

FREE RANGE
by
Johnny B. Dunn

Johnny Dunn
12326 Cedar Bend Dr.
Dallas, TX 75244
310-467-5139
johnnybdunn@gmail.com

Registered WGA

EXT. OPEN RANGE

The truck pulls up to a large stack of hay bales. The headlights land on a large cow tugging and chewing on the hay. The driver's door opens.

TOBY WILSON (16), a handsome, optimistic young man with the gumption of the old west, steps out of the truck. He is the quintessential cowboy - wearing boots, tight jeans, and yoked snap button shirt. He approaches the cow and pats its ass.

TOBY

Been looking for you. You know this hay ain't any better than what you got in the barn.

Toby leans into the truck, turns up the radio.

FINALS ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)

Chad Raines, shining star out of Hope, Texas, sponsored tonight by Free Range cologne.

Toby climbs the bales to the top. He looks out at the sun setting on the horizon beyond the Wilson Ranch house.

FINALS ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Chad leads in the last round. If he can stay on for the full eight seconds no one can catch him.

Toby lies down on the bales.

INT. ARENA

Activity picks up around the chute. Chad looks out into the full arena and waves to the cheering crowd. COWBOYS step up on the rails settling the bull. A handmade rope bracelet dangles from Chad's wrist. He kisses it, climbs on the bull.

FINALS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Taking the final ride of the night:
The last of the great cowboys
saddling up on Big Bertha.

Chad pushes his cowboy hat tight, readies for the ride. He gives the signal. The chute opens, the bull jumps and kicks.

EXT. OPEN RANGE

Toby sits on top of the bale, mimics Chad's actions.

CHAD (CONT'D)

(Beat)

Doc?

DOCTOR

I count fourteen hairline fractures
in your pelvis and spine. You've
been in this business long enough
to know what that means. Remember
Red Simmons in '99?

CHAD

Bull broke his back.

DOCTOR

In a nursing home in Guthrie,
Oklahoma last time I checked.

Chad gets up, grabs his clothes and dresses, determined to
get the hell out of there.

CHAD

Put a loaded shotgun in his mouth
two years ago.

DOCTOR

Always treated you like one of my
own. So, you know I'm not fooling
here when I say that if you get
back on a bull, you'll never walk
again.

Chad loses all his energy and drops in a chair. Doc Fletcher
places his hand on Chad's shoulder.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Go home. Think about what life
still has in store for you. You're
young. Take what you've learned
and do something with it.

CHAD

Don't know nothing but rodeo, Doc.

Doctor Fletcher exits leaving Chad sitting in the room alone.
He reaches for his cowboy boots. He tries to pull one on, but
seizes in pain. He throws his boot across the room, defeated.

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

An OLD COUPLE sit in the waiting area. Chad is transfixed on
the Old Woman patting the Old Man's hand for comfort. The Old
Man's hands shake uncontrollably.

Chad is pulled from the Old Couple as the NURSE pats Chad on the hand. She hands him a bottle of pills.

NURSE

Don't take more than two a day.
You hear?

Chad opens the bottle and pops a pill. The Nurse grabs a GQ magazine and lays it open to the photo spread of Chad wearing different western outfits while holding Free Range Cologne.

NURSE (CONT'D)

I don't suppose you would autograph
this for me?

Chad smiles, signs the magazine.

CHAD

Looks like I won't be going to
Omaha. Sure could use some company
tonight.

NURSE

I've read your chart. I'd say
you're out of the saddle for a
while.

CHAD

I don't suppose that chart says we
can't have a T-Bone and a beer?

NURSE

No, I suppose it don't.

CHAD

I'm down at the Wagon Wheel, room
126. Say you come around?

INT. MOTEL - DAY BREAK

Modest room. The glow of a silent television reflects on the wall. A naked Nurse sleeps in the bed under a sheet.

On the side table is a half-empty bottle of bourbon. Chad grabs a glass, finishes off the last swig. Plays with a rope bracelet tied on his wrist. Pours another drink. Pops a pill. The Nurse rolls over, laces her fingers in his. Looks at him concerned.

NURSE

You got a place you call home?
Anyone to look after you?

The Nurse pulls his arm to her. She plays with the bracelet on his wrist.

CHAD
(Realizing)
Been fifteen years since I've been home. Hell if I go back.

NURSE
Don't go if it knots you up so much. Go somewhere else.

CHAD
Can't rodeo. Got nowhere else.

NURSE
Must of been something awful, you not wanting to go back.

Chad downs the rest of his bourbon. He pulls his wrist away from her.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Where'd you get this?
(Teasing)
You ain't got a wife and kid somewhere, do you?

CHAD
(Dodging)
It was a gift.

NURSE
I knew it.

CHAD
No. It was my brother gave it to me.

NURSE
You excited to see him?

CHAD
He's not there. He gave this to me when he left... gotta take a piss.

Chad gets up, winces in pain.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chad stands over the toilet and pisses. His knee buckles and he leans against the wall as he finishes with pain and frustration.

INT. MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Chad steps out of the bathroom and finds the Nurse getting dressed.

NURSE

Sorry, baby. I gotta go. My kid will be getting up soon and he needs fed before school.

CHAD

No, sure, you go on. I understand.

NURSE

You got somewhere to go?

Chad ignores her.

NURSE (CONT'D)

You say hey next time you come through and see the Doc. You hear?

The Nurse kisses Chad and slips out of the room. Chad pours another drink and painfully lies down.

EXT. WILSON RANCH FIELD - MORNING

Two HORSES tied to a nearby tree. Toby pulls barbed wire.

MARK WILSON (18) carries the worry lines as the older brother and is rougher around the edges with a stronger build than Toby. He holds a hammer and tack nails.

MARK

Tighter!

TOBY

I'm pulling as tight as I can.

MARK

Put your back into it, pansy.

Toby pulls harder. Mark tacks the wire into place.

MARK (CONT'D)

Now cut it.

TOBY

No shit, asshole. Call me a pansy.

MARK

That's it.

MARK

Hurry up. I'm not waiting.

RACHEL WILSON (40), hard working single mom, walks on to the porch.

RACHEL

You boys are going to be late.

(Beat)

Toby, what's wrong with your shirt?

TOBY

Ask Mark.

RACHEL

Mark, why can't you act your age?

MARK

Wimp couldn't pull the wire--

TOBY

Had nothing to do with it.

RACHEL

Enough!

(To Toby)

Now, go change.

Toby runs up onto the porch and into the house.

MARK

Stupid faggot--

RACHEL

You're going to wait on him, mister, whether you like it or not.

MARK

Why can't he just hitch a ride from one of his friends?

RACHEL

And one more thing. If I ever hear you call your brother that again...

Rachel enters the house. Mark, pissed, beats the steering wheel, glares at the house. Then, he turns on the radio...

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)

DJ Dooley Dalton, voice of West Texas. Highs today in the 80s. Spring has arrived and so has the annual regional High School rodeo...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Chad slowly drives by the High School as a BUS unloads.

STUDENTS shuffle along the sidewalk leading to the front of the school. As the Students file in, they pass a life size statue of Chad Raines. The statue, a MODEST Chad wearing a leather fringed jacket with his forefinger and thumb tipping his hat over his face. Plaque reads, "Hometown Hero, Rodeo Champion - Chad Raines"

DJ DOOLEY (V.O.)

...that goes out to all the high schools in the four county area. If you and your high school club or organization plans to compete in this year's regional high school rodeo, team applications must be submitted before the end of the week.

NATHAN STEVENS (16), lanky, wears various Broadway musical buttons on his jean jacket. He walks with TATE (17), a true cowgirl in boots and jeans.

As Chad watches, BULLIES come up to Nathan, knock books out of his hands and pull his jeans jacket over his head from behind. Without hesitation Tate pushes one of the Bullies who stumbles off balance. The other Bullies laugh at their friend and go inside.

LATER...

EXT. HOPE - EVENING

Chad drives through the Town Square. The glow of the neon marquis from the Rialto Theater reflects in his windshield.

He passes by the closed BARBER SHOP. Reminiscing, he runs his fingers through his hair, pulls away passing.

MOMENTS LATER...

Chad pulls up to BOBBY JOE BOBBY'S ROADHOUSE AND SALOON.

INT. BOBBY JOE BOBBY'S ROADHOUSE AND SALOON

Family restaurant and bar. In the center, a mechanical bull surrounded by hay bales and a rough rail fence. Tables full of PATRONS eating steaks and overstuffed baked potatoes.

Bar filled with the local REDNECKS drinking beer, empty peanut shells on the floor. Chad pulls up a stool. He calls out to the Bartender, BOBBY JOE, (50s), gruff with a mustachio, also acts as his own bouncer.

BOBBY JOE

What you drinking? Last call. We're cleaning up.

CHAD

Bourbon, straight up.

BOBBY JOE

Beer only. This is a family establishment now.

CHAD

Whatever's on tap.

A WAITRESS wipes the bar down next to Chad. Chad eyes her. She hands him a matchbook from the Vista Motel. He opens it and finds her phone number written inside. He slips it into his shirt pocket and gives her a wink and a smile.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

STUDENTS open and close lockers. Toby puts his books away. LOGAN (16), shy, well groomed, city type walks by, giving Toby a smile as he stops at his locker. Toby gives Logan a nod and a wink when BAM, Mark slaps a FLYER against Toby's chest. It reads "Rodeo Club Spring Rodeo Practice Starts Today - 3:00 in Practice Barn".

MARK

You know you need this.

TOBY

You mean, you need me.

MARK

Don't be late. And no...

(Looks at Logan)

Your freak boyfriend can't watch.

Toby glares at Mark walking away. He turns to look at Logan. He's gone. He WADS up the flyer and SLAMS his locker door.

INT. CUP OF JOE - AFTERNOON

Western themed coffee house, mix of ADULTS and HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. Nathan waits on customers in Western garb.

Nathan gives Toby a coffee cup. Toby pulls a dollar out of his back pocket and dangles over a milk pail for tips.

NATHAN

Toby. What the hell? The whole school's here.

TOBY

What? Most people like tips.

NATHAN

(Gritted teeth)
Don't you dare.

Toby drops the dollar in and rings the cow bell next to it. The entire room yells, "Cow Tipper!" Nathan and two pimply FACED TEENAGERS working the espresso machine huddle and sing out the "Thank you Cow Tipper" song:

SONG

(Forced enthusiasm)

"Mooove to the tasty flow served
with a smile and thanks/ No matter
how many trips, you're number one
in the ranks/ You may call it Mudd,
Joe, Bean juice, or Java/ But just
so you know, we'll always love ya!/
Here at the Cup of Joe."

Toby sits with Zee, Tate and Logan who is reading a GQ MAGAZINE.

TOBY

Did you ditch the whole day?

LOGAN

Just Shop. I think Mr. Reynolds
likes it that way.

(Changing the subject)

Take a look. They're advertising a
whole line of Western clothing,
Free Range Wear. Chad Raines did
the spread. I could get into this
whole cowboy thing.

Logan shows off Chad's PHOTOS.

TOBY

(To Logan)
You do need some cowboy boots.

TATE

(To Logan)
Have you ever worn boots?
(MORE)

TATE (CONT'D)

And, I'm talking about the real kind. Not those Peter Pan boots.

LOGAN

I've tried Toby's on.

TOBY

You wore my boots?

LOGAN

In gym. You weren't wearing them at the time.

TATE

I just hope it stopped at the boots.

INT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN - CONTINUOUS

Large door of the metal barn SLAMS as a STUDENT enters to start practice. Mark looks up and sees that it's not Toby, but CAMERON (17), a powder keg. He looks at his watch as he charges after Mark.

CAMERON

Where's your brother? You said you had this under control?

In the background several STUDENTS practice roping skills. One STUDENT on a horse runs barrels. TAYLOR (16) approaches.

MARK

We don't need him.

TAYLOR

As much as I hate to say it, we won't win without the fag.

MARK

(Frustrated)

Okay, I'll try talking to him.

CAMERON

No, you better make it happen.

EXT. WILSON BARN - EVENING

The sun sets on a cool spring evening. Toby pulls a bale of hay from the back of a trailer and stacks it near the barn. Mark pulls up in the pick up at break-neck speed. The tires skid to a stop in the gravel, kicking up dust. Mark jumps out.

MARK
(Slamming truck door)
You made me look like an idiot.

TOBY
Just stay away from me. You really
don't want me there with your
friends anyway.

From the end of the drive, a car pulls in.

MARK
If you had kept your dick out of
everyone's business.

Rachel gets out of the car. Carries a bag of groceries.

MARK (CONT'D)
You are such an asshole.

RACHEL
Hey, what is it with you two? All
you do is fight anymore.

MARK
Toby's not competing.

TOBY
I never said that.

RACHEL
Come on, you both love riding
together.

TOBY
I'd rather ride with people who
like and respect me.

Mark and Toby face off.

RACHEL
(Gives up)
Mark, aren't you suppose to be
cleaning out the stalls?

Rachel walks into the house. Mark pushes Toby with his
shoulder as he walks into the barn.

TOBY
Each school has more than one team.
I'll put my own team together.

MARK
And what if they won't let you?

TOBY

I convinced them to let us start
the gay straight alliance a year
ago, didn't I?

Mark turns back to Toby revealing his true feelings.

MARK

Why do you have to be queer?
Couldn't be just like everybody
else. Now you ruined it. The Wilson
brothers. We was the best. We had
fun when we competed together.

TOBY

That doesn't have to change. You
can ride with me.

MARK

Problem is you don't have a team.

Mark continues his work. Toby stops suddenly with the
realization... maybe he does...

TOBY

All you have to be is a recognized
school club, right?

MARK

You mean your friends?

