

BRECKMAN RODEO

"Pilot"

Written by

Steve Lerner

CAA/Leah Yerushalaim  
Brillstein/Natalie Covault

FXP/Freeform  
Executive Producers:  
Joe Weisberg and Joel Fields

5TH STUDIO DRAFT 2.21.18

TEASER

ON BLACK:

The rising murmur of a CROWD. Whistling. Clapping.

As the crowd builds to a **ROAR**, we --

SMASH TO:

EXT. RODEO ARENA - NIGHT

**A GIANT BULL.** White and brown mottled. Filed-down horns. **2000 POUNDS** of heaping, thick **MUSCLE**. It **WHIPS AROUND** like an electrified spring, murder in every stuttered jump.

The arena floor's dirt is chunky, fresh, has the rich, honest smell of livestock. **SPONSOR BANNERS** -- Skoal, Boot Barn, etc. -- line the ring and the stadium.

**BRIGHT STADIUM LIGHTS** draw **HUNDREDS OF FANS** in stark relief, casting shadows through the arena. The fans shout, stamp their feet, pray.

And the *rider* -- **VINCENZO** (18) -- handsome, wiry, cocksure. Rodeo personified. Riding like a master.

A **JUMBOTRON** counts up milliseconds -- 6.8 ... 7.1... 7.9...

A **BUZZER SOUNDS** and applause erupts. *8 seconds.*

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Wow! What a ride!

Finally, near a **STAR-EMBLAZONED BARREL** central in the ring, Vincenzo rolls off the bull, into the soil --

The bull turns on him, incensed, not finished yet --

Vincenzo looks up at it, fear cresting his features for the first time -- *I could die right here* --

And **MILES** (16) **BURSTS OUT OF THE BARREL**. His face pancaked in greasepaint, his baggy denim overalls fringed, Miles is not an easy clown to ignore.

Which is exactly what Vincenzo is counting on. Miles darts between Vincenzo and the bull, drawing its eye --

The bull turns its malevolent attentions on Miles and **CHARGES AT HIM** --

And Miles CLAMBERS UP THE ARENA FENCE. The bull's horns stab only air.

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Whooh! That's some angry beef!

A SCORE appears on the Jumbotron -- 81.6.

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)  
81.6! That's a first-place score  
for Vincenzo Rodriguez!

The crowd cheers accordingly. Vincenzo PUMPS HIS FIST. Then turns toward Miles, who's returned to the bull ring dirt, the bull safely penned away.

Vincenzo slaps his shoulder and they run at each other, launch into a MID-AIR SHOULDER BUMP, whooping.

VINCENZO  
You see that? You see that?!

Vincenzo hooks an arm around Miles's neck, yanks him close.

VINCENZO (cont'd)  
You're my boy Miles! You're my  
goddamn boy!

Vincenzo shoves Miles free and turns to the crowd. THRUSTS HIS MUSCLED ARMS UPWARD, exhorts their cheers with a BELLOW.

The crowd eats it up. This is masculinity; this is rodeo.

EXT. RODEO ARENA - LATER

But rodeo's not just masculine. Not just about dominance.

Three smaller barrels -- all emblazoned "WRANGLER" -- are set up in a wide triangle through the ring.

**ASHLEY** (17) sits astride a muscled MARE. She walks it sideways to the starting line, a stuttering shuffle, barely keeping it reined in. This horse wants to *run*.

And then -- the horse *does*. She SPRINTS, Ashley leaning over her, long dark hair STREAMING BEHIND HER --

The horse gets to the first barrel, then, with the smallest of thigh pressure from Ashley, executes a TIGHT 270 DEGREE TURN, then turns for the second barrel --

Executes another turn -- the barrel TILTS and the crowd GASPS, but it rattles around and stays upright --

Ashley rounds the last turn of the cloverleaf pattern and SPRINTS STRAIGHT FOR HOME --

And blazes in, the whole sequence less than 20 seconds. Applause is drowned by the heavy CHUFFING of the sweaty horse. Ashley gently rubs the horse's forehead, her back.

Rodeo's about love, too.

EXT. RODEO ARENA - LATER

But not now. Right now we're at BAREBACK BRONC, over at the rough stock pens. The most physically taxing rodeo event.

Ashley coaches up **BRANT** (17, All-American) as Brant calmly straddles a pen -- a **FEARSOME BRONC** chuffing inside.

ASHLEY

She's gonna bust right out the pen,  
and she tends to lean low --

BRANT

Ash.

ASHLEY

You really gotta be careful to stay  
off your rope --

BRANT

Ash. Babe. I got this.

We're going to see plenty of insecurity in Brant over the course of the show, but right now he's all confidence. He flashes a smile destined for a GQ spread.

Then he leans in and gives Ashley AN ABSOLUTE TOE-CURLER OF A KISS. Ashley can't suppress a pleased blush.

ASHLEY

Stay tough out there, cowboy.

Brant WINKS.

BRANT

Toughest guy you know.

Brant LOWERS HIMSELF ONTO THE BRONC.

The Bronc BUCKS against him in the pen but Brant holds fast. Bites down on his MOUTHPIECE. Leans back to a 135 degree angle. Cocks his right arm upright at 90 degrees, grabs a THIN STRAP with his left. Locks his chin to his chest.

Then -- sharply, with authority -- Brant **NODS**.

**BANG!** The door SLAMS OPEN and the horse LURCHES out, bucking furiously -- WHIPLASHING Brant's whole body violently, mercilessly, *but Brant's staying on --*

We briefly notice Ashley, watching her boyfriend with an expression of more than support. Closer to envy.

We might not be experts, but we can tell *Brant is very good at this --*

But at 6 seconds -- BRANT FALLS. Rolls on the ground.

The horse PIVOTS -- **REARS UP**, ITS FRONT HOOVES PINWHEELING OVER BRANT --

**AND STOMPS DOWN.**

END TEASER



INT. BRANT'S TRUCK - SAME

Where Brant drives the truck, delighting in the new-car exhilaration, squeezing the steering wheel leather.

His CELL PHONE RINGS -- "DAD." He picks up, and looks in the rearview -- makes eye contact with Chucky, driving the "old" truck (about 4 years old) right behind him.

BRANT

Yeah Dad.

CHUCKY

You keep driving like a grandma and we're gonna be late for practice.

Brant grins into the mirror. FLIPS HIS FATHER THE BIRD. And **GUNS IT**.

Chucky guns it in response, and we FOLLOW THEM THROUGH --

EXT. CHEYENNE - DAY - MONTAGE

Where we see:

- The "Welcome to Wyoming" sign, featuring the slogan: **"FOREVER WEST"**
- A 40-year-old sign for the "Cheyenne Motel" featuring a faded, cartoony waving cowboy
- The train depot, with PAINTED 4-FOOT-TALL BOOTS out front
- CATTLE MOOING across the street from a strip mall

And finally, the trucks turn into a **RODEO COMPLEX** sporting a NEW SIGN: **GRAY BRECKMAN RODEO FACILITIES**.

SMASH TO:

EXT. BRECKMAN BULL RING - AFTERNOON

**WHUMP!** **TUFFY** (16) hits the dirt, hard. Tuffy's big-boned -- about 60% Longbottomed -- and more than a little bit white trash. He grabs two handfuls of arena dirt.

TUFFY

Shit.

Miles -- the rodeo clown from the teaser, now out of makeup, looking like a typical scrawny high schooler -- draws the disinterested bull away from Tuffy.

Chucky watches from the edge of the bull ring.

CHUCKY  
That bull's half-dead, boy! How  
you gonna let it throw you?

TUFFY  
Got a bad mount. It jumped on the  
mount.

CHUCKY  
Whose fault is that?

Tuffy grunts. Chucky turns and jogs off toward his truck.

CHUCKY (cont'd)  
All right! It's that time!

Miles gives Tuffy a hand up.

MILES  
Rough mount.

TUFFY  
Yeah, yeah.

We move to the --

LONG TRACK

Where Brant and Vincenzo (the bull rider from the teaser) hold lassos near a PLASTIC CALF ROPING DUMMY.

Brant's left arm is in its sling; Vincenzo holds his own left arm behind his back. (Roping is definitely a two-handed endeavor; imagine using a lacrosse stick one-handed.)

But still, Brant manages to twirl a loop above his head, and weakly THROWS IT -- over the neck of the dummy.

BRANT  
Does it bother you that I'm better  
at roping with one good arm than  
you are with two good arms?

VINCENZO  
No, cause I ain't got two good  
arms.



Vincenzo throws his own one-arm loop -- misses badly.

VINCENZO (cont'd)  
I got two *great* arms. Muscular,  
defined, gentle.

Brant snorts.

VINCENZO (cont'd)  
Any man can be strong. Takes a  
great man -- with great arms -- to  
be gentle.

Brant shrugs. Might be right.

Chucky emerges from his truck holding A CUPCAKE WITH A LIT  
CANDLE IN IT.

