

# PHOTOS FROM THE FILM

## HONORABLE BUT BROKEN: EMS IN CRISIS



WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY DEREK O. HANLEY

Book Copyright © Derek O. Hanley

Photos © Derek O. Hanley

All rights reserved

Cover design and book layout by Derek O. Hanley

Published by Derek O. Hanley Publishing/DOHP

Pasadena, California

[dohp.net/books](http://dohp.net/books)

First published in 2026

ISBN: 978-1-7356201-3-8

Author photo by Anthony Dimaano

[adimaanophotography.com](http://adimaanophotography.com)

The content or views expressed in the captions/text are of the author and participants only, and not of Falck or any featured agency. Featured agencies, brands, and personnel do not imply endorsement.

Special thanks to all the medics who agreed to be featured. May you be honored and your courage not go unrecognized.

**DOHP**  
DEREK O. HANLEY PUBLISHING  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA



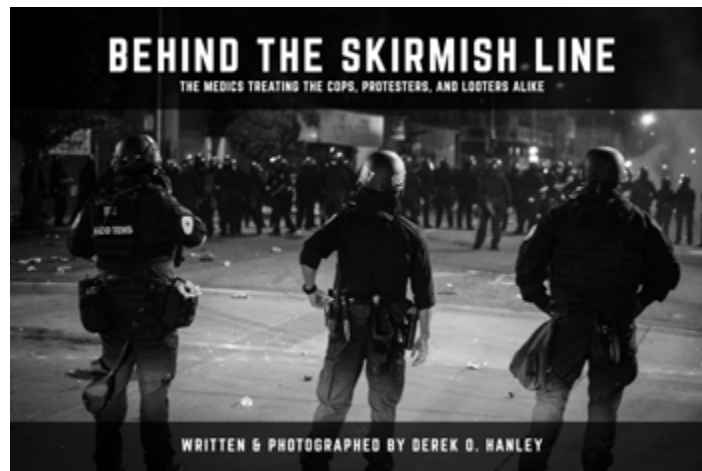
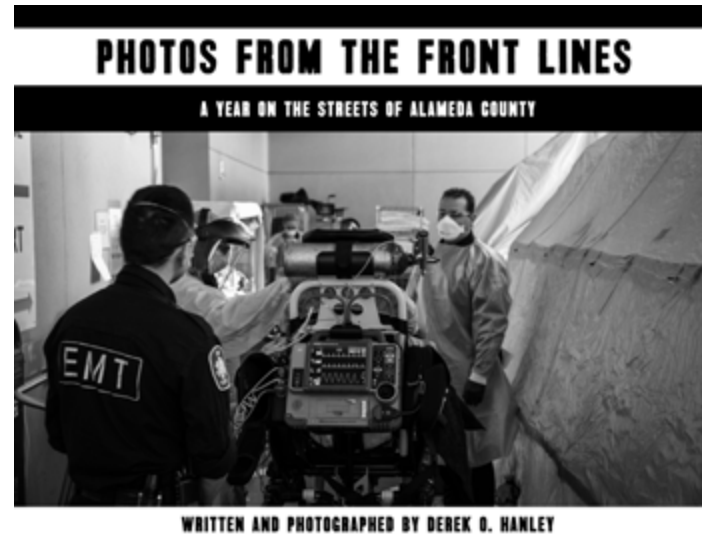
Bryony Gilbey is a former CBS News 60 Minutes and ABC producer and mother of three EMS professionals. She is the award-winning director and producer of the film Honorable But Broken: EMS In Crisis and other documentary works.

## Forward from the director

Making an independent film is a mighty endeavor and Honorable but Broken was no exception. Without unwavering support from the EMS community the film simply would not exist. I shouldn't have been surprised by the outpouring of offers to help because stepping up is what EMS providers do. They are generous, hardworking, smart, and funny and I could not be prouder to be an ally in their fight for substantive recognition.

Derek was one of the very first to reach out. We were looking for photos and footage from around the country to illustrate the wide range of services EMTs and Paramedics perform but our budget was shoestring. Certain that our missions were aligned, Derek kindly offered us his beautiful, evocative photos to use in the film. It was the start of a wonderful collaboration that expanded to brainstorming ideas for marketing and promotion, creating social media sites and a dedicated website and selling film merchandise to raise funds and it continues to this day. Derek and his photos were absolutely integral to the success of Honorable but Broken.

