

Rob Hammer

Would it make you want to hire me if I told you about awards I've won or referred to myself in the 3rd person? Whatever. I'm an advertising/documentary photographer based in Raleigh, North Carolina, most known for my unique way of shooting athletes, fitness, and adventure. To date, I've been very lucky to shoot with legends like Kobe Bryant, Shaquille O'Neal, Kevin Durant, Steph Curry, James Harden, Russell Westbrook, Damian Lillard, Chris Paul, Draymond Green, Blake Griffin, John Wall and many others for clients like Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, Reebok, Foot Locker, Fox Sports, New Balance, Vans, Puma, Uber, Skullcandy, ESPN, Sports Illustrated, Smithsonian, Wrangler, WWE, TRX, Gym Shark, GNC, NBATV, SLAM, Outside Magazine, Runner's World, New York Times, Western Art Collector Magazine, Western Horseman Magazine, Benelli, Patagonia, Fishpond, The Drake, Uppercut Deluxe, Andis, Daily Mail, The Chicago Tribune, and San Diego Union Tribune to name a few. All of that makes me sound really important, but the truth is I just love being a photographer. Doesn't matter if I'm photographing an elite athlete or a random guy on a river. I like using the camera to tell stories. Whether that story helps to define your brand or simply to give the viewer a glimpse into an unfamiliar world, the goal is always the same, to make great images.

When I'm not creating campaigns for commercial clients, I spend a great deal of time out on the road (with my dog Mojo) documenting various aspects of America. Most notable series have been 10+ year projects like "American Backcourts", "Barbershops of America", "America" and the most recent one documenting Cowboy culture in America. If I'm not on the road, that means I'm outdoors (hopefully without cell service), backcountry snowboarding, fly fishing, hunting, riding a horse, or backpacking. Where you will not find me is lying next to a pool.

"If a man can keep alert and imaginative, an error is a possibility, a chance at something new; to him, wandering and wondering are part of the same process, and he is most mistaken, most in error, whenever he quits exploring."

William Least Heat-Moon - Blue Highways

Places the camera has taken me to: All 50 states of the USA, Mexico, Canada, Haiti, Costa Rica, England, Scotland, Wales, Spain, France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Turkey, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Vietnam, and South Africa.

"Rob travels the globe, but he's an American photographer—a photographer of America - first and foremost." - Nick Yetto

Calves to the Fire

A few years ago I was eating a continental breakfast at some shitty hotel in the midwest. The local news was playing on TV. I hate the news, but it was the only sound in an otherwise soulless room. The broadcaster started making a big fuss - "you're not gonna believe what we've got here.....a real life cowboy!!!!". Talking as if he was an alien that landed on earth and now walked among us humans. Her antics were one of many recent instances that made me realize the general public is completely disconnected and clueless about what really happens on a cattle ranch. It's almost hard to blame them because cowboys, in a lot of ways, do live on a different planet. Still though, it makes you wonder if most folks think that beef just magically appears in their grocery store by means no different than a 12 pack of beer?

Being granted access to the daily lives of real working cowboys/cowgirls in the American West has been a great honor and privilege. There's no way of putting into words how much respect these people deserve. The lengths they go to care for cattle is astonishing. Their everyday demands undetermined hours in relentless weather, covering land the size of some northeastern states by horseback, to manage wild and unpredictable 1,400 lb animals.

It's said that 30 billion pounds of beef are consumed every year in the United States. This series aims to show outsiders that cowboys aren't just characters played in a movie. They are hard working men and women that have dedicated their lives to working cattle while adhering to the code and traditions of the American West. Traditions that have gone mostly unchanged for the past hundred years despite what Hollywood depictions would have you believe.