TOBY

Maybe.

MARK

(Laughing)

Yeah, you'd lose riding on a pansy
team. I'll tell the guys you're in
with the Rodeo Club.

TOBY

My offer still stands. We're going
to kick the Rodeo Club's ass.

Toby heads for the house.

MARK

That's it. You're no longer my
brother. You understand? Don't come
crying to me when it all falls
apart.

Toby SLAMS the front screen door.

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Pro-Gay posters on the wall. The members of the Gay Straight Alliance, ZEE (17), Hispanic, Toby's GBF sits with eyes on Toby. The others, Tate, Nathan, BLAS, (16), Goth, and JAKE WILLIAMS, straight guy with an edge ignores Toby.

TOBY

Come on. You can at least consider it. Look, we set our mission statement at the first of the year.

Toby reads from the poster on the board.

TOBY (CONT'D)

The Hope High Gay Straight Alliance is formed to challenge ourselves to take pride in who we are, move beyond stereotypes, and gain the respect of others.

NATHAN

For the last year, we've had our asses kicked from here to last Sunday.

TOBY

The only way we're going to get any respect is if we beat them at their own game.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Taylor sits on a bale of hay chewing on a straw. Cameron watches Mark pace back and forth.

CAMERON

We just put some hurt on him.

MARK

I do that everyday. Won't make a difference.

TAYLOR

What does he love more than riding?

MARK

(Realizing)
I know what he loves.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRINCIPAL FRANK WILLIAMS, worn out educator, steps in the doorway, listens.

TOBY

Can we at least think about competing? Most of us have ridden horses since we were kids.

FRANK WILLIAMS

If you wanted to do something at the rodeo you could do concessions? The drama group is taking a pass this year. Any interest?

JAKE

Sure. Let's take the Drama Club's hand-me-downs. No offense Nathan, but that's the bottom of the extracurricular food chain.

FRANK WILLIAMS

It was just a suggestion. The Superintendent looks for reasons to shut you down. Ease into this.

BLAS

We can't vote on it anyway. Logan's not here and it's got to be unanimous.

Toby pulls out his cell phone and texts Logan "WHR R U STUD?"

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

A cell phone BUZZES in a pile of hay. It's Toby's message. Cameron and Mark have lassoed Logan. Logan hits the ground. Cameron and Mark drag Logan into an empty horse stall. Taylor watches outside the barn door. Cameron grabs Logan.

CAMERON

Yee haw!

Cameron puts his knee in Logan's gut. He grabs Logan's hand and ties him at the wrist with a hoey followed by the feet at the ankles. Cameron raises up as if in the rodeo.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Now, that's how you rope a calf in record time.

Logan's face is covered in dirt. Cameron HOWLS.

MARK

There's more where that came from
if you guys compete.

TAYLOR

I say we skin him!

Cameron smiles and pulls out his Bowie knife and cuts Logan's
shirt off.

INT. CLASSROOM

Toby desperately checks his text messages.

TATE

I say we spread out and see if we
can find him.

Then Tate, Nathan, and Blas dart past Principal Williams. Zee
and Jake hang back.

ZEE

Toby?

TOBY

His last class is history.

FRANK WILLIAMS

That meets in one of the portables.
He would go by the practice barn.

Toby and Zee take off. Jake picks up his gym bag and follows
behind the group.

FRANK WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Jake. Can I see you a minute?

Jake stops and turns back to Principle Williams.

FRANK WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

I'm confused. A year ago, you
didn't even know them.

JAKE

So?

FRANK WILLIAMS

You're not even...

JAKE

Queer? Gay STRAIGHT Alliance. You
know Zee's straight, don't you?

FRANK WILLIAMS

Do you realize the kind of pressure
this town puts on me?

JAKE

Try being the principal's son. See
how many friends you have.

(Beat)

I gotta go and find my friend.

(sarcastic)

Nice hanging with you, Dad.

Jake darts out the door.

INT. BARN - LATER

Toby and Zee slide the barn door open. Light pours in.

TOBY

Logan?!?

IN AN EMPTY HORSE STALL

Logan, wearing only his Calvin Klein boxer briefs struggles
against the ropes.

LOGAN

Get it off. Get it off!

Logan fights the ropes. Toby jumps into the stall and
immediately pulls at the knots in the rope.

TOBY

You have to hold still.

Logan, free, jumps up and tries to salvage his clothes, but
they're too shredded.

Jake enters the barn.

JAKE

Guys?

Zee waves Jake over to them.

Logan turns away from his friends and beats his fist in the
barn. Jake rips open his gym bag and gives Toby his gym
shorts and tee. Toby tries to help Logan put them on, but
Logan pulls away.

LOGAN

I got this!

Toby reaches out for him, but he runs out of the barn.

ZEE
Él estará bien. Just let him go.

TOBY
Damn it!

JAKE
Come on. Let's get out of here.

EXT. RAINES RANCH - EVENING

Chad drives under a metal arch and down the long drive.

INT. RAINES DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Food sits on the table. MACK RAINES (62) gruff and weathered from years of hard labor pulls back the curtains at the window and sees a cloud of dust and Chad's truck barreling down the drive. He drops the drape and walks away.

EXT. RAINES RANCH

Chad pulls up to the house of the working ranch in desperate need of repair. He gets out and steps up on the porch. He looks into the dining room window.

INT. RAINES DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mack sits at the head of the table. The others at the table, BUTCH JONES a sixty year old example of his name, CHESTER WALSH (55), responsible. ALBERT WALSH (42), Chester's younger brother with the mind of a twelve year-old and given the nickname, Simple.

The front door SLAMS shut.

CHESTER
I'd know that slam anywhere.

Chad walks in. Chester, Butch and Albert jump up from the table and greet him. Mack avoids eye contact. Hard feelings festered over time.

BUTCH
God, dang. If this don't beat all.

CHAD
 Lord, Butch look at you. Haven't
 changed one bit.

CHESTER
 Sure wish we could say the same for
 you... big-time star and--

CHAD
 You old goat. Chester, be nice. I
 just got here.

Albert races up to Chad and sticks his neck out.

ALBERT
 Smell my neck. Go ahead, I ain't
 gonna bite.

Chad smells Albert's neck.

CHAD
 Whew, you gotta stay away from
 those hogs.

ALBERT
 No! I'm wearing Free Range. Can't
 you smell it?

CHAD
 SIMPLE, I'm just play'in with you.
 You smell purdy.

ALBERT
 See, Chester. I told you so. Hey,
 Mack. See who's come home. It's
 Chad, Mack.

MACK
 I see that Simple.

Mack notices the bracelet on Chad's wrist.

MACK (CONT'D)
 You hungry?

CHAD
 I could eat a bite.

MACK
 A place just opened up.

Mack stands, eyes square on Chad as if in a gunfight.

CHAD

I won't be in your way long, maybe six weeks.

BUTCH

It'll be nice just to have him home for a while. Don't you think Mack?

MACK

As long as he don't shy away from work. We ain't on vacation.

CHAD

(To Mack)

So, the ranch... she's looking a little worse for wear. What's happened? I send all the earnings I can spare.

MACK

Why did you come home? Cause you could have just mailed a check.

CHAD

Not saying--

MACK

What are you saying? Cause these men work this ranch like it's their own. They deserve an apology.

Mack charges out of the room.

CHAD

He's right. I didn't mean--

CHESTER

All those years when your momma was sick, the bills just added up. Then property taxes got so high.

CHAD

He paying you guys?

CHESTER

Don't you worry none about us. We'll get her back on track. You just wait. Come on, let's get you something to eat.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Half lit by a DESK LAMP, Mark sits, plays video games. The bedroom door SLAMS open. Toby charges in, grabs Mark, knocks over the lamp as he shoves Mark to the wall.

TOBY

You lousy son of a bitch!

Mark fights back, pushes Toby and pins him on the bed.

MARK

You think you can mess with us and we won't give you smack back? You'll are easy pick'ins.

Toby rolls off the bed and gets free. He is able to grab Mark pulling his arm back freezing him in pain.

TOBY

You mess with them, you're messing with me, and I don't like it.

RACHEL (O.S.)

Stop it! Now! Somebody better tell me what's going.

Rachel sets a basket of clean clothes down on the floor.

Toby throws up his hands in truce. Mark jerks away and massages his shoulder.

MARK

He just charged in...

TOBY

Mark beat the shit out of Logan--

MARK

The hell we did. Besides, it was just some fun.

RACHEL

What?

TOBY

They stripped him, tied him up like some animal and left him in the barn for god knows how long...

RACHEL

Mark Edward Wilson. What were you thinking?

MARK

It was just some fun.

Rachel folds her arms in disappointment.

RACHEL

It's like I don't know you anymore.

MARK

If Toby hadn't untied him, I would have gone back.

RACHEL

What if that had been Toby? Did you think about that?

(Beat)

You stole that boy's dignity.

MARK

We didn't do anything--

RACHEL

That's it. I'm selling the horses. I could use the money anyway.

Rachel picks up the laundry basket and charges out of the room. Mark and Toby look at each other stunned.

EXT. WILSON RANCH - LATER

An old model car creeps down the dirt road in front of the Wilson home. A HIGH SCHOOL THUG leans out of the passenger window with a long string of firecrackers strapped to a brick.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

Toby stands at his bedroom window. A breeze whips the drapes. A large poster of Chad Raines centers the wall. The door slowly opens, Rachel steps in with an arm full of clothes.

RACHEL

Interrupting?

Toby grabs the clothes, puts them away.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's been a long year... for all of us. When you and your friends--

TOBY

I know what we did. You want me to take it back? Because it doesn't work that way.

RACHEL

I would never ask you to be someone you're not. No. I'm talking about the club. Because if--

TOBY

I can't take that back either--

RACHEL

You're trying to prove something--

TOBY

So what if I am. I have to prove something to them, to me, to this whole stupid town. If I don't they'll never let us alone.

Rachel, uncertain about what to say next, gives her attention to picking up dirty laundry. Mark steps into Toby's doorway.

MARK

You really going to sell the horses? I got the rodeo, and how do you expect me to work the ranch?

EXT. WILSON RANCH

The Thug lights the fuse and throws the brick in front of the house.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM

RACHEL

Fine. I won't sell the horses. But no more antagonizing--

Fireworks POP in the front yard. Toby takes off running but Mark blocks the doorway.

Toby pushes Mark out of the way. Rachel follows.

EXT. WILSON RANCH

The sparks fly as each firecracker EXPLODES. Toby runs out on to the porch. A Thug yells, "FAG", then pulls out a bat and SLAMS the mail box. The car speeds off as the box tumbles.

Toby runs, picks up the brick ready to throw.

Rachel walks down the porch and softly rests her hand on Toby's shoulder. His tension falls from his body. Mark steps out on to the porch.

MARK

You bring this on yourself. You know that.

Dejected, Toby drops the brick and walks into the darkness.

Rachel picks up the brick, walks to Mark.

Mark—reads the chalk markings on the brick, "FAG".

RACHEL

(clenched teeth)

You've got to step up or your brother's going to get hurt.

Rachel goes into the house leaving Mark alone.

EXT. LOCAL LARRY'S LIQUOR - NIGHT

The neon light BUZZES in the quiet night. Chad's truck sits in the parking lot.

INT. LOCAL LARRY'S LIQUOR - MOMENTS LATER

Chad walks through the aisles looking for Bourbon.

CLERK

(whispering)

Packwood saw him ride into town.

PATRON

If Chad Raines were in town I would know it. Mack would have said.

Chad hides under his cowboy hat. He grabs a bottle of Bourbon and tucks it under his jean jacket. As the Clerk and Patron continue to talk, Chad slips out the front door.

I/E. PICK UP - NIGHT

Toby pulls up to a house. It's dark and quiet just like the other houses down the block.

Toby quietly closes the door and sneaks up to...

EXT. LOGAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Toby moves around to the back of the house. He walks up to Logan's window.

Window open, the curtains move from a breeze.

Toby looking in the dark room HOOTS like an owl.

INT. PICK UP - MOMENTS LATER

Toby faces Logan who sits wearing gym shorts and tee shirt. He pulls up the shirt. Obvious bruises. Logan flinches.

TOBY

I just wish I'd been there. You know that, right?

LOGAN

That's not what this is about.

Logan pushes the shirt down and turns from Toby.

TOBY

It's my own fault. I pushed 'em hard and look what it got us. I won't push anymore. Okay?

Logan turns to Toby with an inquisitive look.

LOGAN

You were best friends with those guys. Back then, did they even know about us?

Toby, uncomfortable, shifts in his seat.

TOBY

It's different now. Then, I was--

LOGAN

Popular.

TOBY

Respected.

LOGAN

You realize that's never going to happen again as long as you hang with the GSA, with me?

TOBY

I want that too, more than anything... and I want the respect.

Logan screams "AAARRRGGG" in frustration.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Don't you want that? We may never be popular, but we can have that.

Logan grabs Toby's hand and looks at him with empathy.

LOGAN

Okay. You know I'd do anything for you.

TOBY

I don't know what I was thinking. I should have never put you in a position--

LOGAN

I said, okay.

Toby looks at Logan with confusion.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

We win, that would do it, right?

TOBY

Sure, but...

LOGAN

If I'm committed, you must be too.

TOBY

(realizes)
Hot damn!
(idea sinks in)
We're gonna need help.

LOGAN

The great Toby Wilson?

Logan smiles. Toby leans in to kiss him. He stops when...

The front porch light comes on.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Great. How could they know.

Logan exits and dashes to the front porch.

Toby rolls down his window.

TOBY
I won't let you down!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Chad, drunk, swigs the last of the Bourbon and looks at his statue. Chad throws the empty bottle at the statue - misses. The bottle breaks on the sidewalk.