Also by Derek O. Hanley



## Intro from the photographer

The photographs in this book were created during the pandemic and are featured in the documentary film *Honorable But Broken: EMS in Crisis*.

When I first spoke with director Bryony Gilbey about the project, I immediately recognized its importance. Bryony’s dedication to the subject was deeply personal—her three children all work in Emergency Medical Services—and the mission of the film closely aligned with themes I have explored throughout my own work documenting frontline healthcare professionals.

EMS is one of the least understood components of the healthcare system. Most people encounter paramedics only during moments of crisis, rarely seeing the realities that exist behind the scenes: the long hours, difficult decisions, emotional burden, and commitment to serving others under extraordinary circumstances.

The images in this collection offer a glimpse into that world. All were featured in the film itself, and provide a closer look and additional context to the stories, people, and environments explored throughout the documentary. Together, they serve as a visual record of a profession that operates largely out of public view, yet remains essential to the health and safety of our communities.

My hope is that these photographs encourage a deeper understanding of those working in EMS and inspire thoughtful discussion about the challenges facing the profession today. Above all, I hope they help preserve an honest record of this moment in the history of emergency medicine and the people who continue to answer the call to serve.



Derek O. Hanley is a former military medic, paramedic, educator, and documentary photographer. His photography is rooted in firsthand experience working in the environments he documents.

Over the course of his career, Hanley has embedded with frontline healthcare providers, first responders, and public safety professionals to create an enduring visual record of their work. His images have been featured in books, films, news media, and public discussions surrounding emergency medicine and healthcare.



THIS WAS THE FIRST IMAGE FEATURED IN HONORABLE BUT BROKEN AND REMAINS ONE OF MY FAVORITES.  
IT REMINDS ME OF A SCENE FROM THE 'TOP GUN' FILMS.

THE CREW RESPONDED TO OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FOR A MEDICAL EMERGENCY ABOARD AN INCOMING  
FLIGHT. AFTER ASSESSMENT, THE PATIENT DECLINED TRANSPORT AND THE CALL  
CONCLUDED WITHOUT A HOSPITAL DESTINATION.

I CAPTURED THIS MOMENT AS THE CREW WALKED BACK DOWN THE FLIGHT LINE TOWARD THE AMBULANCE. THE IMAGE  
ILLUSTRATES A REALITY OFTEN INVISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: EMS MUST BE PREPARED TO RESPOND REGARDLESS OF THE  
OUTCOME. UNDER THE CURRENT REIMBURSEMENT MODEL, SERVICES FREQUENTLY RECEIVE  
LITTLE OR NO COMPENSATION WHEN A PATIENT IS EVALUATED BUT NOT TRANSPORTED,  
DESPITE THE RESOURCES REQUIRED TO BE READY TO ANSWER THE CALL.





THIS IMAGE OF TACTICAL PARAMEDIC ROOS, WHO HAS BEEN A PARAMEDIC IN ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA FOR SEVERAL DECADES, CAPTURES HIM TAKING A BREATHER DURING A JOINT TACTICAL TRAINING EXERCISE WITH A LOCAL POLICE SWAT TEAM. TACTICAL MEDICS ARE ANOTHER FACET OF EMS THAT MOST OUTSIDE THE FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNITY ARE UNAWARE OF. THESE MEDICS RECEIVE SPECIALIZED TRAINING, AND ARE SELECTED TO BE PART OF A TEAM WHICH, WHEN REQUESTED FOR HIGH-RISK INCIDENTS, ASSEMBLE TO PROVIDE MEDICAL SUPPORT DURING HAZARDOUS OPERATIONS. THESE INDIVIDUALS RISK THEIR LIVES TO ENSURE THEIR FELLOW FIRST RESPONDERS AND CITIZENS IN NEED ARE TAKEN CARE OF DESPITE THE POTENTIAL THREAT TO THEMSELVES. THE MOTTO OF THE ALAMEDA COUNTY TACTICAL EMS TEAM IS: “THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE” AND HOMAGE TO THE ELITE US AIR FORCE PARARESCUE MEDICS.