CHUCKY  
(loud)  
Okay, birthday bronc time!  
Eighteen years, eighteen seconds on  
the bronc!

And now, we move to the --

BLEACHER AREA

Where Tuffy talks with **KIRBY** (28, assistant rodeo coach,  
Shoshone). Kirby smacks her stomach.

KIRBY  
Engage your core more, squeeze your  
stomach to your...

Kirby watches as Brant makes quick eye contact with  
Ashley -- our barrel racer from the teaser. Ashley nods as  
she moves toward the bull ring.

KIRBY (cont'd)  
Stomach to your spine. That's your  
power. Gotta do your sit-ups.

Kirby jogs off toward the bull ring. Tuffy follows.

TUFFY  
(grumbling)  
Hell you know about riding bulls.

BULL RING

A series of loud metallic BANGS ring out as fences open,  
marshalling a BRONC into a rough stock staging pen.

Brant quickly BLOWS OUT the cupcake's candle.

BRANT

Dad, I ain't gonna ride today.

CHUCKY

What are you -- it's birthday bronc time, you always do birthday bronc.

BRANT

My shoulder, I can't move it right.

CHUCKY

Doc cleared you.

BRANT

I know what he said, but I'm feeling it, it ain't moving right.

CHUCKY

So you're -- this is rodeo, everybody rides hurt. There's a horse in the pen for you. Get on the horse.

As Chucky and Brant argue, Ashley quietly moves up to the staging area, behind Chucky. Kirby runs up to her.

KIRBY

I haven't even got to ask him about it.

ASHLEY

You ask him he's gonna say no. Come on. Brant's stalling for us.

KIRBY

Just not sure it's the best time.

ASHLEY

Coach I'm gonna do this right now. I'd appreciate your help but I'm going either way.

Kirby sighs and jogs down into the ring. Positions herself in front of the bronc's pen.

Ashley runs to the staging area. Pops in a MOUTHPIECE and a NECK PAD, RUBS HER FACE. Then **CLIMBS ONTO THE HORSE.**

One by one, our characters notice Ashley as she MOUNTS THE HORSE. She assumes the pose -- back at 135 degrees, arm locked at 90 -- like she's been practicing. *Like a pro.*

Brant stares beyond his father at her. His smile betrays more than pride -- a bit of awe, too. He loves this girl.

CHUCKY  
I don't understand why this is even  
a question...

Chucky turns and follows Brant's eyes to Ashley.

CHUCKY (cont'd)  
Oh what is this circus shit --

**BANG!** Kirby YANKS OPEN THE DOOR and --

Ashley rides a bucking bronc. The first time anyone here has seen a woman ride one.

The men and Kirby all watch her ride, with varying expressions -- excited surprise from Miles, disdain from Chucky, etc. -- but most importantly --

She stays on. She's not great. But she *rides*.

For about five seconds, anyway. The horse WHIPS SIDEWAYS, sending Ashley AIRBORNE. She hits the ground on hands and knees, rolls over. Punches the dirt, disappointed.

Kirby gives her a hand up.

KIRBY  
Not too terrible.

EXT. BRECKMAN COMPLEX - NIGHT

Brant's brand-new headlights are on and Luke Bryan BLARES from the parked truck's cab. Brant, Ashley, and Vincenzo lean against the hood.

In the light, Miles country swing dances with **SAMANTHA** (18, striking, not a rodeo "type"). Or he tries to, anyway.

Miles is all elbows, and it shows -- particularly as he twirls Samantha the wrong way and BONKS her into his arm.

SAMANTHA  
No, come on, you know when it feels  
right. Try again.

MILES  
Literally none of this feels right.

But Miles twirls her the right direction, and they resume for a bit, until Vincenzo steps forward.

VINCENZO  
Miles I'm sorry! The music's in my  
bones! I gotta dance!

Miles doesn't bother hiding his relief as he steps aside. Vincenzo takes Samantha's hands --

And they're *electric*. They dance fluidly, effortlessly, so damn beautiful that even their friends are impressed.

BRANT  
(to Ashley)  
Hope you don't expect any of that  
from me.

ASHLEY  
I sure don't love you for your  
dancing, babe.

A SHITBOX JEEP pulls up and parks. Tuffy hops out, a big bag of Taco John's and a carrier of drinks in hand. He hands Brant a credit card and a few burritos.

TUFFY  
(routine)  
Thank you for dinner, Brant.

BRANT  
Thanks for grabbing it.

The song ends and Vincenzo pulls Samantha into a dip and KISSES HER DEEPLY. Tuffy clears his throat.

TUFFY  
Putting your root beer by the  
passenger wheel, V.

VINCENZO  
(muffled through  
kiss)  
Thank you.

Vincenzo pulls Sam up and they join the rest distributing food on the hood of Brant's truck. As they eat:

SAMANTHA  
So does this whole Ashley bronc  
thing mean Ms. White is gonna get  
fired?

ASHLEY  
Kirby will be fine.

TUFFY  
I ain't ever seen Coach Jamison  
that mad.

BRANT  
That's why we did it today. Can't  
get that pissed at me on my  
birthday.

MILES  
Is it a genetic thing to get that  
red? Brant, can you do that?

BRANT  
When the Broncos lose.

Samantha poaches a tater tot from Vincenzo's carton.  
Vincenzo grabs a spare carton and offers it to her.

SAMANTHA  
I just want yours.

Vincenzo rolls his eyes and pours some extra tater tots into  
his pile. Samantha kisses his cheek.

TUFFY  
So Ashley.

ASHLEY  
Yes Tuffy.

TUFFY  
Who pissed you off? Was it Brant  
or Coach Jamison?

ASHLEY  
...what are you talking about.

TUFFY  
You rode the best event of your  
boyfriend and your coach. Which  
one are you getting back at?

BRANT  
Oh boy.

VINCENZO  
Tuff...

MILES

Tuffy have you ever met a woman before.

ASHLEY

You think I got on that bronc for them? To show someone up?

TUFFY

I mean...

ASHLEY

I got on there because I want to ride bronc.

SAMANTHA

Ashley, when you brushed your teeth this morning, what man did you do it for?

Tuffy's flushing, feeling the tide of the conversation turning against him --

TUFFY

I'm just saying --

MILES

Last time you went to the bathroom, which man gave you permission to do it? Was it Tuffy? Because he is not authorized, we've been over this, we've had multiple security breaches at Man Headquarters, and if these protocols --

Samantha SLAPS THE HOOD.

SAMANTHA

Miles Monologue!

BRANT

Miles Monologue here people! We got a live one!

MILES

That was like two sentences! It needs to be at least five before you call Miles Monologue.

The group is laughing, Miles included; making fun of Miles and Tuffy is part and parcel.

Samantha grabs Vincenzo's soda, but he doesn't see.

VINCENZO  
 I do love me a good Miles  
 Monologue --  
     (notices Samantha)  
 No, wait --

Samantha sips from Vincenzo's cup -- then **SPLUTTERS EVERYWHERE**. The group goes silent. Sam GLARES at V.

SAMANTHA  
 God damn it.

Samantha storms off. Vincenzo chases after.

VINCENZO  
 Hey -- babe, you don't gotta --

As they leave, Ashley sniffs Brant's cup.

BRANT  
 Come on.

EXT. BRECKMAN COMPLEX - LATER

Samantha leans against the hood of Vincenzo's truck, arms crossed. Vincenzo sits inside the truck, equally sullen.

Brant and Ashley come out, assess the situation.

ASHLEY  
 Sam, you want a ride?

VINCENZO  
 No, god dammit. I can take my  
 drama queen girlfriend home.

Brant leans in the passenger window.

BRANT  
 You good to drive?

VINCENZO  
 Yes.

Brant stares at him for a bit, then nods to Ashley.

BRANT  
 He says he's good to drive, he's  
 good to drive.

ASHLEY  
 We can still take you home, Sam.

Sam sighs.

SAMANTHA  
It's okay. Thanks though.

She climbs into Vincenzo's truck.

INT. VINCENZO'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Vincenzo and Samantha drive in sullen silence. Finally:

VINCENZO  
Picked up some onesies for your  
cousin's baby shower, by the way.  
Got little aliens on 'em.

SAMANTHA  
Thanks for doing that.

Sam stares out the window. Vincenzo chews on his cheek.

They pull up outside of Sam's run-down house. Dead yard.

VINCENZO  
What do you want, Samantha? I'm  
sorry, all right? Do you want me  
to beg? What do you want?

Sam sighs.

SAMANTHA  
You always make me feel like I'm  
some shrieking drama queen. But  
I'm not. I just have one condition  
and I'm done fighting you on it.  
Thanks for the ride.

Sam unbuckles and opens the door.

VINCENZO  
Hey -- we ain't done talking.

SAMANTHA  
Yeah we are. Bye, Vincenzo.

Samantha shuts the door and heads towards her house.