EXT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Chad tries the locked door. He gives up and moves around to the side of the building.

EXT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN - MORNING

The sun breaks the horizon and glistens on the corrugated steel of the barn. Toby tries the door. Locked. Toby moves to the side of the barn, jumps on a crate under a window and climbs through.

INT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN - CONTINUOUS

The barn LIGHTS UP. Toby closes the electrical panel.

TOBY
Anybody here?

Quiet. Toby grabs a rope and swings at stacked bales of hay.

CHAD (O.S.)
Hey! Turn off the damn lights.

Chad lies on hay bales covered with a horse blanket, his cowboy hat over his face.

TOBY
Gotta practice.

CHAD

And I gotta sleep. Now, turn the damn lights off before I kick your ass.

TOBY

How did you get in here anyway?

CHAD

Same way you did.

TOBY

How do you know--

CHAD

Window's been broken since I went to school here.

(Beat)

It's too early... go on git.

TOBY

Go on, make me.

After a moment of silence, Chad throws the blanket off and sits up and straightens his hat on his head.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(Recognizes Chad)

Shit! Do you know who you are?

CHAD

(realizes he's busted)

Great.

TOBY

That last ride... I thought you were a goner, then you got up and showed them.

CHAD

So, can I sleep this off here?

TOBY

Sure. I won't bother you.

Toby sneaks up closer to Chad.

TOBY (CONT'D)

But, everyone shows up in about an hour. I know they'd love to see--

Chad GRUNTS as he sits up.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Wait, me and my friends could sure use some, you know... maybe tips?

Chad stands, wobbles. Toby steps up to help. Chad leans on Toby's shoulder.

CHAD

You help me to my truck?

(Off Toby's look of concern)

I'm not drunk, my bones ain't with me just yet.

(sarcastic)

Tips. Yeah, sure, come by later. I ain't got nothing better to do.

INT. WILSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Small eating table. Rachel clutches her cup of coffee as a portable radio plays.

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)

DJ Dooley Dalton with a new program today called, "Have we lost all hope". I recently found out that the High School's Gay Straight Alliance has entered to compete in the Regional Radio this year. Now, get this, with star rider, Toby Wilson, as it's captain. How can we allow these subversive values to enter our fine community? Let's keep our Community great!

Rachel sets her cup down and turns up the radio.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

Toby walks down the sidewalk.

DJ DOOLEY (V.O.)

I just happen to have Principal Williams on the line. Principal, are you crazy?

FRANK WILLIAMS (V.O.)

Right now we have no policies against any group registering to compete.

DJ DOOLEY (V.O.)
However, the district and the high school's rodeo club are looking into the matter.

A MERCHANT sweeps his walk, stares at Toby. Then, the Merchant goes into the store slamming the door behind him.

INT. WILSON HOUSE KITCHEN

Rachel wipes the tears from her eyes.

FRANK WILLIAMS (ON RADIO)
I don't see a need--

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)
Principal Williams, you look real hard into that. In the meantime, we asked some of the local residents if they think they should compete and the people we talked to gave us a resounding, hell no!

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

TOWNSPEOPLE stare at Toby as he walks by. He tips his cowboy hat down and continues avoiding eye contact.

INT. WILSON HOUSE - KITCHEN

Rachel turns down the radio. DJ Dooley's voice MURMURS in the background. Rachel picks up the phone and dials.

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)
It looks like we got ourselves a caller. Have we lost all hope?

RACHEL
(talks on the phone)
I'm a local resident and Toby's mother. Let's just get another opinion shall we?

EXT. RAINES RANCH - AFTERNOON

Chad, shirtless, BANGS nails in a fence. Toby drives his pickup GRINDING over gravel into the drive. Toby gets out. Chad finishes the nail.

CHAD
Didn't really officially meet the
other morning.

TOBY
I knew who you were--

Chad turns his back to Toby, puts on his shirt.

CHAD
Now, I reckon I know you. Read the
paper, saw your picture and
thought, I know that kid.

TOBY
I wanted to come by and talk about--

CHAD
That's the kid from the other day.

TOBY
The team is super excited--

CHAD
Just hold your horses. I never said
I would do anything with you and
your friends.

TOBY
What do you mean?

CHAD
Maybe I'm too busy. That's all.

Toby realizes Chad's intent.

TOBY
Oh, I get it. Afraid to be seen
with the gays.

CHAD
That what you think?

TOBY
Surprise me.

CHAD
What do you want?

TOBY
I have a team and most of them
never rodeo--

CHAD
Got yourself a problem all right.

TOBY
I was hoping you might coach us.

Chad picks up the tool bag. He walks toward the house.

CHAD
You can shit in one hand, hope in
the other and see which one gets
full first.

TOBY
(Desperate)
We need a coach. You're the best.

CHAD
I wish you luck.

TOBY
Should've known. Same as everybody
else.

Chad stops short of the porch. He turns on his heel.

CHAD
How's that?

TOBY
Unless you're afraid of what people
will think? We're not asking you
to hang out with us, hell, or even
like us. Just help us.

CHAD
Expect me to run a fool's errand?

TOBY
Gay kids in West Texas. You think
anyone is going to help us? They'd
just as soon see us hang ourselves.

Toby's words hit Chad hard. He lowers his head in despair. Toby waits for a response. Chad steps up on the porch and without turning back to him...

CHAD
Sorry, kid.

Chad walks into the house.

INT. RAINES RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

Chad pulls back the drapes and watches Toby race off THROWING dirt SKIDDING on the gravel. He notices the bracelet hanging from his wrist while he holds the drape.

INT. RAINES RANCH - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Chad makes his way up the stairs. He stops in front of a bedroom door. He hesitates, then tries the door, locked. Chad runs his hand over the top of the door jam, finds the key, opens the door.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room of a high school student, yet untouched in nearly twenty years. Dust makes all the color in the room wash out to a dull grey.

Chad walks to a desk and grabs a framed high school diploma BLOWING dust revealing "Hope High - DANIEL RAINES".

Chad moves to the bookcase and picks up a photo of a young Chad holding a trophy and a seventeen year old DANIEL, proud, flamboyant and big smile. His arm wrapped around Chad.

Mack steps into the doorway.

MACK

Who was that?

CHAD

Some kid looking for an autograph.

MACK

Could use some help outside. Lock it back on your way out.

Mack walks away. Chad lingers for a moment.

EXT. RAINES RANCH - LATER

Mack and Chad wear leather gloves and unload rolls of barbed wire from the back of a truck. Chad's hurting, GROANS, but sucks up the pain. Mack notices.

MACK

If you can't take it...

CHAD

Why not just clear it out?

MACK
Clear what out?

CHAD
The bedroom?

MACK
Made a promise to your mother to
keep it in case he came home.

CHAD
Bull shit. They're both gone. You
can do whatever you want.

MACK
You hold your tongue, boy. You have
no right--

CHAD
No right? She wrote me every week I
was gone. She'd say how ate up
inside she was, but not from the
cancer, from Daniel. The guilt for
not standing up--

MACK
Every week she wrote and you didn't
even have the decency to show up to
see her on her deathbed?

CHAD
She didn't want me here. She
wanted me to remember better days.
But do you want to know something,
Pop? I tried and tried, but I
couldn't remember, not even now.

Mack removes his gloves throws them in the back of the truck
and confronts Chad.

MACK
That's a damn lie.

CHAD
That kid outside? He asked me to
coach his team. Just like that,
asked for help and I told him to
get lost. Sound familiar?

Mack gets in the truck, turns it over.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Maybe I should coach them.

MACK

Always been a selfish bastard.

Chad steps in front of the truck.

CHAD

I had to get out of here and you made it an easy decision to make.

MACK

You sound like your mother, blame me for you leaving. You left. You think I didn't give a damn?

CHAD

Never did.

Mack PUNCHES the gas. Chad jumps out of the way. Chad pulls a bottle out of his pocket, pops a pill as he watches Mack drive off.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Chad, hat in hand, walks down the hall. He stops at the trophy case.

FRANK WILLIAMS (O.S.)

Mr. Raines? My God, you look just like you did as a student. What brings you back?

CHAD

Understand this Toby has a team?

FRANK WILLIAMS

The Gay Straight Alliance. Why?

CHAD

Tell them to be at my ranch Saturday morning.

(Beat)

Let's keep quiet about this. We don't need people sniffing around. You can do that?

FRANK WILLIAMS

They're in room 101. You can see them for yourself, see if you think it's still a good idea.

CHAD

What do you mean?

FRANK WILLIAMS

There are two reasons why our little town was put on the map. One, is you. The second meets in room 101 once a week. I'm just saying they've been through a lot.

Chad walks towards the exit.

CHAD

Tell them seven sharp.

Chad disappears around the corner.

EXT. RAINES RANCH - MORNING

Chad steps out, holds a cup of coffee. The sunrise hits his face. He takes in the moment. The calm before the storm.

Zee pulls up in an old two-door Chevy. Jake follows driving his pick-up.

The team piles out. All dressed for the day ahead with the exception of Blas who is wearing all black including his eye liner. He pulls out his smart phone and videos the moment.

Chad steps off the porch. All eyes are glued on him.

The team stands in a line. With the attitude of a drill sergeant, Chad inspects each one.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Here's how it's going to go. No smoking, no drinking and you go to bed when I tell you.

NATHAN

Yes, sir.

CHAD

If you're not going to take this seriously, then I'm gone. You understand? You can play pretend cowboy on someone else's time. If just one quits, it's all over.

(Beat)

Hell starts now. We do this my way, no questions. You hear?

TOBY

We're ready.

CHAD

All right, all of you follow me.

Chad leads them to the corral and a pile of wood. Chad leans down to the ground and uses a stick to draw in the dirt.

CHAD (CONT'D)

This is the existing corral. You're gotta nail all of the existing loose boards and sure up any loose posts. Then, take this wood and extend the corral so it's regulation size. Like this.

Chad draws the extension in the dirt. The team's confused.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Let's get going. Don't have all day. I'll call you for supper.

Chad walks into the house. Logan picks up the posthole diggers.

LOGAN

Would someone tell me what this is?

Tate grabs the diggers from Logan.

TATE

Wuss. Here, let a real cowboy show you.

EXT. RAINES RANCH PORCH - EVENING

Chad drinks a cup of coffee on the porch, watches the kids working. He repeatedly, mindlessly POPS his prescription bottle open and closed.

Mack rides up on the other side of the corral.

Mack's and Chad's eyes meet. Toby stops working, notices the distance between the two. Mack rides off. Chad turns his back, pops a pill and enters the house.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - NIGHT

Old rough plank floor, wooden beds, and an old pot belly stove sets against the wall. The team enters covered in dirt and sweat, labored BREATHING and GROANS.

A long wooden table with sandwiches and a jug of iced tea sits in the middle of the room. Jake and Nathan grab a sandwich. They all find a bed and collapse.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - MORNING

CRASH! The front door is kicked open. The team lies in bed, filthy, still wearing the same clothes as the day before.

Chad RINGS a large triangle. Toby quickly sits up, the rest of the team doesn't move.

CHAD
Up and at 'em.

Chester and Albert SCURRY in with food. On the table a big bowl of scrambled eggs, plate of bacon and pie pan full of biscuits. Chester and Albert leave as they came in.

JAKE
(sits up)
I smell bacon.

TATE
God, I hope there's coffee.

BLAS
Please, shoot me now.

Nathan sits up. WINCING he grabs his arms in pain. Tate heads for the bacon.

NATHAN
Someone check and make sure Logan
is still alive.

LOGAN
Suck my...

CHAD
Hey, let's grow up a little.

Logan pulls the pillow over his head.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Eat up. Twenty minutes, I want
asses in the corral.

EXT. RAINES RANCH - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Chad stands in the center of the newly finished corral.

Toby leads the pack, Tate, close behind. Jake follows Zee rubbing her shoulders. Nathan CHOMPS down on a biscuit. Logan massages his arms. Blas brings up the rear, ties a black and white bandana as a "do rag".

Chester and Butch inspect the craftsmanship of the corral. Albert jumps up on one of the rails to watch the team enter. He takes notice of Blas.

ALBERT
Howdy. They call me Simple. What are you called?

BLAS
A figment of what I once was.

ALBERT
...You got a nickname?

BLAS
They call me Blas.

CHESTER
Simple, you get over here.

Albert darts over to Chester and Butch.

BUTCH
(to Chester)
Are they what you expected?

CHESTER
Hell if I know. I suppose they look queer.

ALBERT
Seem okay to me.

BUTCH
Shoot. As long as they ain't wearing petticoats, I guess.

ALBERT
(Laughs)
Petticoats.

CHESTER
Simple, you get in there and start cleaning out that barn before I put a spur in your ass. Come on Butch. Let's get to work.

Chester, Butch and Albert head for the barn.

Inside the corral, Nathan leans against the fence, an unlit cigarette in his mouth and his hat tilted up, plays it James Dean cool. Chad walks by. Nathan smiles and winks. Chad grabs the cigarette, tears it up.

CHAD
Who's ridden a horse?

Tate, Jake, and Zee raise their arms. Nathan and Blas, without confidence, raise theirs. Logan keeps his in his pockets.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Toby, go into the barn and saddle up a horse.

INT. RAINES BARN - CONTINUOUS

Mack brushes down his horse while Chester, Albert, and Butch clean. Toby enters. They all stop.

TOBY
Chad wants a horse.

Toby steps up to Mack with his hand out.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm--

Mack doesn't oblige and continues to brush.

MACK
I know who you are.

TOBY
I see everybody reads the paper.

MACK
Grab a saddle.