HERE IS A POWERFUL SHOT OF PARAMEDIC COURTNEY IN HER MASK BEHIND THE OPEN AMBULANCE DOORS. THERE WERE SEVERAL STRONG WOMEN I WAS ABLE TO GET PHOTOS OF WHILE ON DUTY IN THEIR MASK DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC. ONE OF THE THINGS ABOUT THIS TIME WHEN EVERYONE WAS WEARING MASKS WAS THAT THE FOCUS ON THE EYES AND WHAT EMOTIONS THEY CAN COMMUNICATE BECAME THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION FOR PEOPLE. ANY PARAMEDIC WHO HAS BEEN ON THE STREETS OF ALAMEDA COUNTY, OR ANY SERVICE AREA, FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS HAS ALREADY RACKED UP A LIST OF WAR STORIES AND TRAUMATIC THINGS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WITNESS AS A RESULT OF BEING AT WORK. COURTNEY HAS BEEN A PARAMEDIC FOR MANY YEARS, AND YOU CAN TELL THAT SHE HAS SEEN HER FAIR SHARE, YET STILL SHOWS UP WITH A SMILE TO SERVE WHOMEVER MAY NEED HER ADVANCED SKILLS OR CARING DEMEANOR.





THIS PHOTO SHOWS FIREFIGHTERS FROM OAKLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT AND ALAMEDA COUNTY FIRE ON SCENE OF A WORKING APARTMENT FIRE IN EMERYVILLE, CALIFORNIA. THE LADDER TRUCK DEPLOYED THE AERIAL LADDER AND FIREFIGHTERS ARE CLIMBING TO THE ROOF WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT. WHEN THERE IS A FIRE IN A CONFINED SPACE LIKE A SMALL APARTMENT, THE HEAT CAN BUILD UP MAKING THINGS BURN FASTER AND BECOME MORE DANGEROUS FOR THOSE WHO ARE WORKING TO EXTINGUISH IT. FIREFIGHTERS WILL GET TO THE ROOF AND CREATE EXHAUST HOLES TO ALLOW THE HEAT AND SMOKE TO RISE UP AND ESCAPE, ALMOST LIKE TAKING THE LID OFF OF A BOILING POT. THIS IS A VERY DANGEROUS OPERATION, AND MANY FIREFIGHTERS HAVE BEEN INJURED OR KILLED FALLING OFF OR THROUGH A ROOF THAT WAS STRUCTURALLY UNSOUND DUE TO THE FIRE BELOW.





HERE PARAMEDIC JESSE WORKS TO ESTABLISH INTRAVENOUS ACCESS ON HIS PATIENT IN ORDER TO ADMINISTER PAIN MEDICATION. NOTE THE POSTURE REQUIRED FOR THIS PROCEDURE, AS BACK INJURIES AND ISSUES ARE COMMON FOR THOSE WHO WORK ON AN AMBULANCE. MEDICS AREN'T AFFORDED THE SAME LUXURIES THAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS IN HOSPITALS HAVE, AND MUST ADAPT TO THE SITUATION AT HAND IN ORDER TO DELIVER THEIR PATIENT CARE. PARAMEDICS MUST PERFORM MANY OF THE MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS THAT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT WOULD RENDER, EXCEPT THEY ARE DOING IT BY THEMSELVES, OFTEN IN THE BACK OF A MOVING VEHICLE. IN THIS CASE, JESSE OPTED TO TAKE A MINUTE TO GET THE IV STARTED BEFORE DEPARTING, AS HIS ASSESSMENT WAS THAT IT COULD BE A DIFFICULT STICK, AS IT'S TERMED, AND WANTED HIS PATIENT TO GET RELIEF FROM HER PAIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.





THIS PHOTO DEPICTS WHAT WAS TERMED DURING THE PANDEMIC AS “SHOTS IN ARMS” WHICH TRANSLATES TO VACCINES BEING ADMINISTERED. THESE REPRESENT THE FIRST VACCINES WHICH WERE DELIVERED TO THE FIRST RESPONDERS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, AS IN A RARE DISPLAY OF THEIR IMPORTANCE, THEY WERE FIRST PRIORITY FOR THE SHOT. THE TERM “FRONT LINE” WAS USED DURING THIS TIME PERIOD FOR THOSE WHO DID NOT HAVE THE OPTION TO WORK FROM HOME ONCE THE PANDEMIC LOCK-DOWN MEASURES WERE IN PLACE, AND FIRST RESPONDERS WERE THE TIP OF THE SPEAR WHEN IT CAME TO FRONT LINE WORKERS. GOING INTO THE HOMES OF THOSE WHO WERE INFECTED WITH THE VIRUS, PERFORMING CPR RESUSCITATIONS, AND ADMINISTERING BREATHING TREATMENTS IN THE CONFINED SPACE OF AN AMBULANCE ALL DRAMATICALLY INCREASED ONES POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO THE VIRUS, PLACING THEMSELVES AND THEIR LOVED ONES AT HIGHER RISK THAN MOST OF THE POPULATION.



