

A SAMPLE FROM:

"TEN DOLLAR MAN"

a screenplay

by

Alex Percy

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"Ten Dollar Man"

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.

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

INT. TRAILER - MORNING - 1976

THE CHEERING FADES.

BUCK DWAYNE (40's) lies on his back asleep. His sturdy frame stretches across a bed that folds out from the wall. The trailer is messy and cramped.

Buck's eyes open. He sits up and stretches, rolling his shoulders and head with discomfort. He leans forward and rubs his legs.

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

CUT TO:

EXT. RODEO RING - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A bull's FEROCIOUS SCREAM cuts in abruptly as Buck is thrown from a bull. His body 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

A dizzying spin atop a fast and mean Brahma bull. Buck is swung wildly.

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CONTINUED:

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 in front of the mirror. He stares at his reflection with a hint of disappointment, as though he had hoped to see someone else this morning.

Buck's three-day stubble seems permanent, as does his deep tan. A small streak of blood is dried under his nose, which is swollen. 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 half empty 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 well-worn cowboy hat at the mouth of a small canyon. He looks out at a valley of red desert and green forest.

The early morning sun bathes the valley, illuminating it like a stained glass window.

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

Buck notices a DOE and her FAWNS eating from a patch of bushes 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 - MORNING - LATER

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

He approaches a lone filling station. Buck looks in the mirror and pushes his unkempt hair back under his dirty cowboy hat.

EXT. FILLING STATION - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Buck pulls his truck and trailer up to a pump and exits the truck. A MECHANIC approaches Buck.

MECHANIC

Howdy.

BUCK

Hey there. Don't suppose you know where a fella' can get some quick farm work around here?

MECHANIC

There ain't much work out here. Not now.

The mechanic looks at Buck's truck.

MECHANIC (CONT'D)

Need gas?

Buck reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a tattered leather billfold. Inside rests a lone ten-dollar bill. Buck eyes the money as a hungry dog might eye a steak.

BUCK

Go ahead and fill her up.

The mechanic steps to the pump.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Got a bathroom?

MECHANIC

In back.

Buck walks toward the rear of the filling station.

In the shade of an awning an OVERWEIGHT WOMAN sits in a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beside the woman a thin young GIRL in a dirty sundress sits with a MANGY DOG. The girl watches Buck pass, stoic.

From the TV the southern-fried VOICE of an EVANGELIST SPEAKS.

EVANGELIST (O.S.)

There's only one remedy for the
plague of sin that strikes ya' so
deep only one man can save ya'!
Only one man can send you on down
the highway of salvation! Go
ahead, pick up ya' telephone. Say
the words and bless the world!

EXT. BACK OF FILLING STATION - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

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

A sign is posted. It reads:

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

Buck looks out to the field then turns back to the filling station.

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 2,571"

After several liquor stores and remote farms Buck's sky blue pick-up and trailer are driving down Holt's main drag.

A long 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."

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CONTINUED:

Several liquor stores and bars comprise the town's not-so-thriving center.

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

"The Jackson Heart's Traveling 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 - BACK LOT - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Buck walks toward a long trailer. A handful of YOUNG RIDERS stands looking at several sheets of paper 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 several sheets of paper labeled "Bull Riding." Written across from the names are different times.

BACK TO SCENE

Buck scans the sheet with dissatisfaction.

FESS HAWKINS (20's) nudges up behind Buck. A young and handsome rider, Fess has a large wad of chewing tobacco balled up under his lip.

FESS

'Scuse me.

Buck turns to face Fess. Their eyes meet and shoulders rub as Buck edges away from the trailer. Fess looks sharply at the list.

FESS (CONT'D)

Look there, Hawkins, Fess, riding first. Looks like I'll be taking home that purse before you ladies get your saddles polished.

Fess spits a large drop of chewed tobacco in Buck's