Mack steps into a stall. The horse, skittish, WHINNIES and KICKS. Mack gets a bridle around the horse's head.

MACK (CONT'D)
Whoa, girl. There you go.

BUTCH
Mack, you sure about that one?

Mack walks the horse out of the stall. Toby follows the erratic movement of the horse, tosses the saddle on. Mack cinches it.

Mack slaps the back end of the horse. It kicks up and WHINNIES. Toby calms her down.

Toby gives Mack a smirk and exits. Chester, Butch, and Albert still have eyes on Mack. Mack turns to them.

MACK

Don't just stand there, get busy.

INT. CORRAL - CONTINUOUS

Toby enters. Chad signals everyone to get up on the rails.

CHAD

Everyone will take a turn. I want to see how you handle her. Who wants to go first?

(To Logan)

How about you?

Logan jumps down off the rails and walks to the horse. Blas pulls out his phone and records the ride.

Logan awkwardly mounts the horse. It SNORTS and bucks.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hold the reins tighter. Lean into her. Show her who's boss.

SLAM Logan hits the ground. Gets up and dusts off. Chad grabs the horse and holds the reins tight. Toby gives Logan a wink. Logan forces a smile as he limps back to the fence. Chad notices the exchange.

CHAD (CONT'D)

All right, who can do this and not spook the horse?

No takers. Chad looks at Nathan and signals he's next. The horse bucks again. THUD, he hits the dirt.

Blas moves to the horse. Chad unaware.

CHAD (CONT'D)

When you approach your horse you have to talk to it, develop a bond before you get on.

Chad turns to Blas who is hugging the horse around it's neck.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Jesus. You're not going to marry her. Just get on.

MONTAGE:

Blas, scared, mounts the horse. He wraps his arms around the horse's neck as it walks around the corral very calmly. The horse doesn't buck. Blas sits up and takes the reins.

Blas struts with confidence. The horse gallops and then bucks. Blas flies in the air...

Tate flies high in the saddle. The horse bucks around. She grins with excitement even as she is thrown in the air.

Jake hangs on as the horse bucks. He looks over at Zee and smiles just before he is thrown.

Zee holds tight and concentrates. She whispers in it's ear. The horse slows down and TROTS around the corral.

Chad's surprised.

INT. CORRAL - LATER

The Team holds a rope with a lasso. They stand about twenty feet from the posts.

CHAD

Hold the lasso over your head and swing it... use your wrist. Don't rush it. It's not about speed, it's about the wrist.

TATE

You guys should be good at this.

Toby swings his lasso over his head with ease. He watches as the team struggles.

TOBY

It ain't that hard.

CHAD

Jake, don't rush it. Zee, a little more speed.

One by one, each get the lasso over their heads and create a strong rhythm. They're doing it. Nathan breaks out in laughter at his success.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Now, you're going to throw it and hit the post in front of you.

Jake throws and misses. Zee falls short and tries again. Tate hits her post. Logan swings his rope and lassos Nathan. Toby hits his post over and over again.

Logan swings and hits Nathan again. Nathan pushes Logan two posts away from the group.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Just stop.

JAKE

I think my rope is too short.

ZEE

(teasing)

First time a guy's ever said that.

TATE

It's because you throw like a girl.

JAKE

We know you'll never have that problem.

TATE

I don't have to put up with your gender conformity... breeder.

JAKE

Lesbo.

Tate charges and tackles Jake. SLAM! They hit the dirt. Everyone crowds around the fight. Toby jumps in, tries to pull Jake off Tate with no success.

SPLASH! Chad throws water on Tate and Jake.

CHAD

Worse than two bulls in heat.
Wasting my time.

TOBY

We'll get it together.
(to the team)
Won't we.

The team takes its place.

CHAD

Okay, this will take some time.

TOBY

I'll work with Logan.

CHAD

The rest of you, I don't want to see you stop until you hit your post one hundred times.

The team practices. Toby turns Logan toward the post, stands behind him with one hand on his shoulder, one on his hand.

TOBY

It's in your release. You need to wait until the leading edge of the lasso is in front of you.

Together they swing the rope and release. A miss, but close. Toby rolls up the rope and brings it back to Logan.

LOGAN

Let me try it by myself.

Logan swings the rope, releases, hits the post. Toby CHEERS and grabs Logan from behind.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - NIGHT

Zee, Jake, and Tate play cards at the table. Blas sits on his bunk and crafts a dream catcher.

EXT. BUNKHOUSE

Toby in the doorway looks across the yard. Chad appears on the porch of the house.

EXT. RAINES RANCH PORCH

Chad watches the stars.

IN THE BACKGROUND: A Country Song plays.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Off in the darkness, a pick-up. Same country SONG plays.

Pick-up with THREE THUGS pull up to the high school. They sneak around, bandanas over their faces. On the radio...

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)

That was an oldie but a goodie.

(Beat)

I don't know if you've been following the news out of Hope, but Judge Runyon was quoted as saying, "Some day the government and the Justice System is going to wake up and realize that homosexuals are no better than murderers and prostitutes."

EXT. RAINES RANCH - CONTINUOUS

Chad yells into the house.

CHAD

Why don't you turn that shit off!

The radio continues. Chad storms into the darkness.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

One Thug jumps up on Chad's STATUE and smears the face with lipstick and makeup. Two other Thugs fit a pink tutu around the waist.

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)

This old cowboy never tells you how the cow ate the cabbage, but there is one spur in my saddle. I hear the kids are practicing at the ranch of Chad Raines. If that's true, then all the Free Range cologne can't cover up a stink like that and guessing the makers would not be none happy about it either.

The Thugs jump back into the truck, PEEL OUT.

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Now, if you're with me on this, then I'm taking callers and ideas.

CALLER (ON RADIO)

Let's use Free Range to put pressure on Chad Raines and shut this team down.

EXT. BUNKHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cleaned up, Nathan leans against a porch post. Toby rubs Logan's shoulders.

In the distance Chester, Butch, and Albert PLAY GUITAR and SING. Nathan takes a few steps off the porch.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Chester PLAYS GUITAR, Albert BLOWS a harmonica and Butch SINGS. Nathan steps up to them. They stop, eyes on Nathan.

NATHAN

I was wondering if you happen to know any show tunes?

(Beat)

It doesn't matter which one. I know them all.

The men stare at Nathan -- a lifetime passes. Chester pushes his chair against the wall, goes inside. Butch follows. Albert looks at Nathan, then yells at Chester as he follows.

ALBERT

Hey, Chester. What's a show tune?

Nathan stands dejected.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - NEXT DAY

A row of five barrels spread out over the field. Zee on a horse. Tate and Blas hold the reigns.

Zee takes off, clears the first barrel, but turns too late for the second and knocks it over. She misses the third. Chad kicks the dirt in frustration, then points to Tate.

Tate gets on the horse, charges and makes it around three of the five barrels. Chad's a little more upbeat.

INT. CORRAL - CONTINUOUS

A lasso hits the calf and the rope pulls tight. Logan is jerked off his horse and dragged around in the dirt.

Nathan mounts. He chases a calf, misses.

Nathan ropes a calf. Jake runs to the calf, but can't get it off the ground. The rope comes loose from the saddle. The calf runs away. Toby watches with disappointment. Blas rolls spare ropes. Albert approaches.

ALBERT

Are you Indian or something?

BLAS

Nope.

ALBERT

Looks like face paint.

BLAS

If you want to try it sometime...

CHESTER (O.S.)
Simple! Get your ass over here...

BLAS
Hey, what's your real name?

ALBERT
It's Albert.

Albert elated, heads for the barn.

The Wilson truck pulls into the drive. Mark gets out.

EXT. PICKUP - CONTINUOUS

Mark leans on the open door of the truck. Toby approaches.

TOBY
What the hell do you want?

MARK
Brought you something.

Toby opens the package. Mark looks to the corral.

MARK (CONT'D)
How are they doing, by the way?

TOBY
The team's qualifying package --

MARK
Where is he?

TOBY
This is a closed practice.

Mark enters corral. Approaches Chad and team. Toby follows.

MARK
Look at you. Chad Raines.

CHAD
Who are you?

TOBY
Brother.

CHAD
The competition?

MARK
Just bringing the paperwork for
tomorrow's rodeo.

ZEE
Tomorrow?

Toby looks through the package.

TOBY
(Shocked)
Qualifying rodeo in Saltgrass.

The Team looks to Toby for assurances.

TOBY (CONT'D)
(To Mark)
You wait until now to spring this
on us?

MARK
The paperwork just came in. Look,
I didn't even know Cameron was
going to... All new teams have to
qualify before the Regionals.

LOGAN
I don't see how--

TOBY
Mark, get out.

MARK
Don't blame me. Just the messenger.

JAKE
Like hell you are.

MARK
You're going to get your asses
kicked tomorrow. I just might show
up to watch.

The team appears hopeless. Toby grits his teeth.

INT. SALTGRASS RODEO ARENA - EVENING

A full house of PATRONS. Many are waving signs, "No Support
for Queers" and "Buck the Fags". Rachel and Mark slip onto
the bleachers. Blas pulls out his phone and video records.

INT. ARENA - REGISTRATION TABLE - CONTINUOUS

The team lines up. Chad hangs out around a corner earshot of the table. He pulls his cowboy hat down not to be seen.

TOBY

Sign up for the events we talked about.

NATHAN

Then what?

TOBY

Then, Logan, you, and Blas tell them you've suffered an injury and I'm going to compete for you as your substitute.

JAKE

Hell, you can't do all those events.

LOGAN

Let me try this.

TOBY

(Ignoring Logan)

Don't you worry about me. This is a piece of cake.

LOGAN

But that's not the point.

TOBY

The point is we gotta win. Now get up there.

Jake steps up to the table. A REGISTRAR sits in floral polyester and big hair pulls a pencil out of her hair.

REGISTRAR

Name?

JAKE

Jake Williams and Nathan Stevens, team calf roping.

The Registrar pulls two numbers and hands them to the boys.

REGISTRAR

All right, honey, your numbers. Go out when your called. Next!

Blas steps up in his full black eyeliner.

REGISTRAR (CONT'D)
Oh, my. They have arrived.

BLAS
Blas Parker... Steer Wrestling, but
Toby Wilson will sub for me.

REGISTRAR
Here's the number... and what
should I put down is the problem?
On second thought, let's just leave
it to the imagination. Next!

LOGAN
Logan James, Saddle Bronc... but I
won't be able to ride today.

REGISTRAR
Let me guess... Toby Wilson will be
riding for you?

LOGAN
Yes, ma'am.

REGISTRAR
And what's wrong with you?

Logan turns around to Tate who is next in line.

TATE
Don't look at me.

Logan sees Chad. Chad indicates his crotch.

LOGAN
I have a crotch...

REGISTRAR
I can certainly rest easy tonight.

LOGAN
... crotch problem... I got kicked
in the balls.

REGISTRAR
Give Toby this number. He should
know what to do by now. Next!

TATE
Tate Hawkins, I'm a barrel racer.

REGISTRAR
You get kicked in the balls too?

TATE

No! Just give me my number.

REGISTRAR

Oh, I've got your number. Next!

ZEE

Mary Ann Gonzales.

JAKE

(Under his breath)

Mary Ann.

ZEE

(To Jake)

Shut it.

INT. BOOTH - LATER

Two announcers, THURSTON WHEELIS, a large man in overalls and ARLES STRUVIE, a thin man in a yoked cowboy shirt.

THURSTON

Well folks, it's time for the team calf roping competition starting with some new bucks on the circuit.

INT. ARENA

Jake and Nathan wait by the gate.

ARLES (V.O.)

Says they've never competed before. Wet behind the ears. Bet their mommas are waiting in the car.

The gate opens. Nathan lassos the running calf. Jake jumps off, but the rope comes loose from the saddle. Jake lunges for the calf and falls to the ground.

ARLES (V.O.)

Oh, that's too bad. The one that got away.

The calf turns and charges. The Crowd laughs.

THURSTON (V.O.)

Not so fast. This calf ain't quite through playing with these boys.

MONTAGE:

Zee KICKS her horse and charges the line of barrels in front of her. She rounds the first barrel, and then the second. The team cheers until the horse takes off on its own, skipping the rest of the barrels. The Crowd laughs.

Rachel seethes in her seat. Mark chuckles with them.

AND THEN...

The CHUTE OPENS and Toby comes out on a bunking bronco. He stays on, then the eight second BUZZER. The team cheers.

THURSTON (V.O.)

Another win for the kid from Hope,
Toby Wilson. With Scouts showing up
at the Regionals this year, I'm
sure this Wilson kid will get a lot
of attention.

The Crowd BOOs. Rachel cheers alone. Mark embarrassed.

ARLES (V.O.)

However, tonight it wasn't the
attention he was expecting for him
and his team.

NEXT...

Tate takes off, runs her barrels. She knocks over one.

NEXT...

Toby runs after a steer just released from a gate. He grabs it by the horns and wrestles it to the ground.

INT. BOOTH

ARLES (V.O.)

And that wraps it up from Saltgrass
Rodeo. I'm Arles Struvie.

THURSTON (V.O.)

And I'm Thurston Wheelis For the
exclusive rodeo radio channel.

INT. ARENA - LATER

Toby stumbles to the back of the arena dirty, exhausted. He collapses on a bale of hay.

Chad stands over the team's gear. He rolls up loose rope lying near the saddles. A SLAP on the back, Chad quickly turns to find DJ DOOLEY DALTON in his face.

DJ DOOLEY
DJ Dooley Dalton. Nice crowd
tonight.

Chad grabs his arm and pulls him off to the side.

CHAD
You were on the radio the other
night. You responsible for this?