THIS IMAGE BECAME THE COVER PHOTOGRAPH FOR PHOTOS FROM THE FRONT LINES BECAUSE IT CAPTURES MANY OF THE DEFINING VISUAL ELEMENTS OF THE PANDEMIC IN A SINGLE FRAME. A NURSE WEARING EXTENSIVE PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT CHECKS A PATIENT'S TEMPERATURE WHILE TEMPORARY TREATMENT TENTS, MASKED PROVIDERS, AND IMPROVISED MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FILL THE BACKGROUND.

WHAT ONCE SEEMED EXTRAORDINARY QUICKLY BECAME ROUTINE. THE IMAGE SERVES AS A VISUAL TIME CAPSULE OF A PERIOD WHEN HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS, PROVIDERS, AND COMMUNITIES WERE FORCED TO ADAPT TO RAPIDLY CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.





THIS SEQUENCE OF PHOTOS DEPICT MEMBERS OF THE ALAMEDA COUNTY TACTICAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (TEMS) ATTENDING TO A MAN FOUND DOWN IN THE STREET. THIS WAS DURING A PERIOD OF LOOTING FOLLOWING A MASSIVE PROTEST IN DOWNTOWN OAKLAND. POLICE FLAGGED DOWN THE MEDICAL TEAM AS THE PATIENT WAS UNRESPONSIVE AND NEEDED IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE. THE MAN HAD CLEARLY JUST COME FROM A DRUGSTORE ACROSS THE STREET WHICH HAD THE WINDOWS BROKEN AND PEOPLE WERE RUNNING OUT WITH STOLEN ITEMS. THE BOX FOUND NEXT TO THE MAN WAS FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH NICOTINE GUM, ELICITING CONFUSION FROM SEVERAL OF THE FIRST RESPONDERS ON SCENE. MEDICS TREAT EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF STATUS, AND HERE YOU CAN SEE OAKLAND POLICE, FIRE, AND THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL TEAM WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP GET THIS PATIENT TO THE HOSPITAL TO GET TREATMENT.





THIS NEXT SEQUENCE OF IMAGES DEPICTS A UNIQUE RESCUE SITUATION RELATED TO THE TRIPLE OVERDOSE. AGAIN, YOU WILL SEE OAKLAND POLICE, FIRE, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP SAVE THE LIVES OF THESE THREE PATIENTS. THE SCENE LOCATION WAS IN AN ABANDONED BUILDING WHICH HAD CLEARLY BEEN USED FOR DRUG PURPOSES, AND PRESENTED A CHALLENGE FOR RESCUERS, AS ALL OF THE PATIENTS WERE OBESE AND NEEDING TO BE CARRIED FROM WHERE THEY WERE FOUND TO THE WAITING AMBULANCES FOR TRANSPORT TO THE HOSPITAL. MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF NARCAN (NALOXONE), THE OPIOID REVERSAL DRUG, WERE USED IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE PATIENTS BREATHING, AS RESPIRATORY ARREST IS WHAT KILLS IN AN OPIOID OVERDOSE. THIS INDICATED TO THE VETERAN MEDICS THAT FENTANYL WAS THE LIKELY CULPRIT IN THE OVERDOSE.





IN THIS SHOT WE SEE PARAMEDIC JIM DRAWING UP PAIN MEDICATION TO BE ADMINISTERED THROUGH THE INTRA-NASAL ROUTE, IN OTHER WORDS, SPRAYED INTO THE NOSE. PAIN MEDICATION CAN BE EASILY GIVEN VIA THIS METHOD AND IS ABSORBED RAPIDLY. AT TIMES STARTING AN INTRAVENOUS LINE MAY BE CHALLENGING OR TIME CONSUMING, AND FOR THESE REASONS AN INTRA-NASAL ADMINISTRATION CAN BE THE PREFERRED METHOD.