VINCENZO  
The hell is that supposed to mean?

But she doesn't look back.



INT. SAMANTHA'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

And now we understand why Samantha is so hung up on alcohol.

The grimy, worn house looks like a boozy hurricane hit it. At least 12 empty beer bottles scattered throughout. You can almost see the stale-beer stench.

At a central couch, unshaven and snoring, lies Samantha's FATHER (50). A mostly-empty bottle in his hand. Drooling.

Samantha moves to her father and, in a practiced motion, drapes his arm over her shoulder and pulls him upright.

SAMANTHA

Come on. Bedtime.

He MUTTERS AND SPITS, leaning heavily on her, as Samantha walks him to his bedroom.

INT. FUNES BARN - DAWN

Dawn light spears through high windows in the reasonably modest family barn. A SHEEPDOG sits alertly in the corner.

Ashley and her father **ZANE** (40's) GROOM HORSES in preparation of morning chores. **OLIVIA** (5) helps out as best as she can, squatting over a PLASTIC GROOMING KIT.

ASHLEY

(to Olivia)

Ok, now which one?

Olivia points at a SOFT BRUSH. Ashley scrunches up her face. Olivia points at a DANDY BRUSH and Ash nods with a wink. Olivia hands over the dandy brush, grabs her own.

ZANE

Tough to find good help these days.

ASHLEY

You could always hire a ranch hand.

ZANE

Just as soon as one of your mother's scratchers pays out.

Zane smiles at his daughters.

ZANE (cont'd)

Hey, Pastor Timothy says you hopped on a bronc at practice.

ASHLEY

Got tossed pretty quick, but. Felt good to get up there.

ZANE

Goodness, I'da loved to see the look on Chucky's face. Very funny prank.

ASHLEY

Wasn't a prank. I'm gonna ride.

Zane frowns.

ZANE

This some kind of rebellion thing?

ASHLEY

No. I break horses out here. Might as well do it for money.

Zane shakes his head as he tosses a saddle onto his horse and secures the ties.

ZANE

People are gonna talk.

ASHLEY

Can't help that.

Zane thinks about saying something else. Decides against it. He hops onto his horse and trots out of the barn.

Ashley and Olivia continue grooming. After a moment Olivia looks up at Ashley, eyes big.

OLIVIA

You're gonna ride bucking bronco in the rodeo?

ASHLEY

Yes ma'am.

Olivia nods somberly, then returns to the horse's legs.

After a moment Olivia's hand snakes into Ashley's. Ashley looks down at her little sister with a smile.

They groom the horse together.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BRECKMAN BULL RING - MORNING

We're at a DROP BARREL -- basically a seesaw with a barrel on one end and a handle on the other.

Ashley straddles the barrel as Brant PUMPS THE HANDLE, sending Ashley up and down in a reasonable facsimile of rough stock riding. Kirby stands nearby, coaching.

KIRBY

Back on your pockets... you're rounding your back, keep your core tight... stay off your rope! How many times I gotta -- stay off your rope, dammit!

Ashley tries to slide back and goes too far -- loses her hip-hold -- and FALLS TO THE GROUND. Hard.

Brant jogs over as Kirby stands over her.

KIRBY (cont'd)

If you ain't gonna take this seriously I'm not gonna waste my time coaching you.

Kirby storms off. Brant watches after, perplexed.

BRANT

Wonder what's got into her.

Brant offers Ashley a hand up but she ignores it, gets up on her own. Dusts herself off.

ASHLEY

Let's go again.

BRANT

Maybe we oughta take a break.

ASHLEY

You need one?

Brant pats his bicep.

BRANT

With these guns?

ASHLEY

Then let's go. We can take a break  
when I get it right.

Brant looks at her admiringly as she remounts the barrel.

BRANT

Mighty rodeo of you, Ms. Funes.

ASHLEY

Darn tootin.

INT. GRAY BRECKMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

**GRAY BRECKMAN** (52, magisterial) sits at his desk. His office is opulent, full of pictures of Gray with various celebrities -- including Wyoming's own Dick Cheney.

Ashley, still a bit dusty from hitting the dirt, sits across from him, swallowing her nervousness.

ASHLEY

I know it's unusual, Mr. Breckman,  
but I've been training with Coach  
White for months, and there's  
nothing in the rules against it --

GRAY

Ms. Funes, I admire your moxie, but  
let's be serious here. I created  
this rodeo syndicate to celebrate  
rodeo, not to mock it.

ASHLEY

Mock it? Sir, I want to honor  
rodeo by riding, not mock it --

GRAY

We're not experimental, and we're  
not into stunts. I brought you on  
as a barrel racer, and Breckman  
Rodeo will happily pay your stake  
if you want to barrel race.  
Anything else, you'll have to pay  
your own way.

Ashley takes that in. Takes a breath. Then nods firmly.

ASHLEY

Thank you for your time.

INT. GYM - AFTERNOON

Brant, Vincenzo, Miles, and Tuffy work out together, doing DUMBBELL SHRUGS.

Miles, though the weakest, works the most intensely. Tuffy, the youngest, is the strongest by a mile. Between sets:

MILES

Saw Purity Ring is coming to Denver next month. Anyone wanna go?

TUFFY

What ring?

VINCENZO

Nobody knows the bands you like Miles.

MILES

Heathens. You are all heathens.

BRANT

I would, but. Gonna be on the road next month.

MILES

Definitely going pro, huh?

BRANT

That's what the truck's for.

MILES

Well, not to be that guy, but in case you don't have that guy, it's never not a good idea to get your high school diploma. Nobody is ever like "I wish I didn't get that diploma."

VINCENZO

People might say, "I wish I didn't waste that year of being a rodeo star in social studies," though.

BRANT

Sorry, which one of you is the angel on my shoulder?

Vincenzo shoots a sultry glare at the mirror.

VINCENZO

I'm no angel.

Miles notices Tuffy picking up TWO HEAVY DUMBBELLS.

MILES

Jesus Tuffy. Was your Dad a bull?

Tuffy considers.

TUFFY

Well. Suppose it's possible.

BRANT

Thank you for putting that image in my head, Miles.

Miles tips an imaginary cap.

MILES

What's Ashley think of you going pro?

VINCENZO

I thought we said we weren't talking about girls today.

MILES

We said we weren't talking about Sam. Our bronc rider's fair game.

BRANT

She's the boss. I wouldn't do it if she didn't want me to. But she's behind me.

MILES

You aren't worried about long distance or all that?

VINCENZO

Jesus Miles. We're all gonna miss him, but let the man make his choice.

BRANT

Well. I am, but. Think I got a way to have my cake and eat it too.

INT. FUNES HOME - KITCHEN - EVENING

Ashley's home is quaint, rural; old couches, faded scratchy quilts, Bible-verse needlepoints on the walls.

Ashley and her mother **KYLA** (40's) put the finishing touches on a homegrown dinner. Olivia sets the table. Zane comes in and beelines for the sink, washes his hands.

ZANE  
Something smells good.

The family brings the plated food to the table. Ashley looks to her father.

ASHLEY  
Can I have two hundred bucks?

Zane blinks.

ZANE  
Not gonna butter me up or anything first?

ASHLEY  
Gray won't pay for me to ride this weekend.

ZANE  
Ride barrel racing? Or bronc?

Ashley frowns as they sit down at the table.

OLIVIA  
Ashley's gonna ride bucking bronco in the rodeo.

ZANE  
I know what we're discussing, dear.  
(to Ashley)  
Honey, if you wanted to dye your hair purple, I wouldn't stop you, but I wouldn't pay two hundred dollars for it either.

ASHLEY  
That's not -- Mom, will you --

KYLA  
Say grace, Ashley.

ASHLEY  
Mom.

KYLA  
Say grace.

Ashley looks at her mother. Then reluctantly folds her hands and closes her eyes.

EXT. FANTASTIC SAM'S - PARKING LOT - EVENING

Sam stands in front of the raised hood of her **BEAT-UP JUNKER TRUCK**, fiddling with the engine. She's good with this sort of thing, good at fixing stuff that breaks --

SAMANTHA

Shit! God damn it!

-- but this truck, and its **HISSING HOSE**, are beyond simple fixes. She wipes oil from her hands onto her shorts, then pulls out her cell phone. Two rings, then --

VINCENZO (O.S.)

Hello?

SAMANTHA

Truck broke again. Can you pick me up?

VINCENZO (O.S.)

Wait -- but I... I was under the impression we were broken up.

He's speaking slowly and carefully, but it's obvious --

SAMANTHA

Jesus. It's five. You're drunk?

INT. VINCENZO'S BACK HOUSE - SAME

Vincenzo's back house (think converted shed) is as messy and clothes-strewn as you'd expect. A number of **CRUCIFIXES** on the walls. **WHISKEY AND BEER BOTTLES** throughout.