DJ DOOLEY
My listeners need to know, you
queer, or just helping them out?

CHAD
None of your goddamn business and
you can tell your listeners.

DJ DOOLEY
The washed up Chad Raines. What's
going to be your legacy?

Toby and the team come up to get their gear. They notice Chad a few steps away. Chad's unaware, but DJ Dooley is.

Toby signals them to grab their gear and head out. Toby stops and listens to Chad and Dooley from a distance.

DJ DOOLEY (CONT'D)
Don't got a ride left in you. It's
over and all you got is pushing
cologne and god knows what else. I
don't think your demographic are
going to like what you're doing.

CHAD
My demographic, as you call them,
ain't going to know--

Toby approaches a little closer still unseen by Chad.

DJ DOOLEY
Without an endorsement check,
You'll be left with nothing.

CHAD
Well, I'm not going to tell them.

DJ DOOLEY

You think my employer just owns
this piss ant station? They're all
across the country. This will
spread faster than poison ivy.

Chad nervously shifts his feet.

DJ DOOLEY (CONT'D)

They're fags, not rodeo cowboys.
Besides Toby, they're no damn good.
(turns to leave)
You have a good night, you hear?

A panicked reaction...

CHAD

Wait a minute.
(loud whisper)
Don't you think I know that?
So what if I'm throwing them a
bone. This circus won't be in town
for long. Tell your listeners that.

Chad turns to go only to lock eyes with an exhausted Toby a
few feet away. Toby rushes out of the arena.

EXT. ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

Chad rushes up.

CHAD

Did real good tonight.

TOBY

For a circus. At least we gotta
spine and stand up for themselves.

Chad catches up, grabs Toby's arm and stops him.

CHAD

Fake injuries? They're going to go
out there and make a fool of
themselves at Regionals. Not
exactly your end game.

TOBY

I ain't got nothing else! You know
what that feels like.

Toby, hurt and angry, charges off.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Toby packs his duffle bag. The team packs up in silence. Toby readies to leave.

TATE

We qualified. So, what now?

LOGAN

No. Toby qualified. Some of us never got the chance.

TOBY

I'm too tired for this. I'll see you at school tomorrow.

NATHAN

So, that's it? You're quitting?

TOBY

I guess I had grand ideas about how this would play out. That's on me.

Toby leaves.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The phone RINGS in the living room. Chad picks up.

CHAD

This is Chad.

(beat)

Hey, Scott. You ready for me to push some cologne?

(beat)

What pressure?

(beat)

Wait a goddamn minute. There's no team. Let's do this.

Chad hangs up.

EXT. BUNKHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Toby heads for the dirt road.

INT. RAINES RANCH

Chad goes to the bar and pours. Chad swigs, pops a pill.

EXT. WILSON RANCH - NIGHT

Toby walks on the porch and drops his duffle bag. Tear stains are visible in the dirt on his face. He notices a LIGHT from the barn. He wipes his face.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Mark brushes down his horse.

 TOBY
 (entering)
 Where's mom?

 MARK
 Check the house?

Toby turns to leave.

 MARK (CONT'D)
 You were good.

 TOBY
 I don't give a--.

 MARK
 How about a deal? You come back to
 the team, me and all the guys,
 we'll lay off your friends.

 TOBY
 They wouldn't understand.

 MARK
 They'll think -- That's Toby
 looking out for us. Think about it.
 It's the right deal.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Nathan in the back. STUDENTS read to themselves. The TEACHER walks up and down the rows of desks. Nathan's blistered hand is wrapped in a pink bandana.

Blas watches videos on his smart phone hidden behind a book.

INT. MATH CLASS - CONTINUOUS

The TEACHER approaches Logan with her hand out.

TEACHER
I'll take that.

Logan looks up at her. He sits on a pillow.

STUDENT #1
What did you do over spring break?

STUDENT #2
Hell, like we don't know. Toby
must be hung like a horse.

STUDENT #1
Ride'em cowboy!

TEACHER
(snaps her fingers)
All right, that is quite enough!

Logan looks at the Teacher, defiant. She looks at him
curiously, then concedes.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Close books. Time for a pop quiz.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER

Cameron and Mark lean against a locker as Nathan, Blas, and
Logan walk down the hallway toward him.

The Boys hesitate waiting for the harassment. Mark and
Cameron ignore them as they pass.

The Boys flinch, but nothing happens.

INT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN - AFTERNOON

Toby saddles up a horse. Cameron, Mark, Taylor, and other
Rodeo Club TEAM MEMBERS practice in the barn.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN

Logan walks by the open barn door. Sees Toby. He pulls out
his smart phone.

LOGAN TEXT: Where are you?

INT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN

Toby stops. Reads the text. Responds.

TOBY TEXT: Home. Don't come by. Shit load of work.

EXT. SCHOOL PRACTICE BARN

Logan watches as Toby puts his phone away and mounts horse.

INT. BOBBY JOE BOBBY'S ROADHOUSE AND SALOON - EVENING

Chad slumps over five empty mugs of beer. Chester steps in and with a heavy SIGH, sits down next to Chad.

CHESTER

Thought I'd find you here.

CHAD

Have a beer on me.

CHESTER

Known you all your life. Hell, I changed you and your brother Daniel's diapers. I know you're wrestling with some demons and they ain't really none of my business.

CHAD

I can drink to that.

CHESTER

Appears you already done that.

CHAD

What did you want?

CHESTER

Butch gathering supplies for food and was wanting to know when the kids are coming back.

CHAD

You came all the way down here to ask me that? Tell him don't bother.

CHESTER

You ain't finished.

CHAD

More ways than one.

CHESTER

So, that's it? Good riddance to bad rubbish? I think those were Mack's words when Daniel left.

Chad pops a pill, chugs his beer. Chad pushes the mugs out of the way and lays his head down on the bar.

Chester GRUMBLES and SHUFFLES out.

INT. BARN - LATER

Mack beds a stall.

Chad stumbles in drunk. He enters an empty stall. Looks at words carved into the wood, "Daniel's - Keep Out". Chad steps out of the stall, looks at Mack.

CHAD

You think I'm a quitter?

MACK

You're a drunk.

CHAD

Four time national champion. I fall on my ass, I get right back up. Do you know how many bones I've broken? How many cracks I've got in my spine from not quitting?

Chad retreats into the stall. He finds old post cards covered in dirt pinned to the wood. One displays a tourism photo of Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hey, I was there a couple times.

Chad pulls a postcard from the rusted thumb tack. On the back it reads, "Sorry, I won't be home for your birthday. Watch me on T.V. I'll wave to ya. Tell mom I said I love her. Your brother, Chad".

CHAD (CONT'D)

Why didn't mom want me to come home?

Mack finishes. He heads for the door.

MACK

Now ain't the time.

CHAD

I'd say long overdue.

Mack stops, hesitates, then...

MACK

You're right. She was ate up with cancer, her whole body. She didn't want you to see her that way.

CHAD

Why didn't you call me?

MACK

You were always on the road. No telling where you were. Hell, I had to go through ten people to tell you she was dead.

Mack GRINDS his teeth, clinches his fists.

MACK (CONT'D)

She sat by that phone every day hoping you'd call.

CHAD

And what did you ever do for her?

MACK

I got on my knees everyday and prayed for God to take her, to stop her pain. And when I wasn't doing that I was cleaning her, changing her diaper, emptying her vomit.

CHAD

If you needed help, why didn't you go out and find Daniel?

Chad doesn't back down.

MACK

Leave it. I said leave it!

CHAD

He could have been with her.

MACK

I was ready to crawl on my hands and knees to get him to come home for her. I asked his high school friends... it was like he never existed.

(beat)

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)

Don't think I haven't beat myself
up everyday for kicking him out of
the house. And you, he loved you
and how did you treat him?

(beat)

We both let him down.

Mack walks out leaving Chad alone.

CHAD

(To himself)

Finally, something we agree on.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Logan, Tate, Nathan, and Blas sit in the grass.

BLAS

I need a horse.

TATE

Toby has a horse.

LOGAN

Let's not talk about him. Okay?

Zee and Jake walk up holding hands.

ZEE

We have an idea.

(To Jake)

Go ahead.

JAKE

Let's do it. Let's do the rodeo.

TATE

Yeah, well Toby's back with the
Rodeo Club.

LOGAN

We don't need him.

BLAS

They laughed at us.

NATHAN

They were laughing before.

ZEE

We've already qualified.

LOGAN

Who has our qualifying papers?

Tate pulls them out of her backpack and hands them to Logan.

EXT. OPEN RANGE - EVENING

Toby lies on a stack of hay bales. His usual spot away from the house.

The sun sets on the horizon. In the distance. A truck travels down the country road. Logan and Jake pulls up to the house.

Toby watches Logan walk up to the front door.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. WILSON HOUSE

Logan knocks on the door. Jake sits in the truck, watches. Logan holds the qualifying papers in his hand. Mark answers the door. Logan, slightly nervous, holds his ground.

MARK

Go home. He ain't here.

LOGAN

Here are our qualifying papers.
We're going to compete.

EXT. OPEN RANGE

Toby jumps down from the stack and jumps into his truck.

EXT. WILSON HOUSE

MARK

Toby's riding with me.

LOGAN

See you at Regionals where we're
going to kick your ass.

Mark bursts out LAUGHING. Logan and Jake drive off.

EXT. WILSON RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

Toby flies down the drive. He jumps out of the truck just in time to see Jake's truck drive off in the distance.

TOBY
 (To Mark)
 What did Logan want?

MARK
 Dropped off their qualifying
 papers. Guess they're going to go
 ahead and compete.

TOBY
 What?

MARK
 Said they don't need you.

Toby turns away hurt.

MARK (CONT'D)
 If you ask me, you're better off.

EXT. BOBBY JOE BOBBY'S ROADHOUSE AND SALOON - NIGHT

The parking lot is full. Jake parks the truck. Logan sits in
 the passenger seat.

They exit the truck decked in their best cowboy outfits.

JAKE
 The others should be here. And, for
 the record, I think you're nuts.

LOGAN
 You're supposed to be here for
 moral support.

JAKE
 My bad.

LOGAN
 Besides, I got to practice.

JAKE
 If you're going to do this, in
 front of God and everyone, try to
 last the eight seconds.

INT. BOBBY JOE BOBBY'S ROADHOUSE AND SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Logan and Jake enter. They approach the Hostess Stand.

HOSTESS
 Will you boys be eating tonight?

JAKE

This stud is here for Maverick.

Jake looks around and sees Tate, Blas, Nathan, and Zee sitting at a table with a basket of cheese sticks.

HOSTESS

Oh. Don't forget to sign the liability waiver... stud.

Logan and Jake walk the length of the bar. Logan's eyes are fixed on Maverick, the mechanical bull. At the bar, Jake cuts between two Rednecks, BERT and SUMNER.

JAKE

Hey, Bobby Joe. One for Maverick.

Bobby Joe stands at the tap.

BERT

You gonna ride that thing?

JAKE

Not me, he is.

The Rednecks look at a timid, yet determined Logan.

SUMNER

He looks like he can barely hang on to his mother's tit.

JAKE

My friend can outlast you.

BERT

Now, that's a bet I'm willing to take. I got twenty on Sumner.

JAKE

Yeah, well... I got twenty on Logan. You go first.

Jake and Bert lay bills on the bar.

Chad enters from the rest room. He sees the boys and takes his seat.

CHAD

Bobby Joe? I'm gonna need another.

Chad pulls out his bottle of pills and sets them on the bar next to his peanuts. Chad watches the interaction with great consternation as Bobby Joe sets a beer down.

Sumner gets up on the bull and yells to the crowd.

SUMNER

Yee haw! Bobby Joe, crank it up as high as it will go.

The bull moves. When it reaches full force, Bert and other CUSTOMERS count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5... then, Sumner flies off the bull and spills on a bale of hay.

BERT

Sumner you okay, you old fart!

(To Logan)

Okay, kid. You got to stay on for six. I'm guessing you won't make it to three.

Logan and Jake approach Maverick's pen.

SUMNER

(To Bert)

You know fairies can fly. Let's see how high she can go. What do you say, Chad?

Chad pops a pill and downs his beer.

Logan climbs up on Maverick. He raises his arm in the air and grips the handle tight. Jake gives an encouraging look.

All the PATRONS watch.

Logan gives Bobby Joe a nod.

The bull starts up. When it reaches full force, the restaurant Patrons shout.

PATRONS

1, 2, 3, 4, 5...

Logan's hand slips, but regain's his grip.

PATRONS (CONT'D)

...6, 7, 8!

Logan flies through the air and lands on a hay bale.

Jake jumps over the fence. He picks Logan up in a bear hug. Jake swings Logan around.

The Patrons CHEER, WHOOP and HOLLER.

Jake picks up the money and splits it with Logan.

JAKE

Let's eat!

Jake and Logan join the other kids at their table.

Chad, surprised and confused watches them join their friends.

INT. WILSON BARN - NIGHT

Toby brushes down his horse. Rachel stands in the doorway of the barn. She takes a moment to watch him.

RACHEL

You missed dinner.

TOBY

Not hungry.

Rachel approaches, touches his hair.

RACHEL

You're just like your father.

Toby pulls away.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Stubborn, bull headed.

TOBY

I'm not him.

RACHEL

I just worry.

TOBY

You remember when you taught me to rope my first calf? You told me I could do anything, be anything I want. Just be my best at it.

RACHEL

That's all I can ever ask of you.

TOBY

I'm trying real hard, but no one seems to understand that.

RACHEL

Toby, tell me what's wrong. Is this about your brother?

TOBY

No! I don't give a fu--

RACHEL

Language. If not your brother, then must be Logan. You two fight?