“OFFICERS DOWN” WAS THE CALL WHICH PRECEDED THIS SCENE. THE NIGHT OF THE MAJOR GEORGE FLOYD PROTEST IN DOWNTOWN OAKLAND, TWO FEDERAL SECURITY OFFICERS WERE GUNNED DOWN FROM A VAN WHICH WAS IT TURNED OUT WAS UNRELATED, BUT USING THE PROTEST AS A SMOKE SCREEN TO CARRY OUT THIS UNPROVOKED AND HEINOUS ACT OF VIOLENCE. BY THE TIME I HAD ARRIVED ON SCENE, THE FIRST AMBULANCE WITH MEMBERS OF THE TEMS TEAM HAD ALREADY DEPARTED WITH THE OFFICER WHO WAS MORE CRITICAL, WHO ENDED UP DYING FROM HIS INJURIES. THE SECOND OFFICER SEEN HERE HAD TOURNIQUETS PLACED ON HIS LIMBS TO STOP THE BLEEDING FROM HIS MULTIPLE GUNSHOT WOUNDS, AND IS BEING RAPIDLY EVACUATED FROM THE SITE TO THE CLOSEST TRAUMA CENTER.





Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the trust, professionalism, and generosity of the paramedics, EMTs, nurses, firefighters, dispatchers, physicians, patients, and public safety professionals who allowed me to document their work.

Many of the moments contained in these pages occurred during one of the most challenging periods in modern healthcare. The individuals featured here continued to answer the call despite uncertainty, exhaustion, risk, and personal sacrifice. Their willingness to serve others made this work possible.

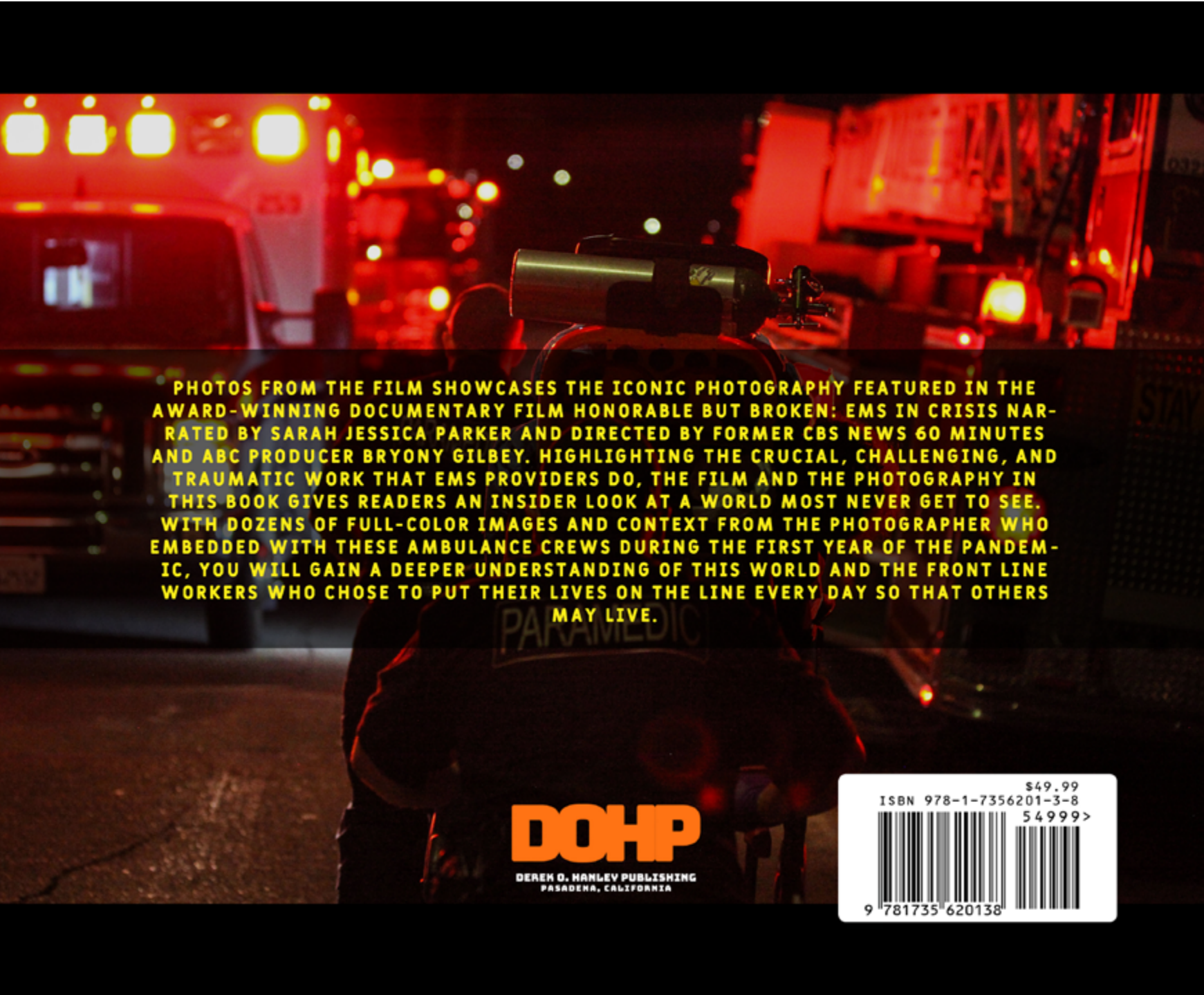
I am especially grateful to the medics who welcomed me into their ambulances, stations, training exercises, and workplaces, and who trusted me to tell a small part of their story through these photographs.