He shoots to his feet, **KNOCKING OVER A WATER GLASS** -- he scrambles to control the spill and put it upright.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

VINCENZO

I'm not drunk, I had two drinks, but I'll come --

SAMANTHA

No. Do not come. I won't get in the car with you.



VINCENZO

Sam --

SAMANTHA

Why do I have to *tell* you to not drive drunk?! Why is that a thing someone has to tell you?! Jesus! I'll call someone else.

VINCENZO

Sam!

But she's hung up.

Vincenzo stares at the phone in his hand.

VINCENZO (cont'd)

God *damn* it.

INT. MILES'S SEDAN - SUNSET

Miles drives his excessively suburban Civic as Samantha stares sullenly forward.

Suddenly Sam reaches for her purse.

SAMANTHA

Pull over.

MILES

We're like five minutes --

Sam pulls out a FLASK.

SAMANTHA

I'm about to open container you. Pull over.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SUNSET

By sheer cinematic coincidence, Miles has pulled over at a vista overlooking the city. It stretches for a few miles -- malls, schools, parks -- but wilderness lies just beyond.

Miles and Samantha sit on the trunk of his car. Miles sniffs the mouth of the flask.

MILES

One part bad whiskey, two parts cinnamon.

SAMANTHA  
I know. I love it.

Sam takes another swig. Eyes the flask.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)  
I'm such a hypocrite.

MILES  
If anybody's earned the occasional  
after-work drink, it's you.  
Frankly, you've earned a better  
alcohol. And if I were to --

SAMANTHA  
Don't Miles Monologue me. I like  
what I like. Hipster.

A comfortable beat. Then Sam digs around in her purse.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)  
Wanna see something funny?

Sam hands over an OPENED ENVELOPE. Miles takes out the  
enclosed paper and scans it, his eyes widening.

MILES  
Wait -- what the hell is this?

SAMANTHA  
That is the most selective cosmetic  
school in the tri-state area,  
accepting my application.  
(shakes her head)  
I'm such an idiot.

MILES  
Wait -- how did I not know about  
this? How am I just finding out  
about this now?

SAMANTHA  
I didn't think I'd get in! I only  
ever told Vincenzo. And it's not  
like I can go. I can barely afford  
to live now, so it's not like I can  
add on tuition, or leave my Dad, or  
Vincenzo right now... it was stupid  
to apply.

MILES  
Where is this school?

SAMANTHA  
Colorado Springs, U.S.A.

MILES  
Sam. Sam, Jesus. You need to go.  
We'll figure out the rest. Get  
your Dad in a home, get a job out  
there, leave Vincenzo behind.

SAMANTHA  
Miles --

MILES  
Him not making you better is one  
thing. We know he's not making you  
better. That's established. Him  
holding you back, though... Sam,  
you need to do this.

Sam looks down. She's knows he's right.

MILES (cont'd)  
You're already the best est... est-  
the... beautician.

SAMANTHA  
No, come on, we practiced this.  
Aesthetician.

MILES  
Fine. That. You're already the  
best one of those in Cheyenne.  
This, this will make you the best  
one in the whole tri-state area.

SAMANTHA  
All three states.

MILES  
Yeah. I said it. All three.  
People will come from miles around  
to have their hair done by the  
brilliant Samantha Brown.

Samantha takes a swig. Lets herself think about it.

MILES  
Listen. I'll come with you. We'll  
live together and have a white  
picket fence and a whole litter of  
kids and be in love.

Sam grins up at him.

SAMANTHA

Can you imagine? Living in a city?  
A place where more than one person  
can know you're gay?

MILES

As a matter of fact, yes I can.

SAMANTHA

God, you could be a typical gay  
friend. That'd be nice. You could  
watch The Bachelor and tell me when  
my butt looks good in jeans or  
whatever.

MILES

Your butt always looks good, Sam.  
You're frustrating that way.

Sam smiles at him. Bops his shoulder with hers. He bops  
her shoulder back.

They watch the sunset.

FADE TO:

INT. BRANT'S ROOM - NIGHT

A very un-porny ORGASM.

Ashley, propped up on her elbows, reaches down and pulls  
Brant's head up from between her legs.

These kids are virgins, but they know exactly where that sin  
line is.

Ashley, panting, offers a high-five. Brant accepts.

ASHLEY

Nice... nice work there, buddy.

BRANT

I'm no hero, ma'am. Just doing my  
job.

Brant pops down on his back next to Ashley. Puts an arm  
around her, stares at the ceiling as she curls into him.

ASHLEY

Hoo. I am gonna miss that.

BRANT

Well, um. I've been thinking.

Brant pauses. Takes a breath. Suddenly nervous.

ASHLEY

Oh?

BRANT

I was thinking what if there was a way... you didn't have to. Miss me.

ASHLEY

If I didn't have to miss you?

Brant leans over the side of the bed and digs through his BACKPACK. Having a tough time finding what he wants.

BRANT

Um. Well. Imagine this went really smoothly. Ah.

Brant produces two FOLDED PIECES OF PAPER. Hands them to Ashley. She scans them, brow furrowed --

ASHLEY

Is this...

BRANT

PRCA permit. All paid for. Just needs your signature.

ASHLEY

(stunned)

That's so expensive.

BRANT

Well. What's money for.

Ash keeps staring at the permit. Still taken aback.

BRANT (cont'd)

With that permit you can ride bronc in any pro rodeo. You deserve to ride more than anybody, Ash. So come with me. We'll ride every rodeo from Washington to Texas, just you, me, and a new truck.

Brant takes a breath.

BRANT (cont'd)

I love rodeo, but it doesn't feel right without you there too. So forget about Gray. Come with me. We'll be the most American love story anyone's ever seen.

Ashley finally meets Brant's eyes.

ASHLEY

Brant...

Brant's face falls.

ASHLEY (cont'd)

This is about the sweetest thing anyone's ever done for me, but I promised my family I'd stay around until Olivia was old enough to hold her own on the ranch. I can't go back on that. But I mean... in another world...

BRANT

Yeah, I. I know.

ASHLEY

But thank you. Truly.

Brant takes a deep breath.

BRANT

Do you... would you want me to stay? Because I would. I'd stay for you.

ASHLEY

No. Not for me. Brant I want you to be a rodeo legend. I want you to win millions out there. And when you have a weekend off, I want you to come back here to me.

BRANT

I just... long distance...

ASHLEY

Hey. We're going to be fine. We'll make it work.

BRANT

I mean... everyone thinks they'll be fine, but --

Ashley kisses Brant sweetly.

                                  ASHLEY  
                                  It won't be like that for us.  
                                  Okay? It won't be like that for  
                                  us.

Ashley smiles at him. Brant tries to smile back.

INT. JAMISON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is high-ceilinged but narrow, white walls yellowing, curtains fraying. An aging version of opulence from a poor man's idea of what riches should look like.

RODEO HIGHLIGHTS loop on the TV. Chucky SNORES IN AN EASY CHAIR. Brant and Ashley TIPTOE PAST him.

Ashley gives Brant a goodnight kiss. Gently shuts the door as she leaves.

Brant's eyes move past the room's main feature, A GIANT DOUBLE BOOKSHELF converted into a TROPHY CASE. One half, chock full of buckles and trophies, features Chucky's picture above it.

The other half -- with a respectable number of buckles, but plenty of empty space -- sports Brant's picture.

This is a room -- a house, a life -- dedicated to *rodeo*.

But Brant's focusing on a small framed photo --

Brant and Vincenzo, both 7, holding up **LIL' BRITCHES BUCKLES**, wide gap-toothed smiles. VINCENZO'S PARENTS flank him; Chucky stands beside Brant.

An **WOMAN'S ARM** is draped over Chucky, but the rest of the person has been artfully CROPPED OUT.

Brant focuses on the arm.

Brant turns to Chucky. His Dad, normally an imposing figure, seems small, engulfed in his chair.

He seems *alone*.

Brant stares at his father.

INT. FUNES HOME - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Ashley quietly shuts the front door behind her. She finds Zane reading a book by lamplight on the couch.

ZANE  
Evening honey.

ASHLEY  
Hi Daddy.

ZANE  
So. You cool off a bit?

Ashley's face sets.

ASHLEY  
I'm gonna ride, Daddy.

ZANE  
Honey, I know you want to, but...  
if you do, you'll be a sideshow.  
This whole family will be a  
sideshow.

Ashley doesn't respond.

ZANE (cont'd)  
Why is this so important to you?

Ashley takes a beat.

ASHLEY  
Because none of you think I can do  
it.

Zane meets her eyes.

ZANE  
That's not a good enough reason to  
do something.

They stare at each other.

END ACT TWO



ACT THREE

EXT. PASTURE - EARLY MORNING

Wyoming mornings are quiet, tinged with oranges and yellows. The air is sharp, cool. DEW SPARKLES.

We're in a pasture that could be mistaken for a gone-to-seed yard. Dandelions, ragweed.