TOBY

I'm not sure what he's thinking sometimes. I do everything for him and he just gets mad.

RACHEL

Maybe that's not what he wants.

TOBY

I can't read his mind. It's like he's mad at me all the time.

RACHEL

Believe it or not, you both want the same thing.

Rachel exits the barn.

INT. BOBBY JOE BOBBY'S ROADHOUSE AND SALOON - LATER

Chad's chair is empty at the bar. Bobby Joe busses the half empty beer glass and grabs the bucket of peanuts revealing the bottle of pills Chad left behind. Bobby Joe looks around, then tosses the bottle in the trash.

EXT. BOBBY JOE BOBBY'S ROADHOUSE AND SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Logan, Tate, Blas, and Nathan, laughing as Zee and Jake with their arms wrapped around each other. Logan stops the group as he hears FOOTSTEPS on the gravel in the shadows.

Chad emerges into the light.

Logan sees Chad and charges. He pushes Chad who is not here to fight. He lets Logan have his moment.

LOGAN

Not the loser now, are we?
(to kids)
Let's get out of here.

CHAD

I just came out to say I was wrong. I had an idea about you and it was wrong... I'm sorry.

LOGAN

Sorry you gave up on us? Maybe that ain't good enough. We compete in two weeks.

JAKE

We want another night like this.

Chad looks over the eager group. He walks over to Logan and rubs his head. The bracelet dangles from Chad's wrist.

CHAD

Come by tomorrow ready work.

Chad heads out into a dark parking lot. The group STUNNED.

EXT. WILSON HOUSE - LATER

Chad steps up to the front door. He hesitates, then KNOCKS. He quickly removes his hat and waits. The door opens.

RACHEL

Chad?

CHAD

(recognizing her)
Rachel? Rachel Clady? Hell, it's been a long time.

Rachel steps out onto the porch, CLOSES the door behind her.

RACHEL

(cold)
Chad Raines.

CHAD

Toby Wilson. Damn! I should have made the connection. You married Carl Wilson. I heard he went off to the Gulf War.

RACHEL

He did. Just didn't come back.

CHAD

I'm sorry, I didn't mean... You and Carl were in Daniel's class.

RACHEL

I was surprised to hear you were helping the kids out. You didn't exactly make it easy for Daniel.

CHAD

We were all jerks in high school.

RACHEL

You teased him about kissing Junior Stevens in front of everyone. Think it was funny? Even after your friends beat the shit out of him?

CHAD

Not proud.

RACHEL

Daniel always forgave you. After all the grief. Have you asked him for forgiveness?

CHAD

I'm actually here to talk to Toby.

RACHEL

What do you want with my son?

CHAD

Just trying to make things right.

RACHEL

I'm sure Toby has his reasons.

CHAD

Would you at least tell him I stopped by and want to talk?

Rachel doesn't respond.

Chad hesitates, then steps off the porch and drives off.

Toby enters from the house.

TOBY

Who was that?

RACHEL

Where are you off to? It's late.

TOBY

Going to practice.

Toby steps off the porch and heads for the barn.

RACHEL

Toby?

Toby stops.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Don't let Mark or Chad get in the
 way of you and your friends.
 They're worth more than carrying
 around disappointment.

Toby continues to the barn.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Toby dresses. Looks at the photos taped to his mirror. He runs his finger down the photos of him with Zee, Tate, Nathan. He stops on a photo of Logan awkwardly wearing Toby's cowboy hat, then the same photo Logan has on his phone display. Toby smiles.

In the mirror Toby sees the reflection of the poster of Chad. He scrolls through his contact list. He stops on "LOGAN". Hesitates, then scrolls down to "ZEE". He presses talk.

TOBY
 Hola, es Zee allí?
 (Beat)
 Donde? Raines? The Raines' Ranch.
 Gracias.

EXT. RAINES RANCH - DAY

Chad and Logan sit on the rails of the corral. Jake and Nathan set up barrels. Blas and Tate prep the horses.

Chester and Albert stack hay bales near the barn. Albert watches them set up. He leaves the hay, walks to the corral.

BLAS
 If you're here to watch and laugh,
 you can just leave.

ALBERT
 I promise, no laughing. I just want
 to watch.

Chester sees the interaction and walks to the corral.

CHESTER
 Simple, you go on back to work.

ALBERT
 I'm going to watch my friend.

CHESTER
 I'm saying he ain't your friend.

ALBERT

Why not?

CHESTER

He's different, that's all and do what I tell ya.

ALBERT

I'm different.

CHESTER

It ain't the same.

BLAS

Different is cool. Albert, you're cool. Feel me?

Albert smiles. Albert reaches his hand through the corral rails. Blas shakes it and adds a few extra hand gestures.

INT. CORRAL - CONTINUOUS

Blas on a horse runs barrels. Chad times him. He knocks half over. Jake resets.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. BARN

CHESTER

Okay, Albert. Back to work.

Albert and Chester head back to the bales of hay.

INT. CORRAL

Blas watches Albert walk away.

Tate makes the run. She knocks over one barrel. Jake resets.

Chad, disappointed resets the stopwatch.

CHAD

Zee, you're up.

Zee makes a clean run.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Not bad. Next time better time.
(to team)
Let's move on to bronc riding.

BLAS
Jake, reset.

Blas mounts the horse. He looks to Chad.

Chad starts the stop watch.

Blas takes a deep breath, closes his eyes and kicks the horse. He's off and makes a clean run.

Chad-clicks off the stopwatch. He smiles.

The team jumps off the rails to congratulate Blas.

Blas breaks away from the team and runs to the rails. He raises his arms in the air and holds until he gets Albert's attention.

Chad looks at Blas and then Albert.

CHAD
Folks, you have a winner.

EXT. BARN

Albert and Chester stop and look at a defiant Blas with his arms still in the air.

Albert climbs to the top of the hay bales. Albert raises his arms in the air just like Blas.

CHESTER
What are you--

Chester looks at Albert, then Blas. Removes his hat and scratches his head.

INT. CORRAL - LATER THAT DAY

Logan looks at Chad who is poised, ready with the stop watch. Jake holds on to the chute door and waits for a cue from Logan. Logan gives Jake a nod. The chute opens.

The horse bucks and throws Logan around. Logan keeps steady with one arm in the air. Chad counts and gets louder the closer to eight seconds Logan gets.

CHAD
Four, five, six, seven, eight!
That's it. Get off!

Logan jumps down from the horse.

JAKE

That's what I'm talking about.

Logan isn't in the mood to celebrate. He looks down the drive to a quiet road.

Chad steps up behind Logan.

CHAD

Sorry, sport. He ain't coming.

LOGAN

I miss him.

Chad hesitates and places his hand on his shoulder.

CHAD

Come on. It's getting dark soon.

INT. TOBY'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Toby, alone on his bed. He hasn't moved all afternoon.

Rachel steps into the doorway, then sits next to him as the glow of the sunset washes over them.

RACHEL

Gorgeous isn't it? Helps put things in perspective.

Toby remains still and quiet.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Chad stopped by the other night says he needs to talk with you.

TOBY

He's just like everybody else. Everyday, I think I got it all figured out. And then...

Toby moves to the mirror. Pulls off the pictures of his friends. Tosses them on the dresser. He stops on Logan.

TOBY (CONT'D)

I just gotta stick to the plan.

Toby pulls Logan's picture off.

RACHEL

You've set them up to fail by riding with your brother. You realize that?

Rachel moves to the dresser and picks up the picture of Toby and Logan together.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You heard about Logan and the bull?

TOBY
What bull?

RACHEL
Seems he beat Sumner Phillips in a
showdown on Maverick at Bobby
Joe's.

Toby's shocked.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(hands Toby the picture)
That boy can sure surprise you.
He's a keeper. Don't blow it.

INT. RAINES DINING ROOM - EVENING

Mack, Chester, Butch, and Albert finish eating at the dining room table. Chad has a renewed energy.

CHAD
They really looked good today. I
never seen kids work harder--

MACK
A rodeo. What's it going to prove?

CHAD
Prove to yourself that you can do
it even if others don't. Self
respect.

MACK
You ask me, they should straighten
up and act right. That'll get'em
some respect.

CHAD
Didn't work so well for Daniel--

MACK
You watch your tongue.

CHAD
Why? We should talk about it, not
just sweep it under the rug?
(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

We know it's coming out. DJ Dooley will make certain of that.

BUTCH

No one's saying... It's just too painful, that's all.

Simple angrily picks at his food.

ALBERT

(under his breath)
Different is cool.

CHAD

And the pain started here. It was my fault, all of us. Started with Daniel and we just let it go on, Daniel and not these kids today.

MACK

Daniel was nothing like those kids.

CHAD

By God he was. The only difference was he didn't have someone to fight for him. Well, maybe it's my turn.

ALBERT

Different is cool!

CHESTER

Simple, shut it.

ALBERT

No! And my name is Albert!

Albert charges out.

Chad looks at each of them, heads down. The point made. He leaves. Chester and Butch frozen. Mack tosses his fork.

MACK

Hell, just lost my appetite.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - NIGHT

Zee and Jake play cards on one of the bunks. Tate lies on a bunk, watches Jake with a wary eye. Blas and Albert sit at the table and apply war paint on each other's faces.

Zee seductively looks at Jake. He doesn't get it. She grabs his shirt collar and both sneak out.

BLAS
 (To Albert)
 Let me show you something.

Blas pulls out his phone and plays a video for Albert.

Zee and Jake rush by Chad coming in.

The video is a short collage of their practice with DJ Dooley's voice over, the Saltgrass crowd with signs, then of Logan's ride at the Roadhouse.

Chad watches from a distance. Albert and Blas unaware.

Ends with a posed picture from their first day at the ranch. Everyone happy and Toby proud.

BLAS (CONT'D)
 (noticing Chad)
 Hey, Chad.

CHAD
 You know, Simp... Albert here is a very good photographer. Albert, you should take Blas up to your room and show him.

BLAS
 I would like that.

Albert, excited, grabs Blas' hand and they exit.

Chad smiles. His attention is drawn to Blas' smart phone lying on the bunk. He picks it up. Frozen picture on the screen. He hits play and watches.

Chad CHUCKLES and sits on the bunk. He sends the video to a post on his own Facebook page.

CROSS CUT TO:

TOBY'S BEDROOM

Toby lies on his bed refreshing his message thread from Logan. Nothing appears. DING. A Facebook message appears, "Chad Raines posted a video."

Toby plays the video.

EXT. RAINES RANCH

OFF SCREEN MUSIC, Chester PLAYS GUITAR and Butch SINGS.

Toby slowly rolls down the driveway unnoticed with his headlights off. Before he reaches the house, he pulls to the side and turns off the truck. He exits.

EXT. BUNKHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

MUSIC OFF SCREEN continues...

Nathan leans against the porch post looking up at the night sky. Nathan hesitates, then steps off into the darkness.

EXT. RAINES RANCH PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Chester plays guitar and harmonizes with Butch to TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS.

BUTCH

(Singing)

See them tumbling down/
Pledging their love to the ground/
Lonely but free I'll be found/
Drifting along with the tumbling
tumbleweeds.

Cares of the past are behind/
Nowhere to go but I'll find/
Just where the trail will wind/
Drifting along with the tumbling
tumbleweeds.

Nathan walks on to the porch. Butch stops in mid lyric. Chester stops playing.

CROSS CUT TO:

EXT. BUNKHOUSE

Toby steps up on the porch and looks through the window. The Bunkhouse is empty.

EXT. RAINES RANCH PORCH

CHESTER

Why'd you stop?

Chester turns and sees Nathan on the porch.

BUTCH

We don't want no trouble. You just go on back to the bunkhouse.

Nathan stands his ground, sings with a smooth country twang, "WAITIN' FOR THE LIGHT TO SHINE" from the musical BIG RIVER.

NATHAN

(Singing)

Far beyond horizons I have seen/
Beyond the things been, beyond the
dreams I've dreamed/ Are the
things I've done...

CHESTER

Go on, get out of here.

NATHAN

(Singing)

In fact each and everyone/ are the
way that I was taught to run.

BUTCH

He don't listen too good.

NATHAN

(Singing)

I am waiting for the light to
shine/ I'm waiting for the light
to shine/ I have lived in the
darkness for so long/ I'm waiting
for the light to shine.

Chester and Butch look at each other in silence. Chester leans his guitar against the porch. He stands toe to toe with Nathan with a mean dog glare. Nathan doesn't move.

CHESTER

Well?

NATHAN

(Voice cracks)

Well, what?

CHESTER

That was different.

BUTCH

Different?

CHESTER

That's what I said.

CHESTER (CONT'D)

Never heard it before, but sang it
good, I guess.

BUTCH
 (To Nathan)
 Are you just going to stand there,
 or are you going to get a chair?

INT. ALBERT'S BEDROOM

Tidy. The walls covered with photographs. Albert sits on his bed. Watches Blas admire the photos. Blas stops on a picture of a bluff over looking a colorful canyon.

BLAS
 I know this place. I used to go
 there when I needed to remind
 myself that...

ALBERT
 Everything was going to be okay.

BLAS
 Yeah.

The MUSIC from the porch rolls in through the bedroom window.

EXT. RAINES RANCH PORCH

Albert, with a big smile, runs out the front door to join them. Logan, Zee, and Tate sit on the steps of the porch. Blas joins them. It's a regular campfire gathering.

The music starts up again with the boys SINGING and Nathan HARMONIZES.

EXT. RAINES BARN - CONTINUOUS

Toby lurks in the shadows of the barn. He hears the sound of boots in the dirt moving toward him. He looks into the darkness, then suddenly...