While this book captures only a fraction of what they experienced, my hope is that it helps preserve an honest record of their service and the profession they represent.

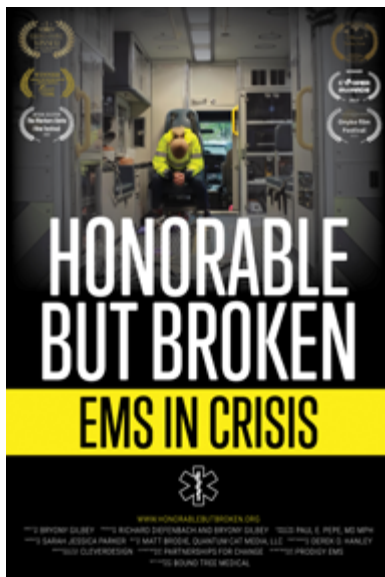
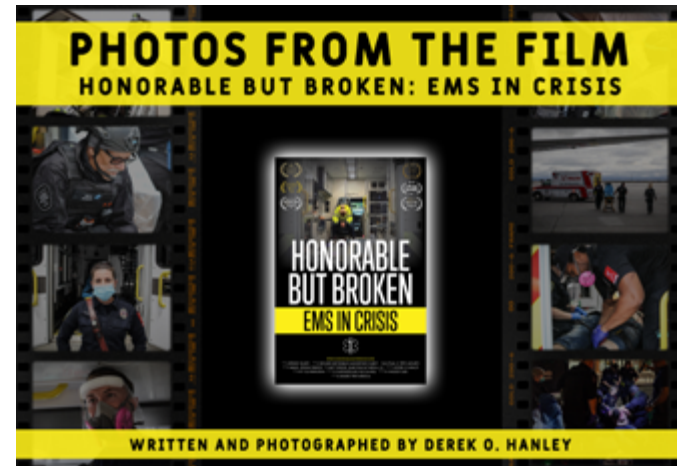
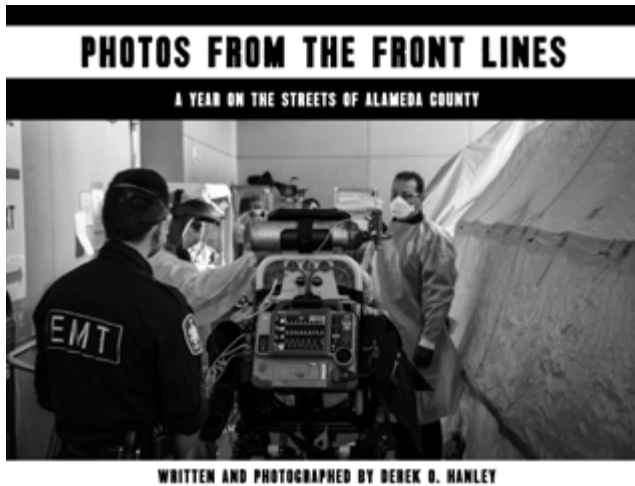
To medics everywhere,

Thank you for your service.

— Derek O. Hanley



# CONTINUE THE STORY



**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY. CLICK IMAGES TO LEARN MORE.**

**TO EXPLORE ADDITIONAL WORK DOCUMENTING MILITARY MEDICINE, EMS, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE, VISIT [DOHP.NET](http://DOHP.NET).**