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## “Brotherhood”

A Portrait of the Fire Department of New York  
@radical.media production, a film by Lilibet Foster

### Cast and Credits

Directed and Produced by	Lilibet Foster
Produced and Executive Produced by	Jon Kamen, Frank Scherma
Executive Producers	Rick Boyko, Lynn Roer, Stuart Rudefer
Additional Directing by	Robert Leacock
Cinematographers	Robert Leacock, Evan Estern
Co-Producers	Lisa Guidetti Amy Goodman
Edited by	Melissa Neidich
Music Composed by	Michael Kamen
Performed on Guitar by	Phil Palmer
Technical Advisor	Lt., Robert E. Higgins, FDNY
Additional Cinematography	Tom Hurwitz, John Romeo, Paul Bozymowski, Rob Featherstone
Sound Recordist	Peter Miller
Assistant Editor	Dasaw Floyd
Production Assistant	Rebecca Cohen, Caitlin Roper

### Fire Department of New York:

#### **Squad 252, Brooklyn:**

Captain, Edward Metcalf  
Lt., Robert Chuisano (“Cheeseman”)  
Firefighter, Thomas Burke (“Norton”)  
Firefighter, Sterling Alves

#### **Rescue 1, Manhattan:**

Captain, Robert Morris  
Firefighter, Paul Hashagan  
Firefighter, Joel Kasinsky  
Firefighter, Al Benjamin

#### **Rescue 4, Queens:**

Captain, Paul Heglund	Firefighter, Liam Flaherty
Firefighter, Dan Heglund	Firefighter, Richard Schmidt

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## About the Film

*“The Best Job in the World.” - FDNY motto.*

Almost a brand name, the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) is considered to be the best and most well respected fire department in the world. This is because it is well trained to respond to emergencies in one of the world’s most complicated and most populated cities. It had this recognition before it also became known for having the biggest loss of fire fighters in a single day than any other fire department. **“Brotherhood”** is a character driven, cinema verite style immersion into the microcosm of the FDNY. Moving beyond September 11th filmmaker, Lilibet Foster, set out to capture the culture, dedication and job of fire fighters in New York City and the world events developing around them that continue to impact all of our daily lives. “I wanted to explore what it means to be a firefighter today in a post September 11<sup>th</sup> New York. I started out by visiting as many of the fire houses in New York City as possible, looking for the best group of characters and to see if they would let me live with a camera in the middle of their world for a while. I thought this would be the best way to convey the larger-than-life activity of a fire house and drama of their jobs while at the same time, the unspoken detail and subtlety of their personalities and camaraderie. This was no small request because it was like asking them if I could live in their home - they really needed to be able to trust me. That was two years ago. I am extremely grateful to everyone who generously let me in and shared their stories.”

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## Summary

*“Brotherhood”* focuses on Squad 252, in “Borough of Fire” Brooklyn, and the prestigious Rescue Company 1, of Manhattan, and Rescue Company 4, of Queens. From an insider’s point of view, the film vividly captures their pecking order, extroverted personalities, uncompromised respect for fires, teamwork, commitment to training and enviable camaraderie. Through the use of a hidden “firefighter cam” the filmmaker even brings the audience into the middle of their work – involving them in the dramatic rescue of an entire family from a burning brownstone. As the film reveals, they are committed to carrying on the expertise, loyalty and traditions that have been passed down for generations, but are still struggling to rebuild their companies. And, while their basic mission -- to protect citizens and property -- is the backbone of the profession, their job is in the midst of radical change. Experienced fire fighters are retiring in massive numbers leaving behind a younger, greener department and in budget cuts, the city threatens to close Squad 252 and 6 other fire houses, further thinning out their ranks and morale.