And **SHEEP**. A bunch of dirty, grey-white sheep meander through the grass, chewing, baaing. Central among them --

**JEFFY** (6), blonde, chubby, in ten-year-old hand-me-downs. He sits astride a bored sheep, trying to keep his balance. The sheep MOVES -- Jeffy struggles to stay on top --

This is called **mutton busting**. And it's adorable.

But here, Jeffy fails at it. He tumbles off the sheep, barks his arm on the tough dirt. His LIP TREMBLES --

TUFFY (O.S.)

Hey.

A low wooden fence separates the pasture from a SHITTY TRAILER PARK. On the trailer park side, we find Tuffy and Brant. Tuffy puts in a HEFTY DIP OF CHEW.

TUFFY

You gonna cry? You gonna be a crying cowboy?

Jeffy scowls and shakes his head, bites back tears.

JEFFY

No.

TUFFY

Goddamn right you're not. You're a Meiners, and Meiners don't cry. What do we do when we get bucked?

Jeffy climbs -- flops, more like -- back onto the sheep. Brant and Tuffy applaud.

TUFFY (cont'd)

That's my boy. That's my brother.

BRANT

Get 'em, Jeffy.

Jeffy gives the high schoolers a proud nod. Gets back to work.

TUFFY

That kid is sure gonna miss you  
once you're gone.

BRANT

I dunno.

TUFFY

You don't think he'll miss you?

BRANT

Don't know if I'll be gone.

Tuffy raises an eyebrow.

BRANT (cont'd)

Been thinking I might stick around  
for senior year. Get my diploma.

TUFFY

So... you could leave here, but  
you're not gonna?

Brant shrugs at him.

TUFFY (cont'd)

I mean shit, I know you got Ashley  
and all...

Tuffy spits out a gout of tobacco juice.

TUFFY (cont'd)

It was me, I could get out of here?  
You'd blink and I'd be in Vegas.  
Montana. Someplace else.

Brant smiles tightly. Claps Tuffy's back.

BRANT

Stick around awhile.

They stare out at the sheep until --

MAY (O.S.)

Thomas! You making breakfast?

**MAY** (36), Tuffy's mother, stands outside her trailer in athletic shorts and a tank top. Far past her prime. Cigarette in hand. Flanked by two excited PIT BULLS.

TUFFY  
Ma, I put eggs in the fridge --

MAY  
I ain't got time to cook. I gotta  
get ready for work.

TUFFY  
Ma, I...

Tuffy shakes his head.

TUFFY (cont'd)  
(to Brant)  
Five minutes?

Brant nods. Tuffy heads inside, walking beside his mother,  
not touching her.

MAY  
You need to buy cigarettes too.

TUFFY  
I know.

Brant watches them go.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tuffy, Chucky, and Brant walk parallel lines through some  
sparsely treed woods.

Brant holds a CAMERA, periodically SNAPPING PHOTOS. The  
other men hold **CROSSBOWS**.

They tread carefully, stealthily. Chucky periodically blows  
into a HANDHELD ELK CALL.

Brant slowly angles so that he's walking beside Chucky.  
Hushed:

BRANT  
Dad. I...

Brant takes a breath. Here goes.

BRANT (cont'd)  
I think I want to stay and do my  
senior year. Here.

Chucky says nothing.

BRANT (cont'd)

I figure it can't be a bad thing to get my diploma, and...

CHUCKY

High school diploma or pro rodeo career. You're choosing diploma.

BRANT

It's not like I won't go pro in a year, I just want to, you know, be a senior.

CHUCKY

Be a senior... Kid, nobody has the resources and the talent to go pro. Except you. You can be a pro *right now*. You can *win*. And you want to keep competing against fifteen-year-olds?

BRANT

It's not about --

Chucky stops.

CHUCKY

You've spent your whole life working for this moment. Now you can finally get rich and famous and be appreciated for all that work. And you want to put that off? Just because you're worried about losing your girlfriend?

BRANT

It's not Ashley, it's that I want a senior year --

CHUCKY

Brant. Respect me enough to be up front about this.

Brant bites the inside of his cheek. Looks down.

CHUCKY (cont'd)

She say she was gonna break up with you if you go?

BRANT

No.

CHUCKY  
Then what's the issue?

Brant finally meets Chucky's eyes. With some fire.

BRANT  
Can you think of a long distance  
relationship that didn't work out?

Chucky closes his eyes. Now it's clear.

BRANT (cont'd)  
Because I can think of one.

CHUCKY  
Brant, that's... that's not why she  
left.

BRANT  
Okay, then why?

CHUCKY  
It's never just one...

Chucky looks at his son. Takes a deep breath. Then pockets his elk call and turns back the way they came.

After a beat, Brant follows.

INT. BRANT'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Chucky drives, staring straight ahead, 10 and 2. Brant gazes out the passenger window. Tuffy, in the middle bench seat, wills himself invisible.

A silence stretches. Finally --

CHUCKY  
You can be so special, kid. You  
can be a legend. But you just...  
you can't bank your whole future on  
one girl.

BRANT  
Yes, you can. You just chose not  
to.

Chucky exhales, long and deep.

They drive on.

INT. MILES'S ROOM - EVENING

We find Miles in his hipster-teen bedroom. Courtney Barnett vinyls, Shep Fairey posters. He browses Facebook.

He looks at an action shot of himself in full rodeo regalia, posted by Brant (who really is a good photographer).

Miles focuses on a comment, from VINCENZO -- "my hero."

An inauspicious comment, but we see from Miles's face -- the intensity of his stare -- it means something more to Miles.

Without warning THE DOOR OPENS. **MILES' MOM** (40's, business suit) leans in, taking out her earrings. Miles JUMPS.

MILES  
You gotta knock.

MILES' MOM.  
Sorry. Dad says noodles are ready.

She leaves. Miles takes a few breaths.

He wasn't doing anything wrong. But he still feels *caught*.

Finally, after a beat --

MILES  
(loud)  
No sauce on the spaghetti, please!

MILES' DAD (O.S.)  
It's already on the noodles!

INT. ASHLEY'S TRUCK - EVENING

Ashley drives as Sam stares straight forward, biting her lip, deep in thought. EMPTY BANKER'S BOXES in the back. CLASSICAL MUSIC blares from tinny speakers.

SAMANTHA  
Can we give the violins a rest for a minute?

ASHLEY  
It's actually cellos, but.

Ashley turns off the radio. After a beat:

ASHLEY (cont'd)  
Listen. I know it's hard.

SAMANTHA

Ash.

ASHLEY

But you have to be the most important person in your own life. That's what this is.

SAMANTHA

Ash I appreciate the ride, but I'm really not looking for a pep talk right now.

Ashley raises her eyebrows. *All right.*

They pull up in front of Vincenzo's back house. Sam takes a breath. After a beat:

ASHLEY

You want me to come in with you?

SAMANTHA

I should do this alone.

Sam gives Ashley a weak smile, real gratitude in it. Ashley smiles back.

ASHLEY

I'll be here.

EXT. VINCENZO'S BACK HOUSE - EVENING

Sam stands outside of Vincenzo's place, Banker's Box in hand. Steels herself. This won't be easy.

She knocks. Vincenzo, bleary-eyed, opens the door -- and is shocked to see Samantha.

VINCENZO

Sam -- I -- did you text me you were coming? I didn't get a text.

SAMANTHA

No.

Sam pushes past him into --

INT. VINCENZO'S BACK HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Where she beelines for his bathroom. Vincenzo follows, confused.

VINCENZO

Are you... what's going on?

She emerges from the bathroom and Vincenzo gets a glimpse of the box -- it now has a TOOTHBRUSH, some other toiletries --

VINCENZO (cont'd)

Wait -- what are you -- Sam. Sam.

Hey. Come on. We're forever.

Sam moves to a SHELF OF DVDs. Starts picking out hers. She determinedly ignores PHOTOS of her and Vincenzo in cheap frames.

Vincenzo, panicked, goes to his cabinet. Takes out TWO CHEAP HANDLES OF WHISKEY.

VINCENZO (cont'd)

Sam, if it's you or the booze --

Vincenzo opens both handles and **UPENDS THEM IN THE SINK**. Brown liquid GLUGS out.

VINCENZO (cont'd)

Sam. Sam, come on, look.

But Samantha's not looking. She's holding a SHEAF OF PAPERS. We see them: **ZILLOW PRINTOUTS**.

SAMANTHA

What are these?

VINCENZO

Oh... I was looking at some places for us in Springs.

SAMANTHA

(softly)

But... I wasn't going to get in.

VINCENZO

Of course you were.

For the first time, Samantha looks up at Vincenzo. He moves toward her.

VINCENZO (cont'd)

Those places... they're not big, but if I win three or four more rodeos, and you keep on at the salon, we could put a down payment on one. Get us out of here.



SAMANTHA

I don't want you to save me,  
Vincenzo.

Vincenzo nods toward the emptying handles in the sink.