Chad grabs Toby and pushes him into the barn.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. RAINES BARN - CONTINUOUS

Toby stumbles in. One of the horses, spooked, WHINNIES.

CHAD (O.S.)
 You back?

TOBY
I wanted to see Logan--

CHAD
(entering barn)
Can't unless you're with the team.

EXT. BARN

Mack walks by and hears the conversation. He approaches the door. Remains out of sight.

INT. BARN

TOBY
It's more than just winning for me.
It's about giving a damn. Something
you don't know much about.

CHAD
You don't know me.

Chad grabs leather tools and repairs a saddle.

TOBY
You don't know me either. We needed
a group, I started one. People push
us, I push back. Nothing stands
between me and my friends.

CHAD
Just yourself.

TOBY
The hell you say! I'm trying to
protect them. Unlike what you did
to Daniel.

Chad turns from Toby as if punched in the gut. He fidgets with his bracelet.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Mom told me all about it.
If it was me, I'd get in my truck
and go see him. Be his brother.

CHAD
Glass houses, boy.

TOBY
Well, why don't you?

CHAD
 (Angry)
 Because.

TOBY
 You're just to chicken sh--

CHAD
 (punches the barn wall)
 I wish I could! He hung himself
 before I had the chance! You happy?

EXT. BARN

Mack, devastated walks into the darkness.

INT. BARN

Toby is struck silent.

CHAD
 I wish I could take back all the
 bad decisions I've made in life.
 When you're young and stupid, it
 makes you blind from seeing the
 others you care about. Ain't a day
 goes by that I wish I could get in
 my truck and go pick him up, bring
 him home.

TOBY
 Mom didn't tell me--

CHAD
 Hope's best kept secret.
 (grabs a rag for his
 bloody knuckles)
 I got him beat up real bad. Daniel
 came home bloody and bruised. Mack
 found out and--

TOBY
 Went and kicked their asses.

Chad gives Toby a 'get real' look.

TOBY (CONT'D)
 (off Chad's look)
 I can hope.

CHAD

Not in this town. This is Hope's purgatory. Instead, he told Daniel he got what he deserved. Then, threw him out of the house.

Chad grabs Toby's shirt collar and pulls him out of the barn.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

The music from the porch still fills the air.

Chad let's him go and points to the porch. Toby sees Logan sitting alone from the others.

CHAD

Do you not like him? Cause he looks for you all the time.

TOBY

Logan was thrown out once. Stayed with me for a while. My mom, me... hell, all of them, we talked some sense into his parents. Down deep I had hoped he would just stay.

CHAD

What the hell is wrong with you? Toby turns to leave when Chad grabs his arm. Toby jerks his arm from Chad's hand.

TOBY

I made a deal to protect them.

CHAD

Ride with your brother, those knuckleheads?

TOBY

I was out of options.

CHAD

They're strong. Respect is what will protect them... believe that. Regionals is tomorrow. What's it going to be?

Toby disappears into the dark night.

CHAD (CONT'D)

(Calling after Toby)
Life is too short for regrets.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - DAY

It's Regionals day. The team sits quietly on the ends of their bunks, scared like troops ready to go into battle. The door opens and Chad enters.

CHAD

It's the big day. How are we doing?

The team, like deer in headlights, makes Chad a little uneasy. He holds hat in hand...

CHAD (CONT'D)

I reckon this would be the time when Toby would say something encouraging.

LOGAN

(to Chad)

Hey, sport. He's not coming. As much as we all hoped.

Chad turns and looks at Logan. They both look at each other with shared disappointment.

JAKE

Let's get the hell out of here.

EXT. ARENA - EVENING

The County Fairgrounds Rodeo Arena lies center of rows and rows of cars. A large banner over the entrance reads "TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL REGIONAL RODEO".

Rows of tents line the walk to the front entrance, hawkers selling raffle tickets to the latest farming equipment. Media trucks, REPORTERS, and cameras add to the circus.

A dozen PROTESTERS picket with signs that read "FAGS BURN IN HELL" and "MOMMA DON'T LET YOUR SONS GROW UP TO BE QUEERBOYS". Local DEPUTIES keep the Protesters from obstructing the PATRONS near the tents.

FANS stand around the radio truck of DJ Dooley who's inside doing his show on site.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Frank Williams sits at his desk. He opens an email from Jake with a link to a YouTube video, Blas' video. He opens it and watches. He notices the two million views.

The comments at the bottom encourage people to show up at the rodeo in support. He dials the phone.

FRANK WILLIAMS

Darlene, call all the teachers. I want them at the rodeo.

EXT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Toby runs along the row of cars leading up to the Arena. Plates from Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Arizona... a GROUP of TRAVELERS pile out of a car from Oklahoma.

He stops and approaches.

TOBY

Hey, you guys come all this way for the rodeo?

TRAVELER #1

Here to support that GSA from Hope's High. The YouTube video?

TOBY

Video?

Toby finds the video with his smart phone. He watches.

INT. ARENA - DAY

The bandstands filled with a sold out crowd. Cameras are set up in the upper corners of the arena. A Jumbo-tron hangs from the center with full color display.

In the audience PEOPLE wave signs that say "FAGS DON'T RIDE HORSES" and "JESUS SAVES YOU A PLACE IN HELL". Other folks wave rainbow flags, signs that read, "PFLAG SUPPORTS OUR KIDS" and "GOD LOVES NOT HATES".

Rachel sits in the stands nervous and concerned.

INT. ARENA - TEAM BLEACHERS

Banners for each of the schools in the competition line the top of the bleachers: "HOPE, PINE ELLIS, FAIRVIEW, and CIMARRON.

The bleachers overlook the dirt arena floor.

Jake sits behind Zee rubbing the tension out of her shoulders. Blas chews on his black fingernail polish. Nathan slaps Blas' hands from his mouth.

Tate sits calm and collected while Logan stares into the distance in shock. Chad gives Logan a comforting hand around the scruff of his neck.

CHAD

All right, you're all checked in.
All you have to do is wait for your
names to be called.

Logan grabs his mouth and speeds behind the bleachers. PUKES. He sits on straw bales with his head between his knees.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. ARENA ENTRANCE

Toby scans the CROWDS OF PEOPLE. Moves around concession stands looking. In the distance he sees Logan slumped over. Toby, rushes through the CROWD.

INT. ARENA - TEAM BLEACHERS

Logan looks up and sees Toby pushing through the Crowd. Jumps up on the straw bale.

LOGAN

Toby!?!

Toby and Logan hug. Toby pulls him under the bleachers.

TOBY

Damn, I missed you. I stopped by
last night--

LOGAN

Toby, what are you doing?

TOBY

I'll never let you down again.

Logan throws his arms around Toby. A forgiving moment. Logan grabs Toby's arm and drags him in front of the bleachers.

Chad lights up at the sight of Toby.

The team, emotionless, stares at Toby.

Chad's enthusiasm fades as he looks upon the Team and Toby.

TOBY (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry, and if you could let me back in, I want to help you win this.

ZEE

That's not good enough.

NATHAN

You got some splaining to do.

TOBY

I screwed up. I'll fill you—in later. What you need to know now is I broke a deal by coming back. They're going to come down hard.

LOGAN

Let'em bring it.

The team jumps up and welcomes Toby back.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. PRESS BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Thurston and Arles address the crowd over microphones.

THURSTON

Well, hello everyone this is Thurston Wheelis.

ARLES

And I'm Arles Struvie with the exciting play by play of tonight's Texas High School Regional Rodeo.

THURSTON

Tonight, four schools, Hope, Pine Ellis, Fairview, and Cimarron bring various teams to compete. You know Arles, this night has been met with a turnip truck full of controversy.

ARLES

Sit back and we'll get this rodeo
under way in just a few minutes.

INT. RAINES RANCH

Chester tunes the radio. The VOICES of Arles and Chester
come in with static. Chester tunes.

ALBERT

That's it Chester.

CHESTER

Settle down now, Albert.

THURSTON (ON RADIO)

Yes indeed. Sure as I know my
momma's teeth come out. So did
these kids that represent the team
from Hope High School.

ARLES (O.S.)

Out like a light.

THURSTON (O.S.)

Out of left field.

ARLES

And their coach, Chad Raines.

THURSTON

Who I'm certain is out of a job.

ARLES

Bless his heart.

Mack steps into the living room. Chester sees him and jumps
up and shuts the radio off. They all freeze.

MACK

What are you doing?

CHESTER

Nothing Mack. Just doing a little
sitting.

ALBERT

And listening to the rodeo.

BUTCH

Look here, Mack. We can just mosey
on out of here if you want.

MACK

I got someplace I need to be.

Mack leaves. Chester turns the radio back on.

INT. RADIO TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Chad steps into the Radio Truck Booth.

DJ DOOLEY

Well, strike me dead. It's National Champion, Chad Raines. Come on over here. I was just about to share some interesting information with my listeners. Let's start with those high school queers.

Chad walks up to the microphone.

CHAD

Well, I've never worked with a group of kids so dedicated and passionate--

DJ DOOLEY

(Laughing)

Let's leave it there, this is a family show.

EXT. RAINES RANCH - CONTINUOUS

Mack sits in his truck. He looks at the radio, hesitates. Curious, he turns it on and listens to DJ Dooley's show.

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)

We know it would be a freak of nature. But, if they win, you can count on every other region in the state following suit with their own fruit teams. What do you think that will do to the sport?

CHAD (ON RADIO)

Competition's good for the sport.

DJ DOOLEY (ON RADIO)

And what about your career and your sponsors?

CHAD (ON RADIO)

I had a brother who was gay and didn't give him the support he needed. Guess I'm just trying to do right by these kids.

Mack turns over the truck and takes off.

INT. RADIO TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

As Chad's commitment builds, so does his excitement.

CHAD

Did you see those cars out there? There are people from all over, here to support these kids. There are a lot of different cowboys and cowgirls in this world and if my sponsors don't see that, then they're blind as well as stupid.

DJ DOOLEY

When this rodeo is over and all those people go back home, what happens then?

CHAD

We all go back home and watch the same sunset, breath from the same air. And maybe, some day, we'll remember this day and a bunch of kids who just want to rodeo.

INT. PRESS BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Thurston picks up a piece of paper from the desk.

THURSTON

I just got a notice from parking security that it appears we have a pickup in the parking lot with its lights on. Sorry, no license plate number.

ARLES

Well, now... that'll clear the arena.

THURSTON

Now, folks before you go running outside, there is a clarifying feature.

(MORE)

THURSTON (CONT'D)

It seems there is a bumper sticker on the back that says Peace not War.

ARLES

Got to wonder if they're even in the right place?

THURSTON

That is a distinct possibility, but if that is your truck I wouldn't stand up right now and make yourself known.

ARLES

Good advice.

THURSTON

Now, if you're keeping score tonight, remember this is a team rodeo event. That means it will be the accumulation of all points that will determine the winner. Individual scores don't matter.

ARLES

It don't.

THURSTON

No sir... each team is just going to have to fight it out.

ARLES

Brother against brother.

INT. ARENA - LATER

MONTAGE:

Barrels set in the Arena. COMPETITOR #1, from Fairview takes off when the TIMEKEEPER drops the flag to signal the start. She makes the run. One barrel missed.

COMPETITOR #2, from Pine Ellis runs the barrels. A clean run.

Tate mounts the horse and waits for the Timekeeper to give her the signal. Timekeeper drops the flag and Tate is off and running. She makes a clean barrel run.

Chad hovers over the THREE JUDGES at a table just off the Arena floor.

Tate brings the horse back to the starting point and watches the score board on the back wall of the arena. Numbers come up, second place. Arms raised, she exits the arena and high fives Chad standing on the side. A mixture of CHEERS and BOOS from the audience.

INT. ARENA - LATER

Nathan and Jake wait atop their horses. Their eyes are locked on the chute. Nathan grips his lasso tight.

Jake looks up into the stands. His father, Frank Williams, stands up and waves to his son. Jake smiles.

The chute opens, the calf takes off running. Nathan and Jake are close behind. Nathan hits the calf and it stalls in the dirt. Jake jumps off and quickly brings the calf on its back and ties the hooves.

The arena goes silent. Jake and Nathan watch the score board, frozen. Their number comes up, first place. They jump up and down and smack chests in the middle of the arena. Nathan grabs his chest in pain. Jake raises his arms in the air to the crowd. Rachel explodes with applause. More CHEERS than BOOS.

INT. ARENA - TEAM BLEACHERS - LATER

Blas walks up to the team.

BLAS
Third place.

TATE
Hey, little man. It's okay.

BLAS
Okay? It's great! I'm just glad
to be alive.

In another part of the bleachers Mark and Cameron watch Toby's team.

INT. ARENA - TEAM BLEACHERS ACROSS - CONTINUOUS

Mark sees Blas congratulated by Tate.

MARK

(to Cameron)

You should have seen him the other day. He couldn't keep a barrel up. Now, he placed.

CAMERON

Lucky fag.

(Beat)

So, what was Logan's standing in the bronco ride?

MARK

Second Place. I'm up next.

CAMERON

You better pull off first.

Mark exits the bleachers.

INT. ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

Mark readies himself in the chute.

THURSTON (O.S.)

Up next is Mark Wilson representing the Rodeo Club of Hope High.

ARLES (O.S.)

A Senior this year, hoping to take home first.

The chute opens. Mark is bucked around the arena. He stays on for the limit. The HORN sounds and Mark jumps off. As he pulls his leather gloves off, he watches the score.

First Place. He raises his arms to applause. Rachel jumps from her seat.

INT. ARENA - TEAM BLEACHERS ACROSS - CONTINUOUS

Taylor slides up beside Cameron.

TAYLOR

Hell, yes. How does Mark help us?