As the US counts down to their attack on Iraq, the country goes into “Code Level Orange” terrorist alert and the fire department, as “first responders,” is deployed to the front line of defense. With the possibility of biological, radiological and chemical retaliation, these “smoke eaters” scramble to be prepared. Clearly, their jobs are now more dangerous than before. For the Captain of Squad 252, who is showing signs of survivor’s guilt, the potential for another incident proves too much and he decides to leave his embattled company in the hands of his Lieutenant. As one fire fighter puts it, “The reality of being a fire fighter has really changed since I first joined. But the world changed for us because it changed for everyone.”

Shot on Super 16mm film with unprecedented access and the boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens as the backdrop, *“Brotherhood”* is ultimately a personal, poignant, moving and unavoidably humorous journey into the lives of what has become the world’s most recognized fire department, still responding in New York City, at the point of one of the greatest changes in US history.

*“Brotherhood”* is a production of the recent Academy Award, winning production company @radical.media (for Fog of War) and directed by Academy Award, nominated filmmaker, Lilibet Foster and produced by Lilibet Foster, Jon Kamen and Frank Scherma with additional directing by Robert Leacock. It is a non-profit film with all proceeds going back to the Fire Department of New York. The project would not have been possible without the generous support of Kodak Films, DuArt Color Labs, Nice Shoes Editorial, Company 3 Editorial, Outpost Digital and Overstock.com.

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## The Characters

*“New York would be a great place, if only they’d finish it.” - Mark Twain.*

### Squad 252: Bushwick, Brooklyn

New York City, unlike any other city, has the largest concentration of bridges, tunnels, highways, subways and underground waterways in the world. To tackle emergencies, there are 360 fire companies ready to respond within minutes to anything, anywhere, anytime. Ambitious firefighters want to be assigned to the busiest companies in the borough of their choice. Typically, more fires take place in poor neighborhoods or “ghettos,” as fire fighters refer to them, and Brooklyn, known as the “borough of fire,” is one of the most desirable places to work.

Squad 252 is in the heart of Bushwick, Brooklyn, one of the poorest neighborhoods in all of New York City. Ed Metcalf is their dedicated Captain and after losing 7 men on September 11, he is in the process of recruiting and rebuilding his team despite his feelings of survivor’s guilt. Because they are a busy company, there is a tight bond between fire fighters who have worked together for most of their careers. Squad 252 is also a fixture in the community. A young kid from up the street regularly drops by to help them wash the fire truck; one of the senior members, who is African American, grew up in the neighborhood; and the house is home to the infamous Tommy Burke (known job-wide as “Norton”) a career “ghetto” fire fighter of legendary proportions.

As their story unfolds, they prepare to hold a long awaited plaque dedication to honor their fellow fire fighters lost on 9/11 and the company goes through growing pains as the recruits brought in to replace those who died, struggle to fit in. Meanwhile, when the country goes into a “Code Level Orange” terrorist alert they are put on the front line of defense and sent on daily assignments to Manhattan because they are one of the few companies trained to respond to Hazardous Material emergencies including biological, radiological and chemical disasters. Their first call is a report of Anthrax at ABC Television.

Captain Metcalf, is told that the fire department intends to permanently relocate them to Manhattan so that they will be near the UN and the Mayor’s headquarters. The potential move will leave Bushwick without a fire company. As the community board fights to keep them, a record breaking cold spell hits New York and Squad 252 gets busy in Bushwick, rescuing an entire family from a burning brownstone. For “ghetto” fire fighters, moving to Manhattan -- with its high-rises, wealthy citizens and infrequent fires -- is like moving to another city. For Captain Metcalf, Squad 252 is his home yet with the potential move and his haunting memory of 9/11, it looks as though he may leave the FDNY. “It will rip my heart out,” he says.