VINCENZO

You're not the one needs saving.

Sam finally looks at the handles. Looks at Vincenzo.

VINCENZO (cont'd)

We can do this, babe. We can do  
this together.

SAMANTHA

And you'll...

VINCENZO

Cold turkey. Cold turkey. For  
you.

Samantha slowly leans into Vincenzo, the printouts still in  
her hand. She caves.

VINCENZO (cont'd)

We'll do this together. We're  
forever. You and me. Forever.

They hold each other as the handles GLUG their last.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. JAMISON LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Brant comes downstairs. Looks to the kitchen, sees Chucky eating breakfast. A FULL PLATE waiting for Brant.

Then Brant looks to the Lil' Britches picture on the wall. Focuses again on his mother's arm. Sets his mouth.

And walks out the front door.

INT. GRAY BRECKMAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Brant sits across from Gray, who is barely keeping himself from rolling his eyes.

BRANT

...so obviously the ticket sales,  
but we should also factor in the  
publicity. She starts winning,  
we'll get all sorts of coverage.

GRAY

Mr. Jamison, I appreciate that  
you're thinking like a businessman,  
but I think like one too. This  
syndicate of mine is already a  
pretty radical idea. I don't need  
to add in circus stunts.

BRANT

Well can I offer you a business  
proposal then?

GRAY

By all means.

BRANT

I've been your biggest draw and  
your biggest winner for the last  
three years. You're gonna have a  
tough time replacing me.

Gray nods, a smug smile creeping at the side of his mouth.

Brant takes a breath. *Commit.*

BRANT (cont'd)

If you put Ashley on as a bronc  
rider, I'll sign a contract

(MORE)

BRANT (cont'd)  
committing me to riding for  
Breckman Rodeo for the next year.

GRAY  
Just want to make sure I'm clear.  
You're offering to sign a legally  
binding contract. Just so she can  
ride.

BRANT  
Yes.

GRAY  
You understand that I am a  
litigious man, and I will hold you  
to this?

Brant nods. Gray shakes his head.

GRAY (cont'd)  
You must really like this girl.

He looks at his lap for a beat. Considers.

GRAY (cont'd)  
I'll stake her for three rodeos.  
She places in one of them, I'll  
front her for the rest of the year.  
She doesn't, I cut her, but you  
still ride under my banner. Yes?

BRANT  
Yes.

GRAY  
All right then.

Gray extends a hand to Brant.

BRANT  
And... let's not tell Ashley about  
this.

Gray nods with a smirk. Brant shakes his hand.

GRAY  
I'll get those papers drawn up.

INT. BRANT'S ROOM - EVENING

Brant holds Ashley's hands in his as they sit on the bed  
(fully clothed). Brant's smile is warm; Ashley is confused.

ASHLEY

I don't understand.

BRANT

I'm staying. I'm doing my senior year here. With you.

ASHLEY

Is this... it's not because of me.

Brant bites down the hurt. Smiles convincingly.

BRANT

No, no, Miles got in my head. And I do want to have a senior year. Just... not ready to leave yet.

Ashley's face betrays her worry.

BRANT (cont'd)

Gotta say, this is really not the reaction I was hoping for.

ASHLEY

No, I mean -- it's great, of course it's great, it's just -- you've been planning to go pro forever.

BRANT

I'm still gonna go pro. But I'll do it after we graduate. For now, I mean... what's the hurry?

Brant smiles at Ashley. She smiles back, a bit weakly.

Ashley's PHONE RINGS, breaking the moment. She looks at it.

ASHLEY

It's Gray.

Ashley picks up. Brant atches, quietly proud, as we hear Gray on the other end:

ASHLEY (cont'd)

Hello?

GRAY (V.O.)

Why is riding bronc so important to you?

Ashley considers.

ASHLEY  
Because I'm rodeo.

An interminable beat.

GRAY (V.O.)  
You get three rodeos to place.  
Don't embarrass me.

ASHLEY  
(containing  
excitement)  
Yes, sir. I won't, sir.

CLICK. Ashley hangs up, stunned. Her eyes find Brant's.

BRANT  
Yeah?

Ashley can't keep the slow smile from spreading across her face. Brant moves in for a congratulatory hug.

BRANT (cont'd)  
Yeah? You're gonna ride?

ASHLEY  
I'm gonna ride.

Ashley finally gives herself over to the triumph of the moment as we head into a WESTERN EXCELLENCE MONTAGE:

EXT. JAMISON RANCH - EVENING

- The guys have removed the RUBBER TIPS off of some LACROSSE STICKS and stuck **LIT BOTTLE ROCKETS** into the hollow shafts.

In slow motion, Tuffy and Vincenzo **SHOOT HIGH ARCING BOTTLE ROCKETS INTO THE PLAIN.**

Ashley and Miles, **DRIVING BOUNCING 4-WHEELERS**, chase the rockets, FIRE EXTINGUISHERS in hand.

- Kirby and Chucky tend to RACKS OF RIBS on a **HUGE BARBECUE GRILL.** Chucky and Brant studiously avoid each other's gaze.

- Tuffy offers a shot to Vincenzo. Vincenzo, arms around Sam, shakes his head. Tuffy hands the shot to Miles.

- Brant and Samantha SHOOT ROCKETS from their lacrosse sticks. They react to the RECOIL, laugh to each other.

- Tuffy and Miles DO A SHOT then FINGER GUN QUICK DRAW on each other. Tuffy wins; the shot treats Miles badly.

Vincenzo watches them. His CLENCHED FIST betrays his otherwise happy face.

- Ashley and Miles HEROICALLY POSE as they BLAST A SMOLDERING BOTTLE ROCKET with their fire extinguishers.

- The riders EAT MESSY RIBS. Brant sneaks a look at his father, cleaning the grill. Then looks away.

Samantha wipes RIB SAUCE from Vincenzo's face. V responds by rubbing a FULLY SAUCED HAND across her cheek. She recoils as they LAUGH.

Miles watches, conflicted, as he TAKES A DRINK.

- Two more rockets ARC INTO THE AIR, EXPLODING in the now-night sky, and we move down...

EXT. JAMISON RANCH - NIGHT

To three of the cars, now parked alongside one another. BLANKETS are pinned under windshield wipers. Our six young leads lie two to a hood and look up at the METEOR SHOWER.

Tuffy and Miles, our third wheels, look upward. Miles sporadically POINTS AT SHOOTING STARS.

MILES

There's one!

TUFFY

Where?

MILES

Right over there! Oh, you missed it. Wait there's another one!

TUFFY

Wait -- I didn't --

MILES

Oh look there's two! They're spelling out your name.

Tuffy realizes what Miles is doing.

TUFFY

Dick.

We move to Vincenzo's truck, where Sam and Vincenzo lie. Samantha stares up at the sky. Vincenzo stares at Sam.

SAMANTHA

They have so many different gyms there. And they have Soulcycle, I've always wanted to try that --

VINCENZO

That's the culty one, right?

SAMANTHA

Don't judge. But yeah. And there's all these concert venues, and I saw Eric Church's coming through there in December -- so many tours go through Springs -- and they have Benihana, that's the one with the funny chefs... what are you looking at.

VINCENZO

You.

SAMANTHA

You're missing all the stars.

VINCENZO

Yeah.

Sam looks at him. Kisses him with everything in her.

Finally, we move to Brant and Ashley, on the new truck.

ASHLEY

I still can't believe... I never expected Gray Breckman of all people to change his mind. Why do you think he did?

BRANT

I guess sometimes it just takes a while for an old dog to come around on a good idea.

ASHLEY

Yeah, I mean... it's weird, but gift horses. I'm gonna ride!

Brant kisses the side of her head.

BRANT

You're gonna do great.

Ashley sighs happily. A SHOOTING STAR arcs across the sky.

ASHLEY

Look at this. Is there any place  
you'd rather be right now? Any  
place in the world?

BRANT

No. Not one.

Brant hugs her to him. They watch the stars together.

EXT. JAMISON RANCH - LATER

The aftermath. Tuffy, Ashley, Brant, and Samantha are  
nowhere in sight. Miles sleeps on the car hood.

Vincenzo picks up empties, trash bag in hand. He looks  
pale. Clenching his teeth, his fists.

He picks up a **SMALL BOTTLE OF JAMESON** near Miles's car. A  
FEW GULPS OF WHISKEY still slosh around the bottom.

Vincenzo stares hard at the whiskey. Struggling.

FROM MILES' POV, we SWIM INTO FOCUS -- Vincenzo, staring at  
the bottle like Yorick, *so goddamn handsome* --

MILES

Hey.

Vincenzo JUMPS, drops the bottle. Takes a few steps.

VINCENZO

Jesus Miles.

Miles slides off the hood, stumbles a bit. Clearly STILL  
DRUNK. Smiles widely, walks toward Vincenzo --

MILES

I was just thinking about you  
actually. I was wondering if you  
ever think about, ever thought  
about, I know you and Sam are happy  
right now, but if you ever wondered  
if there was something else --

VINCENZO

Miles I can't do one of your faggy  
Miles Monologues right now.



