean met the bay. It was violent. 500 active firemen live down here and they tried to get the people that needed to be rescued out. Then, in early evening, the fires started and with the high winds, homes were catching fire, one right after the other and it spread to 136 homes. Luckily, there was a wind shift and the fire department was able to get water on the houses that hadn't started burning and because of the incredible work the guys did, there were no fatalities in this particular area. The day after the storm, it was just massive destruction everywhere. The entire community needed help. So initially, the calls came in from firemen, friends of firemen, or family of firemen. I was a licenced contractor prior to Sandy so we came together as the fire department always does and did whatever we had to do to get the people back into their homes. It seems like every day is a sense of urgency, there's not enough hours in the day and everybody does a little something different. I'm limited on how much I can do physically so I'm the gopher. I go for this and I go for that. We help each other. It's just something that's instilled in you from the time you come on the fire department. Putting your life on the line with that guy. He's watching your back, you're watching his back and that's how the brotherhood is formed because you don't want to let the other guy with you down. In Queens, you don't judge a guy by how tough he is by how many guys he can knock down, you judge a guy by how many times he can get back up. That's the Rockaway, Breezy community. They are a resilient group of people It's taken some time to get back but it's from hard work and getting it done. It's always a personal sense of satisfaction you get a house finished just to be able to move on to the next house, to know that that family get back into their home.