## The Characters *[cont.]*

*“I love my job.” - Captain Morris*

### Rescue 1: Manhattan

Every house has a senior man – the person who has been in the house for the longest, regardless of his rank and the one that everyone goes to to resolve any conflict. For Rescue 1, the senior man is Paul Hashagan (“Hash”). He is also one of the most decorated men in the entire fire department. His specific knowledge of seemingly trivial facts, like the best way to cross midtown Manhattan at midday, is vital to his everyday job as the driver or “chauffer” of Rescue 1. He, along with his colleagues, is trained to rescue people from any possible location, including collapsed buildings, scaffolding, elevator shafts, mangled cars, subway tracks, bridges and the New York rivers. Paul Hashagan has seen all of this and more. Like most firefighters, he loves his job. But this year he is retiring after 25 years - 20 of those at Rescue 1.

It used to be that most fire fighters joined the FDNY for life, and it was rare that they would willingly retire when they were eligible. As they say, “you used to have to push guys out the door.” Paul Hashagan is lucky to be alive. And, due to pressure from his family and the knowledge that he survived “the big one,” he like many others has decided to leave. Rank and seniority are important in the FDNY but reputation is everything. He lives and breathes the FDNY, so his last day in the fire house is bittersweet and his colleagues give him a send off fitting of his stature on the job. Before he goes, he will complete a mural in the firehouse where he has painted a caricature of each man he has worked with in the company and he’ll do his duty by handing down his knowledge to his younger colleagues.

In retiring, he will no longer drive for the committed commanding officer, Captain Morris who took over the house after the famous Captain Hatton died on 9/11. He is known job-wide as an experienced “fire fighter’s fire fighter” and continuously drills his men on fire fighting techniques, can open any kind of locked door and maintains a no-frills house. As he says, “We don’t have a gourmet kitchen here. We don’t have a comfortable place to sit. We come here to work.” For “Brotherhood,” Hash’s retirement is symbolic of the steady loss of experience in the FDNY. As experienced and professional as the remaining guys are at Rescue 1, they protect the borough that has already been hit twice by terrorists. And, although they describe their job as “the best in the world” they admit that they are concerned about the safety of citizens and fire fighters. Although “dirty” bombs are the “buzz” weapons of the day, the film reveals how even the most common incident may be fatal when the seasoned Captain radios in a “may day” call and has to be rescued from a smoky subway fire.

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## The Characters *[cont.]*

*“I live and breathe the FDNY. At night I dream of going to fires.”*  
- Fire Fighter, Liam Flaherty

### Rescue 4: Queens

In Rescue 4, brotherhood is taken literally. It may be the only house in the FDNY where two real brothers work together – Captain, Paul Heglund and his younger brother Fire Fighter, Dan. Despite the so called “Sullivan Theory” left over from WWII when multiple brothers died in the line of duty on the same day, they sit side by side in the front cab of the rig with Dan at the wheel as chauffer.

After September 11, the Captain inherited a group of eager, ambitious, middle rank fire fighters willing to take up the challenge of building a new team. The younger guys in the house were trained by those who are retiring, and as the film reveals, it is their turn to “step up” and become senior men. With a fire department that is younger then it has ever been, it is up to the next generation to carry on the training, traditions and reputation of the FDNY.

Liam Flaherty is one of these men. He is referred to as “Mr. FDNY” especially because he led the bagpipe band at every funeral and memorial service after September 11th. He expresses concern that if the tradition, knowledge and skills of the job are lost with the men who died and the subsequent mass retirements, it will be irretrievable and the FDNY will never be the same. In the course of the film, Liam is promoted to Lieutenant and makes the transition from firefighter to commanding officer. For *“Brotherhood,”* the story of Rescue 4, illustrates the current reality of the FDNY – while rebuilding and adjusting to the changes in the job and this country, the everyday dangers remain the same and Liam, along with other firefighters like him, are required to take up the reins at an increasingly accelerated pace.

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## About the Filmmakers

### Lilibet Foster Director & Producer

Originally from the Virgin Islands, Lilibet Foster has been an independent filmmaker in New York City for the past thirteen years. *“Brotherhood”* is her feature documentary directorial debut.