Miles freezes. Vincenzo picks the bottle back up, tosses it into the trash bag.

MILES

What.

VINCENZO

Buddy I love you but my head's goddamn killing me, I can't deal with one of your queer little speeches right now.

Miles stares at him for a beat. Processing.

Then **MILES SHOVES VINCENZO**. Vincenzo takes a few steps --

VINCENZO (cont'd)

What the --

MILES

Don't CALL me that.

Miles SHOVES Vincenzo again, this time in the chest -- Vincenzo squares up on him, not gonna happen a third time --

VINCENZO

Miles what the hell are you --

MILES

I am not a FAGGOT --

VINCENZO

I didn't --

Miles **SWINGS AT VINCENZO**.

Misses badly.

Vincenzo doesn't.

He **COUNTERPUNCHES MILES IN THE FACE**. Hard. Miles goes down. Vincenzo's trash bag falls with a CLATTER.

The weight of the punch falls on both of them.

Miles, suddenly far more sober, glares up at Vincenzo, ignoring his reddening cheekbone.

Vincenzo rubs his knuckles, open-mouthed, stunned.

VINCENZO (cont'd)

What are you doing?

Samantha comes out, sees the situation. RUNS TO MILES, kneels beside him. She looks up at Vincenzo.

SAMANTHA  
What did you do?

VINCENZO  
He swung on me.

Samantha looks at Miles, who continues to glare at Vincenzo.

MILES  
He called me a faggot.

INT. VINCENZO'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Vincenzo and Samantha drive in stilted silence, staring straight ahead. After a beat:

VINCENZO  
For the record, I never called him a faggot. I called him faggy. Not the same thing.

SAMANTHA  
You shouldn't have called him that.

Vincenzo looks at Samantha. Putting it together. Just as he's about to ask --

SAMANTHA (cont'd)  
You shouldn't call anyone that.

They drive on.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Miles's sedan slowly meanders along a country road and DROPS OFF THE SHOULDER. Comes to rest a few feet into some brush.

The horn periodically **BLEATS** as Miles POUNDS ON IT.

Finally he rests his head on the wheel.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. RODEO ARENA - SUNRISE

The sun rises on the empty arena, already in motion. RANCH HANDS till the dirt. USHERS place fliers on empty seats.

Rodeo day.

INT. JAMISON LIVING ROOM - MORNING

SCRAMBLED EGGS SIZZLE on a pan as Chucky slides them onto a plate. He brings the plate to Brant, who sits at the kitchen table, staring at his lap.

Chucky grabs his own plate and cup of juice and sits down across from him. They eat quietly for a bit.

BRANT

I'm sorry. For what I said the other day.

CHUCKY

I always said I'd rather you talk straight with me than pussyfoot around things. Can't be mad if it ain't what I want to hear.

They return to their food. After a beat:

CHUCKY (cont'd)

You are a shit negotiator, though.

Brant looks up.

CHUCKY (cont'd)

You ain't a lock to place in one rodeo out of three, and you're the best bareback rider in the state. Ashley's unproven at best --

BRANT

That contract was supposed to be confidential.

CHUCKY

From Ashley. And I won't tell her. But Gray didn't want to go behind my back.

BRANT  
I'm eighteen years old.

CHUCKY  
Which is why I'm not stopping you.  
You know how I feel. But you're an  
adult. You can make your own  
choice.

BRANT  
Okay. I will.

Chucky stares at his orange juice for a bit.

CHUCKY  
I will say, though, if you're  
making this choice because you're  
worried you'll lose Ashley if you  
leave, well... that would be a  
decision made out of fear. And  
decisions made out of fear  
generally don't go the way you want  
them to.

Chucky takes a long breath.

CHUCKY (cont'd)  
If there's one thing I've learned.  
People are gonna feel the way they  
feel. And sometimes there's  
nothing you can do to make them  
feel how you want.

Brant meets his father's eyes.

BRANT  
I really am sorry, Dad.

CHUCKY  
Nothing to be sorry for. I just...  
want to make sure you know what  
you're giving up.

BRANT  
I'm still gonna go pro, Dad. Just  
in a year is all.

Chucky smiles tightly.

CHUCKY  
That's the thing about rodeo. You  
never know when your last ride's  
(MORE)

CHUCKY (cont'd)  
gonna come. Only that it's gonna  
come too soon.

INT. VINCENZO'S BACK HOUSE - MORNING

Vincenzo stirs awake in a messy bed, Samantha conked out beside him. He squints against the morning light.

He stumbles to the bathroom, RIPS OPEN the medicine cabinet, grabs an ASPIRIN BOTTLE and **SWALLOWS TWO DRY**.

Samantha stirs, notices him.

SAMANTHA  
You okay babe?

Vincenzo squeezes the counter. Looks in the mirror, sees mussed hair, bloodshot eyes. *I could really use a drink...*

VINCENZO  
Toughest guy you know.

Off this mirror staring, we move to:

INT. MILES'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Miles, doing the same thing.

His left eye is **PURPLE AND SWOLLEN**. Vincenzo really popped him.

Miles stares at himself for a long beat.

Then he reaches down for a MAKEUP SPONGE covered with white foundation. Paints over the bruise.

INT. FANTASTIC SAM'S - DAY

Ashley sits in Sam's salon chair, hair wet, as Sam goes to work. Other STYLISTS buzz around, all watching, critiquing.

STYLIST ONE  
You giving her bangs?

STYLIST TWO  
Girl you better not be, that hair's  
gonna be in the paper tomorrow.

SAMANTHA

Gonna be something else in the paper tomorrow if you all don't back up and let me do my job.

STYLIST ONE

Ain't no rodeo star with bangs in my chair, I'll tell you that. You come sit over here, honey.

SAMANTHA

Ashley, do you want one of these fine ladies to cut your hair?

ASHLEY

I'll stick with you, Sam.

SAMANTHA

Thank you. Step off, ladies.

Sam smiles and goes back to work. Ashley smiles too, but there's some uneasiness in her eyes.

EXT. RODEO ARENA - AFTERNOON

It's starting to feel like a rodeo.

EARLY BIRDS fill into the bleachers, fanning themselves with PROGRAMS in the hot sun. A RANCH HAND drives a Zamboni-like cart over the dirt, combing it into furrows.

Some COWBOYS pal around near the staging area. They GUFFAW and shove each other, seemingly all looking over at...

**MILES.** In full clown regalia, next to his barrel, leaning against the wall of the ring. Not sure if they're all laughing at him or if it just feels like it.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Hey!

Miles JUMPS to see Ashley, who's snuck up on him. She leans down to him from the bleachers.

MILES

Hey there, superstar.

ASHLEY

Ugh, don't call me that.

MILES

You nervous?

ASHLEY  
A little. Yeah.

MILES  
Me too.

Ashley chuckles.

ASHLEY  
What could you have to be nervous  
about?

Miles smiles tightly. Not about to answer that.

We PAN UP to an AIR FORCE FLYOVER, and we segue into a RODEO MONTAGE:

- A PRECOCIOUS KID belts the national anthem as **FIREWORKS BURST OVERHEAD**

- The crowd stands respectfully as the PA Announcer prays

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
...we thank the Lord Jesus Christ  
for His many blessings and ask that  
He watch over our brave rodeo  
riders and keep them safe...

- DANDIES -- high school horsewomen -- ride a tight formation, a SPONSOR FLAG lodged in each of their saddles

- A GOOFY COWPOKE walks through the aisles of the bleachers, doing GUN-SPINNING TRICKS

- RODEO QUEENS ride through the stadium, doing the princess wave, their SADDLEBAGS glittery and colorful

- We see some of the COWBOYS in the staging area, some dressed drably, some in **COLORFUL, EXCITING CHAPS**

EXT. RODEO ARENA - LATER

And now -- IT'S TIME FOR BRANT TO RIDE.

He lowers himself onto a **SWEATY BAREBACK BRONC**. SLAPS HIS FACE. Gets himself ready.

We can see on his face -- satisfaction. Confidence. *I belong here.*

BANG! The door BURSTS OPEN and **BRANT RIDES**.

And he is *masterful*. His neck locked down, his arm up, his hips in tune with the horse --

This is what rodeo should look like. This is the logo.

And as the BUZZER SOUNDS, signaling 8 seconds --

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Wow! That's an amazing ride from  
Brant Jamison!

Brant rolls off to a healthy round of applause. A CHEER RISES as his score posts -- an 87.3. A HUGE score.

Brant tips his hat to the appreciative crowd as he jogs back to the staging area, where he meets Chucky.

CHUCKY

Helluva ride, kid. Would've won  
most any pro rodeo you entered.

Brant nods, pleased with himself.

CHUCKY (cont'd)

You sure showed him.