CAMERON

That means that Toby has to place in the bull riding event. So, I guess we can count on them placing.

TAYLOR
Maybe winning.

CAMERON
Not if I can help it. Follow me.
I've got an idea.

INT. ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

Mark exits near the chutes and sees Taylor and Cameron grab Toby and shove him into a Janitor's Closet. Cameron grabs a board and wedges it in the door. Mark approaches.

MARK
What the hell are you doing?

CAMERON
Making sure they don't win. You think I'm going to let them go home with twenty thousand dollars?

MARK
Come on, Cameron. Now you're taking it too far.

CAMERON
Bro, you stick up for him over me?

Mark lunges for the board. Taylor grabs and holds Mark while Cameron approaches him with clinched fists.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black. Toby beats on the door screaming...

TOBY
Let me out, god damn it!

INT. ARENA

Mark falls to the ground, bloody lip. Taylor stands, arms crossed, between Mark and the board.

CAMERON
You go near that board and we'll crush you.

MARK

I never realized how much Toby scares you. A queer can't be better than you? Is that it?

TAYLOR

Shut the hell up, Mark.

MARK

Fine. And remember, I only have one bro and it ain't you.

Mark storms off.

INT. ARENA - TEAM BLEACHERS

Logan paces in front of the team.

ZEE

Logan, will you sit down?

LOGAN

The bull riding is up next and I haven't seen Toby.

ZEE

He'll be there.

INT. PRESS BOOTH

THURSTON

Next up, in the bull riding is contestant, Toby Wilson.

ARLES

Been doing real well on the amateur circuit.

INT. ARENA - TEAM BLEACHERS

A nervous team waits in anticipation.

LOGAN

He's not on the bull.

ZEE

Go talk to the Judges. I'll see if I can find him.

Logan races off. Zee runs into Mark.

MARK
Where's Chad?

ZEE
Go to hell.

MARK
(Frustrated.)
Look, Toby's in a real jam--

JAKE
You heard her, go to hell.

The team races off to find Toby. Mark is left alone.

INT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Logan and Chad run to the Judge's table. Three veteran COWBOYS sit at the table scribbling notes on their tally sheets. Logan addresses JUDGE #1.

LOGAN
We're looking for Toby Wilson.
He'll be here any minute.

JUDGE #1
Well, that's about all he's got.
If he isn't on that bull in one
minute the chute opens and he's
disqualified.

LOGAN
No, no. You have to wait.

Jake runs up to Logan.

JAKE
We can't find him. You're going to
have to do this.

JUDGE #1
You're on his team aren't you?

LOGAN
Yes.

JUDGE #1
What are you standing here for?

Logan hesitates.

CHAD
Come on, Logan. You can do this.

Logan runs to the bull chute. He pulls his gloves on and mounts the bull. The BULL HANDLERS ready the chute. Chad helps Logan get up and ready. Logan pounds his fingers tight on to the rope.

LOGAN

I'm supposed to do that, right?

Chad smiles, pushes Logan's cowboy hat tight on his head.

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET

Taylor stands alone. He's caught off guard when Mark CHARGES and knocks him down.

INT. ARENA - CHUTE

Logan talks out the procedure.

The Bull Handlers look at Logan and break out laughing. Chad gives them a stern look. The Handlers stop laughing.

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET

Struggling with Taylor, Mark uses his boot and kicks the board from the door. Cameron appears and grabs Mark. Taylor and Cameron drag Mark out of sight.

The door flies open. Toby runs out just as the BUZZER sounds.

INT. ARENA - CHUTE

The chute opens. Logan leans into the bull.

INT. ARENA

Toby RUSHES to the ARENA WALL. He follows the wall watching as Logan barely stays on the bull. Then, the eight second buzzer RINGS. Toby yells.

TOBY

Ye haw! That's my cowboy.

Toby's excitement quickly turns to concern.

Logan stays on the bull, his hand caught in the rope. He jumps off, hand still caught. Logan tries to keep up with the bull as it continues to throw him around.

RODEO CLOWNS charge in to calm the bull down, with no affect.

Toby jumps the Arena Wall and charges after Logan. He reaches Logan and works with his hand. Logan and Toby lock eyes, Logan terrified.

Logan's hand freed, he falls to the ground. Toby releases the bull and scrambles out of the way. The bull circles around and stomps on Logan several times.

Chad runs out into the arena. He helps the Clowns chase the bull out. Toby runs to Logan who is out cold.

The Crowd silent.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Somebody! We need help here!

PARAMEDICS from the sidelines run out with a stretcher.

INT. ARENA - EXIT

Chad and Toby follow the stretcher out the exit door.

Zee, Tate, Jake, Nathan and Blas run up to see the stretcher leave the Arena.

Mark watches the stretcher load in the ambulance. The Paramedics work on Logan.

CHAD
He's going to be okay. I'm going to check on his score.

Toby looks at Chad. Chad rests his hand on Toby's shoulder.

CHAD (CONT'D)
He's going to ask as soon as he wakes up.

Chad takes off. Toby sees Mark and approaches him.

MARK
Toby. I tried--

TOBY
Was this the plan all along?

In the background, the SQUAWK of the speakers.

ARLES (O.S.)
It's a tie. The Hope High Rodeo Club and...
(MORE)

ARLES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 well tighten your suspenders folks,
 it's the Hope's High Gay Straight
 Alliance.

Mark and Toby stand two to two as they listen.

THURSTON (O.S.)
 A good old fashioned show down. For
 any Rodeo Scouts in the audience,
 this is how we do it in West Texas.

Rachel makes her way to Toby.

RACHEL
 Toby. I'm going to try to reach
 Logan's mother. If they take him to
 the hospital, I'll go with him.

TOBY
 I'm going with you.

RACHEL
 You need to stay and finish this.
 (To Toby and Mark)
 Both of you, finish this.

Rachel exits.

INT. PRESS BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Thurston thumbs through a regulation handbook.

ARLES
 I guess the town of Hope isn't
 laughing now.

THURSTON
 Kind of hard to laugh with a darn
 foot in your mouth.

ARLES
 Size thirteens, if you ask me.

THURSTON
 Folks, according to the rules, each
 team must select a final event and
 one player. So, team captains,
 report the event and rider to the
 judges stand.

ARLES
 In the mean time, take a visit to
 Betty Jo's Funnel Cakes.

THURSTON

I think all this tension has given me the munchies.

ARLES

Just getting up in the morning gives you the munchies.

THURSTON

So, if you want a funnel cake, you better get a move on.

ARLES

Move! Before Thurston gets there.

INT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Cameron and Taylor take their place behind Mark. A face off with Toby's team. Chad walks up between the two teams.

CHAD

I've been working with the Judge's table. Each team must pick a rider and agree on an event.

MARK

I'll ride.

CAMERON

Like hell. You're likely to throw it. I'll ride.

Toby looks at Mark confused.

CHAD

Toby?

TOBY

Somebody else's gotta do it. I need to stay with Logan.

ZEE

Toby, I get it. But no one else can do this and you know it.

TOBY

Then, just tell them it's over.

TATE

Like hell! We haven't worked this hard for you to just give up.

NATHAN

You wanted this... now we all do.
Even Logan. Do it for him.

Toby looks over the group. Blas gives him an affirmative nod while the others are defiant in their position.

TOBY

(resigned)
Let's get this over with.

Mark pulls Chad to the side.

MARK

Make it bronc riding. It's Toby's
strongest event, but not Cameron's.

Mark pleads with his eyes. Chad looks at Mark with compassion. He turns back to the teams.

CHAD

What do you say to a little Bronc
riding?

TOBY

Bring it on.

Toby and his team walk off.

Cameron grabs Mark's arm tight.

CAMERON

Get in my way--

MARK

(pulling away)
Just keep it clean.

INT. ARENA - LATER

The two teams, separated, wait by the chute for their turn. Cameron climbs into the chute, gets on the horse.

THURSTON (O.S.)

Based on the coin toss, the Rodeo
Club will go first.

The chute opens. Cameron, bucked all around the Arena. Hangs on. The crowd counts the seconds on the clock... ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN... The horse tosses Cameron in the air.

ARLES (O.S.)
The Rodeo Club finishes with a
tremendous time of seven seconds.

THURSTON (O.S.)
Now if Toby Wilson's team wants to
be this year's Regional champion--

ARLES (O.S.)
And take home the prize--

THURSTON (O.S.)
He'll have to come out with a
perfect eight seconds.

Toby walks up to the chute. Chad stops him.

CHAD
Keep forward. You can do this.

Chad takes Daniel's bracelet and ties it on Toby's wrist.

CHAD (CONT'D)
It's always brought me luck.

TOBY
You never said where you got that.

CHAD
Daniel. Swore I would never take it
off until I found him. I'd say he
found me instead.

Chad slaps Toby on the back as Toby walks to the chute.

CROSS CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

Paramedic holds Logan still unconscious. The other Paramedic
pulls Logan's arm and resets his dislocated shoulder.

Logan wakes and sits up ready for a fight. The Paramedics
calm him down. Logan SCREAMS in pain.

INT. ARENA - CHUTE

Mark approaches Toby on the horse.

TOBY
If you've come here to talk shit,
you can save your breath.

MARK

You listen to me, little bro--

TOBY

Get out of my face.

MARK

This last year, we've done nothing
but bust each other's balls.

TOBY

What's your point?

MARK

Nail this, god damn it! The Toby I
know... He'd show those smug son's
of bitches. Show them you're
better than all of us.

Mark jumps down off the fence. The anger in Toby's face
melts as he watches Mark walk away.

Jake jumps up and SHAKES Toby back into the game. Toby
reassures Jake with a look, readies for the ride.

INT. AMBULANCE

Logan in a sling argues with the Paramedics.

LOGAN

I'm not going. Now, let me out!

PARAMEDIC

You need X-rays.

LOGAN

I need to see Toby.

RACHEL

(to Logan)

Come on.

(to Paramedics)

I'll bring him back and then we'll
go... I promise.

PARAMEDIC

Are you family?

RACHEL

Close enough.

Rachel throws open the ambulance door.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ARENA

The Chute opens. The Horse throws Toby around. The crowd chants: ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE...

Logan and Rachel approach the arena wall.

Toby sees him.

The crowd continues... SIX... Toby flies off the horse. The Crowd goes SILENT.

Zee, Jake, Tate, Nathan, Blas, and Mark jump the wall.

Toby lies in the dirt.

The Crowd watches intently as the seconds feel like hours waiting for the final seconds to flash up.

The silence and the tension is thick as Toby's time finally displays on the scoreboard, 6.93 seconds.

Cameron, Taylor, and the rest of the Rodeo Club jump up and SCREAM in celebration of their win.

INT. PRESS BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

ARLES

Mercy. Not sure how I'm feeling in this moment.

THURSTON

Like I've been kicked when I'm down.

ARLES

It is, it is, it is.

INT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

The team is stunned as is the Crowd. Logan moves close to Toby frozen in the dirt and squats down next to him.

TOBY

(covering his eyes)
I'm sorry.

LOGAN

Come on, get up. Let's go home.

Toby doesn't move. The team grabs him and drags him to his feet. Toby feels the stares of all the eyes from the stands.

Chad walks out on to the dirt. He locks eyes with Toby and stands toe to toe with him.

CHAD

(to Jake)

Give me a hand.

Chad leans down and grabs Toby's leg. Jake follows. They lift Toby up on to their shoulders.

The Travelers from Oklahoma stand and CLAP. Others join until the entire arena is on their feet CLAPPING.

LOGAN

There it is. What it was all for.

INT. ARENA - LATER THAT NIGHT

The sound of the cheering crowd faded away. Chad stands in the empty arena, looks up in the stands. A few JANITORS sweep the trash and toss protest signs into the garbage cans.

Mack walks up to the arena wall, hat in hand. Chad keeps looking into the empty stands.

MACK

That kid going to be all right?

CHAD

Logan? He's tougher than you think.
You watch the rodeo?

MACK

You should be proud of them.

CHAD

That I am.

MACK

You know, I watched every time you
were on T.V. We all did.

CHAD

You ever proud of me?

MACK

No more than I am today.

Chad realizes that's the best apology he's going to get. He looks at Mack, the most vulnerable we've ever seen him.

CHAD

Pop... Doc says it's over for me. I can't ride no more.

MACK

Hell! I've got plenty for you to do. Besides, The Hands would like you to stick around for a while.

Mack SLAPS his hat on his leg, puts it tight on his head and walks for the door.

MACK (CONT'D)

Don't stay out late. It's going to be an early morning.

Chad takes another long look at the stands.

TOBY (O.S.)

What's next?

CHAD

I think I'll stick around here for a while. You gonna be all right?

Toby ties Daniel's bracelet on to Chad's wrist.

TOBY

It's good to be home.

Chad hugs Toby, then pushes Toby away and gives him a playful kick in the butt. Chad heads out of the arena.

CHAD

I'll see you at the rodeo.

As Chad leaves he walks by Logan who sits on the arena wall. Chad pats Logan on the chest.

CHAD (CONT'D)

You go get him tiger.

Logan jumps down and walks up to Toby.

TOBY

What were you thinking getting up on that bull. I should kick your ass for doing something so stupid.

LOGAN

It definitely won't happen again.

TOBY

I hear Bobby Joe is renaming the
mechanical bull after you.

LOGAN

Should have been there.

Toby kisses Logan with the force to make up for many he
passed up.

INT. ARENA ENTRANCE

Chad turns and looks back to see the embrace. He smiles as if
he is seeing true love for the first time. As he turns to
leave he sees Rachel sitting on a bleacher. He tips his hat
with a wink. He exits.

FADE OUT.

THE END