

"TEN DOLLAR MAN"

a screenplay

by

Alex Percy

WGA Registered

"Ten Dollar Man"

FADE IN:

INT. ARENA - RODEO RING - NIGHT

IN SLOW MOTION, a MAN atop a bucking bull.

A spotlight shines on the rider as he and the animal move with a ghost-like glow. The quick burst of flash bulbs pop in the background where an audience sits unseen.

CHEERS SWELL as the bull turns and kicks, elevating he and the rider off the ground. The CHEERS CRESCENDO and mix with the EXCITED VOICE of an announcer.

INT. TRAILER - MORNING

THE FOLLOWING TAKES PLACE IN THE YEAR 1976.

THE CHEERING FADES.

BUCK DWAYNE (40's) lies on his back asleep. His sturdy frame stretches across a small bed. The trailer is messy and cramped.

Buck's eyes open. He sits and stretches, rolling his neck while lighting a cigarette.

He leans down and rubs his legs. One of Buck's calves is dotted with many small, shallow scars.

As Buck stands he flinches with a sudden jolt of pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. RODEO RING - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The angry GRUNT of a bull cuts in as Buck is thrown. He lands awkwardly, as if he had escaped from a moving car.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAILER - MORNING - PRESENT

Buck's face is bent in pain. He finds the wall to steady himself. Buck takes another step.

CUT TO:

EXT. RODEO RING - DAY - FLASHBACK

Buck is spun on a fast and mean Brahma bull. A BUZZER SOUNDS. Buck is flung to the dirt.

As he scrambles away the bull's hind legs thrust down landing a blow to Buck's hip.

The CRUNCH of Buck's bones and CRY of pain can hardly be heard above the CHEERS.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAILER - BATHROOM - MORNING - PRESENT

Buck stands at the mirror. Buck's three-day stubble seems permanent, as does his sun-darkened skin. A small streak of blood is dried under his nose. Buck moves closer to the mirror and inspects it.

BUCK

Shit.

Buck opens the medicine cabinet. Inside is a collection of pill bottles, all painkillers, and a bottle of Southern Comfort.

Buck grabs one of the pill bottles and the whisky.

EXT. TRAILER - SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH-WEST - MORNING - LATER

Buck stands barefoot in jeans and a beaten Stetson above a canyon of red desert and green forest.

Buck lifts a steaming mug of coffee to his lips and washes down several painkillers.

Buck notices a DOE and her FAWNS eating from a patch of brush in the day's first light.

Buck gazes out at the endless Southwestern landscape and an almost undetectable smile appears on his otherwise downcast face

INT. TRUCK - MOVING, SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH-WEST - MORNING - LATER

WAYLON JENNING'S "RAINY DAY WOMAN" cranks through the truck's radio as Buck cruises down an empty country highway.

Buck approaches a lone filling station. He checks himself in the rearview, pushing his hair back under his hat.

EXT. FILLING STATION - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Buck pulls his truck and trailer up to a pump then exits the truck. An elder MECHANIC approaches.

BUCK

Know where a fella' can get some farm work around here?

MECHANIC

There ain't any work out here. Least not now. Need gas?

Buck pulls out a tattered leather billfold. Inside rests a lone ten-dollar bill, next to several singles. Buck eyes the money as a hungry dog might eye a steak.

BUCK

OK, fill her up.

EXT. FILLING STATION - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Buck exits the bathroom and steps to a fence protecting a huge field, acres of once prosperous farmland.

A sign posted reads:

"Property of the Bank of Cache County, Auction of land and farming equipment, Saturday, September 5, 8:00 AM"

Buck gazes upon the land. From behind him.

YOUNG BOY

'Scuse me, sir?

Buck turns to see a BOY (10), rough looking in a pair of worn overalls.

BOY

Sorry to bother you but I'm lost out here and need to get a bus to see my mama, she's in Kansas.

A beat while Buck looks at the boy and the boy looks back. Buck digs out a single and hands it to him.

BOY (CONT'D)

Thank you, sir.

The boy is off.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING - MORNING - LATER

GOSPEL MUSIC plays on the truck's radio.

BUCK

(singing)

Got a telephone call from Jesus...

Buck passes a sign that reads:

"Entering Holt, Utah's Friendliest Little City, Population
1,571"

A row of storefront windows filled with faded displays of out-of-date products: Benji's Sporting Goods, C.C. Taylor's Fine Men's and Women's Clothing, Holt Barber Shop: "Home of the feather-edge cutting style."

In a park in the town's center a brightly colored sign is staked into the ground. It reads:

"The Jackson Heart's Fair and Rodeo, Sunday, August 19, 12
PM at the Cache County Fairgrounds"

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - PARKING LOT - MORNING - LATER

Buck pulls into the dirt parking lot of Cache County's fairgrounds. The lot is filling with cars and trucks, OTHER RIDERS.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - RIDER'S AREA - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Buck walks toward a trailer where a handful of YOUNG RIDERS stand looking at a list taped to the trailer's cab.

Buck makes his way through the small sea of cowboy hats to have a look.

CLOSE ON LIST

The names of the afternoon's participating riders are written vertically down a sheet labeled with each of the day's events. Buck eyes the sheet labeled "Bull Riding."

BACK TO SCENE

FESS HAWKINS (20's) nudges up behind Buck with a wad of tobacco balled under his lip and eyes the list.

FESS

Look there, Hawkins, Fess, riding first. Guess I'll be collecting that purse before you ladies get your saddles polished.

As Buck retreats Fess spits a drop of chewed tobacco in his direction.

BUCK

You got no manners, Hawkins.

FESS

Oh, I must a' missed your name on the list, Buck. Why ya' think that is?

BUCK

How you suppose it would be, chewing tobacco without any teeth?

FESS

Well now we're gettin' on a subject you know sumthin' about, losing and breaking body parts.

Buck grabs Fess's collar.

BUCK

Keep it up and the only thing you'll be able to ride is a wheelchair. And they don't give prizes for that.

PHIL HARPER (70's), silver haired in worn jeans and a Pendleton, hurries to the skirmish. He moves pretty quickly for a man in a wheelchair.

PHIL

(pulling Buck away)
What's the problem, Buck?

BUCK

Name ain't on the list.

PHIL

You know who you got to talk to about that.

(to the other riders)
Let's get back to it fellas.

The riders slowly disburse.

PHIL (CONT'D)

(low to Buck)
Got any theories 'bout why your name's missing?

Buck does not respond.

From his shirt pocket Phil retrieves a worn hand written check and passes it to Buck. A red stamp across it reads "Insufficient Funds."