Chucky nods to a YOUNG COWPOKE (14), too small for his chaps, his supportive family standing around him as he shakily mounts his bronc.

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And now, competing in his very  
first high school rodeo, Ben Carr!

Brant grimaces as he watches his terrified competition.

EXT. STAGING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Kirby has pulled Ashley aside, away from the crowds at the staging area.

Ashley's taking noticeably deep breaths.

KIRBY

Okay. Remember. Fluid but strong.  
Fluid, strong. Squeeze your core.

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Oh! Good effort, Benny. Now, that  
fall brings us one bronc closer to  
the end of this section, and you  
know what that means!



A **ROAR** rises from the crowd. Ashley's eyes widen.

KIRBY  
That's for you.

ASHLEY  
That's for... they already heard...

KIRBY  
That's for you. That's for you on that horse.

Ashley nods a few too many times. Nerves.

KIRBY (cont'd)  
Now listen. I've been hard on you. I've been hard on you because you're not the only girl that wanted to do this. You're the one that got the shot. You understand what happens if you fall off after one jump? How long it'll be until one of us can get back on?

Ashley meets her eyes. Betrays her nervousness. Kirby jabs her in the sternum.

KIRBY (cont'd)  
You wanted this. Now do your job. Show 'em all how rodeo you are. Stay on that goddamn horse.

Ashley nods. Getting pumped up. Getting ready.

KIRBY (cont'd)  
Let's go.

EXT. RODEO ARENA - LATER

Ashley sits astride the **BUCKING, SWEATY, ANGRY BRONC** in the staging pen. Assumes the posture as Kirby and Brant ADLIB SUPPORT. Chucky, nearby, pointedly looks elsewhere.

Ashley focuses on her horse until --

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
And now, at last -- Ashley Funes!

The crowd's **ROAR** makes Ashley look up, and she REGRETS IT --

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE stand for her. Moms, Dads, kids. **LITTLE GIRLS WITH SIGNS**. Ashley is stunned --

**BANG!** The door opens, surprising her, and the horse LEAPS OUT --

It STUTTER-STEPS, **CREATING DISTANCE BETWEEN ASHLEY AND ITS BACK** -- ASHLEY TILTS LEFT, HER HAT FALLS OFF --

Jesus, she's gonna fall after one jump --

But she manages to REESTABLISH CONTACT WITH THE HORSE, hanging off the side, her form loose and sloppy --

This is not a good ride, **BUT SHE'S STAYING ON** --

And **THE BUZZER SOUNDS**. Ashley FLOPS OFF THE HORSE, falls to the dirt.

She grabs two handfuls of arena soil and POUNDS THE GROUND.

A SCOREBOARD SHOWS: **59.1**. Far from a winning score.

She gets up, head bowed, and walks to her hat. She smacks the dust off of it, finally looks up --

**TO A STANDING OVATION.**

Not from everyone. Maybe a third of the crowd sits, ignoring or frowning at her. But the rest... THEY ROAR.

She didn't win. Maybe she never will. But she earned a score. She stayed on.

Ashley looks at the crowd.

Fuck it.

**SHE PUMPS HER FIST.** Exhorts the crowd. *My fuckin' arena.*

Brant runs up to her as she reenters the staging area and wraps her up in a big hug.

BRANT

Attaway! You did awesome!

ASHLEY

Was a crap ride. Gotta do better.

BRANT

Hey. You stayed on. You stayed on the bronc. You belong here.

Ashley allows herself a small smile. Nods.

INT. ARENA TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

The cheers echo through the grimy, bare, fluorescent-lit tunnel, nothing but a large TRASH CAN for decoration.

And Vincenzo is decorating the trash can. He VOMITS, light and stringy. He shudders, squints his eyes shut.

Miles, in full costume, approaches Vincenzo.

MILES  
Vincenzo. You okay?

VINCENZO  
You have any blow?

MILES  
...no.

Vincenzo spits.

VINCENZO  
Shit.

MILES  
V, don't ride today. Or at least  
ride with the pads and helmet.

VINCENZO  
Miss me with that faggy shit,  
Miles.

Miles shuts down. Face goes stony.

Vincenzo turns to him, a cruel smile on his pallid face.

VINCENZO (cont'd)  
That word sure bothers you, huh.

Miles's face doesn't betray an inch. Vincenzo turns back.

MILES  
You shouldn't ride, Vincenzo.  
You're not yourself.

VINCENZO  
And who are you exactly?

Miles nods. Lets it land on him. Hardens up. And leaves.

Vincenzo squeezes the rim of the trash can. Sets himself.

And stands.

EXT. RODEO ARENA - NIGHT

Vincenzo, pale but upright, **SLAPS THE HELL OUT OF HIS FACE.** Almost looks like himself. He mounts the KINETIC, ANGRY BULL, as it **SLAMS ITS REAR HAUNCH AGAINST THE PEN WALL.**

PA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
And now, last month's champion,  
Vincenzo Rodriguez!

A CHEER rises through the crowd, and Vincenzo surveys the fans, the arena -- and Miles, standing up in his barrel, staring blankly back at him.

**BANG!** THE GATE SLAMS OPEN and THE BULL BURSTS OUT OF THE PEN. This bull is MAD, his leg kicks violent, his spine fluid and serpentine.

*BUT VINCENZO IS STAYING ON.* His right hand on the flank strap, his left raised high, his powerful hips squeezing the bull, his back almost parallel with it --

This is a special ride. And everyone watching knows it.

Four seconds... five... six...

Then Vincenzo's hand **SHAKES OFF THE FLANK STRAP.**

He loses his balance -- loses his thigh grip, LIFTS HALF AN INCH OFF THE BULL, which is all the distance it needs to KICK INTO HIM, **SENDING HIM FLYING OVER THE HORNS --**

The stadium GASPS as Vincenzo hits the ground and rolls forward, the bull in pursuit --

Miles sees it, pops out of his barrel, hat in hand --

*AND HESITATES, ONLY FOR A MILLISECOND --*

**AND THE BULL GORES VINCENZO IN THE BACK.**

The sound whooshes out of the stadium.

Miles WHIPS HIS HAT at the bull, who still has Vincenzo skewered -- it RAISES ITS HEAD, lifting him a foot into the air before he slips off the horn and flops to the dirt.

The hush extends as the bull gallops toward Miles, its attention waning. Every eye is on Vincenzo. Silent.

Only one voice, echoing through the arena --

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
 You're okay. Get up, baby. You're  
 okay. Come on. Just get up.

Sam, in the front row, growing increasingly desperate --

SAMANTHA  
 Baby GET UP!

And maybe -- could he actually -- he HEARS HER. Even as a  
**RED BLOSSOM** spreads across his shirt, he STIRS.

He looks around, GASPING -- sees his STETSON, GRABS IT --

And incredibly, a force of adrenaline, PUSHES TO HIS  
 KNEES --

And Vincenzo raises his hat. SALUTES THE CROWD.

**AND FALLS.**

His hat bounces in the dirt.

Silence.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

The waiting room is terrible. Faded green wallpaper, muted  
 infomercials on a grainy TV. Lots of empty seats.

In a corner of the room, we find a few SETS OF ADULTS,  
 central among them **VINCENZO'S PARENTS** (50's), clutching  
**ROSARY BEADS**, muttering prayers, Chucky offering comfort.

In the other corner, we find Miles, Tuffy, Kirby, Brant,  
 Ashley, and Samantha. The riders are silent, introspective.

Sam is a razor. In Miles' direction, but really to nobody:

SAMANTHA  
 Guess I should've let him drink,  
 huh?

Nobody responds. Nobody looks at anyone else.

Sam jerkily gets to her feet. Goes to a TRASH CAN. Takes  
 out her ADMISSION LETTER. Looks at Miles.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)  
 It was nice, you know? Having  
 plans?

She throws the letter away.

Miles meets her stare, and we see on their faces -- Sam blames Miles for this.

Miles does too.

Tuffy, eyes red, a little drunk, awkwardly tries to put a comforting hand on Sam's shoulder. She turns to him.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)

You and me, Tuffy. People like you  
and me, we don't get to leave here.  
And God punishes us for trying.

Tuffy looks at her, eyes glassy. Removes his hand.

Brant abruptly stands up, stalks out of the room.

Chucky and Ashley make eye contact. After a beat, Chucky follows Brant out.

Ashley stays.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAWN

Sunrise rips reds and oranges across the clouds.  
STREETLAMPS stay on.

Brant has grabbed a handful of WOOD CHIPS from beneath a tree and wings them, one at a time, at a TRASH CAN.

Chucky comes out, stands a few paces from his son. Puts his thumbs in his pockets.

Brant doesn't look at him. Throws another chip.

BRANT

Never know when your last ride's  
gonna be. Only that it's gonna  
come too soon.

CHUCKY

She worth it?

Brant looks at his father.

The hospital looms over them.

END PILOT