Foster was nominated for an *Academy Award* for documentary feature *“Speaking in Strings,”* which she produced. It also won the **Cine Golden Eagle Award**, premiered in competition at the Sundance Film Festival and won several festival awards including the **Jury Prize** at the Newport Film Festival, and **Best Documentary** at Paramount Studio's *WIN Femme Film Festival*. *“Speaking in Strings”* was theatrically released followed by a television premiere on **HBO**. Prior to that, she produced the feature documentary *“Soul in the Hole,”* which was internationally theatrically distributed with a companion soundtrack on **Loud Records**. It premiered at the *Rotterdam Film Festival*, won the **Independent Spirit Award** and was nominated by the International Documentary Association (IDA) for **Best Film of the Year**, while receiving widespread critical acclaim. *“Soul in the Hole”* was named one of the Top Ten Films of the Year by *The Village Voice* two years in a row and **Top Ten Gem of The Year** by *Premiere* magazine.

Her commercial, television and short film documentary work includes directing and producing a video installation piece and a two-part DVD, *“A Day in the Life of Africa”* following 100 top photojournalists while they shot one day in the life of each of the 53 countries of Africa; *“Operation Fine Girl”* about rape used as a weapon of war in Sierra Leone for **Oxygen Television** and the human rights organization, **WITNESS**; and *“Remembering Marshall”* about a plane crash that took the life of an entire college football team which premiered on the thirtieth anniversary of the tragedy on **ESPN**. Her past directing and producing includes acclaimed television documentaries *“Muhammad Ali,”* *“Joe DiMaggio,”* and *“Ronald Reagan”* for **A&E** and *“Film in the Television Age,”* in the **BBC/PBS** series *“American Cinema.”* Her short documentaries include, *“The Thin Veil of Privacy,”* about your privacy and security on the internet, for the World Economic Summit in Davos, Switzerland; and a documentary short about the 2001 New York City Marathon for **Nike**. Under her production banner, **Asphalt Films**, Lilibet has directed and produced several public service announcements for *The Coalition for an International Criminal Court* and **WITNESS** which won the **2002-2003 Film and Video Festival Award** from the Council on Foundations; and an eight-minute piece for permanent installation at The Museum of Immigration, *“Refugees: The Last Resort,”* which also won the **Film and Video Festival** award, as well as IFFilm's **Best of the Net** award.

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## About the Filmmakers *[cont.]*

### **Jon Kamen**

#### **Executive Producer and Chairman @radical.media**

*“Brotherhood”* is an @radical.media production. Headed by Chairman Jon Kamen, the company possesses an outstanding management team with an average of more than 18 years experience in production, advertising and entertainment, along with one of the top rosters of directorial talent in the industry.

@radical.media’s feature documentary credits include “Fog of War,” directed by Errol Morris, which won this year’s Academy Award, for Best Feature Documentary as well as the 2004 Independent Spirit award for Best Documentary from the Independent Film Project. @radical also produced “Concert for George,” a documentary that takes viewers behind the scenes of the tribute concert for George Harrison at London’s Royal Albert Hall. Released theatrically in the fall of 2003, it appeared on PBS’ “Great Performances” series in March of 2004. In addition, @radical’s “Metallica: Some Kind of Monster,” a documentary from acclaimed directors Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofksy about the legendary metal band’s complex artistic and personal relationships, has been acquired by IFC Films for U.S. theatrical distribution. The film was an official selection at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival.

@radical.media’s television projects include Nike’s “Battlegrounds,” a two hour branded content special that ran on MTV; the critically acclaimed “Report from Ground Zero,” based on the best selling novel by Dennis Smith, for ABC; “Road to Paris,” produced for Nike, featuring Lance Armstrong and the USPS cycling team’s pursuit of its fourth Tour de France win, which aired on CBS; “Players,” a VH-1 program featuring hip-hop artist Ludacris; and 32 half-hour episodes of “The Life,” a regular series for ESPN. In development are several feature films, a series pilot for VH1 and the stage musical Ball, directed by George Faison and choreographed by Savion Glover.