

**"8 SECOND DANCE"**

by

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FADE IN:

INT. HORSE PAVILION - DAY

A modest, dirt-covered oval surrounded by wooden bleachers.

BART TYLER,

a 26 year old cowboy, personable and rugged in that well-fed, outdoors-y kind of way, speaks to an off-camera interviewer. (NOTE: All dialogue, unless indicated otherwise, is shot in this documentary-interview style)

He stands just outside the oval at the far end of the pavilion. In the b.g. we get a fleeting glimpse of two RODEO CLOWNS engaged in what would appear to be a skirmish with an unseen bull.

The HOOTS and HOLLERS of a handful of spectators can be HEARD ECHOING ACROSS THE PAVILION.

SUPER: "BART TYLER - RODEO CHAMPION"

BART

Been around animals all my life. I been riding since before I could walk. Started on the bulls when I was six or seven. My daddy was a rodeo champ. I'd have to say he was my biggest influence.

INT. FARM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

BILL and MARGE TYLER, in their mid-50s, sit on the couch. A framed photo rests face down on Marge's lap.

SUPER: "BILL & MARGE TYLER - BART'S PARENTS"

BILL

The Tylers and the rodeo goes back generations, I reckon'.  
(he chuckles)  
O ya, the rodeo is in his blood.  
It's definitely in his blood.

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE

Do you worry about him getting hurt?

MARGE

O sure. What kind of mother would I be if I didn't? But that's what he wants to do...

(MORE)

MARGE (CONT'D)  
 Riding bulls and broncos is all he  
 ever wanted to do.

INT. HORSE PAVILION - DAY

BART  
 First horse I ever owned I named  
 Snowflake. I remember she was all  
 white 'cept for a little coal  
 smudge on her left ear... But that  
 washed off.

INT. FARM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marge holds up the photo that's been lying on her lap.

MARGE  
 This is Snowflake.

INSERT - THE PHOTO

A young boy in pajamas straddles a STICK PONY - a red pole on  
 wooden wheels with a flat wooden horse's head fixed to the  
 top of the pole. The boy smiles broadly as he holds onto the  
 horse's wooden handles.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
 She was a gorgeous white, as white  
 as meringue. Just immaculate. But  
 it was no time before she got all  
 marked up and scuffed--

BILL  
 Bart would ride her pretty hard--

MARGE  
 My heavens, I can hardly remember  
 seeing that boy without it. No  
 wonder she got filthy like she did.

BILL  
 (indicating the photo)  
 I finally got it away from him long  
 enough to paint her red. Figured  
 the dirt wouldn't show so much. Put  
 a good coat o' varnish on her, too.

INT. HORSE PAVILION - DAY

BART  
 I rode her till the wooden wheels  
 come off. Rode 'em clean off.  
 (a beat; sadly)  
 (MORE)

BART (CONT'D)  
 ...Yup, she was a real special horse.

INT. FARM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

MARGE  
 It just broke his heart... But once a stick horse loses its wheels, there's nothin' much you can do.

BILL  
 Had this specialist come in. All the way from Finland. The Finns are really good with wood an' stuff, ya know. Make some beautiful furniture--

MARGE  
 But in the end we had to put her down--

BILL  
 Once the wheels is gone...

MARGE  
 'Course, Bart blamed himself. He took it pretty hard.

INT. HORSE PAVILION - THE OVAL - DAY

ON BART

on top of "Man Handler", a champion STICK BULL (pretty much the same as a Stick Pony, except for the wooden head! This one has a decidedly angry expression painted on its plywood face.)

Bart is having one helluva ride. The two rodeo clowns circle nearby.

INT. HORSE PAVILION - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

BLONKERS and RUSTY, the two rodeo clowns, relax in a makeshift dressing room. They're in full clown makeup.

SUPER: "BLONKERS THE CLOWN", "RUSTY THE CLOWN"

BLONKERS  
 Bart's just an all round champion cowboy. It's a real treat to watch him work. Like watching ballet on a bull.

Rusty nods in agreement.

RUSTY  
Baryshnikov on beef.

INT. THE OVAL - DAY

SLOW MOTION: ON BART AND THE BULL

-- And Blonkers is right. It IS just like ballet.

IN A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS, WE SEE:

BART,

rocking back and forth on the leaping stick bull. He's clearly in his element.

THE NUMBERS ON AN LCD CLOCK

snapping from '8' to '7'...

THE BULL

bucking and spinning. As the bull reels to the left, a long, gelatinous gob of snot slingshots from its nose.

THE CLOWNS

circling, ready to spring into action.

BART

dipping, weaving, rolling... Dammit, this guy is good!

THE CLOCK

and the numbers flip from '4' to '3'...

CLOSE ON - THE BULL'S PAINTED FACE

-- and you'd swear it really does look angry!

THE WHEELS

on the bottom of the stick bull slamming into the dirt, readying for one last buck.

THE CLOWNS,

watching in awe. Man, this guy can ride!

THE CLOCK

jumps from '2' to '1'

The bull dips his head to the earth, then rears back in one powerful, frightening move. But as its wheels hit the dirt, they shatter--

And again WE SEE THE WHEELS SHATTERING--

And still again. The WHEELS SHATTER IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

Bart gets catapulted into the air at the same moment that the BUZZER SOUNDS.

END SLOW MOTION.

Bart scurries away from the bull, flanked by Blonkers and Rusty who offer enthusiastic congratulations. Bart salutes the stands with his hat, then turns to look in the direction of the stick bull.

Blonkers and Rusty already see what he sees-- the stick bull lies lifeless in the dirt.

After a moment, Rusty looks to Bart--

RUSTY  
Dude, I think you busted the  
wheels.

Blonkers and Rusty STEP OUT OF FRAME as they head to the downed bull.

WE STAY ON BART

as the weight of the moment sinks in. After a long moment, he turns and shuffles sadly toward the exit ramp.

MUSIC RISES as Bart, like a cowboy heading into the sunset, heads into the tunnel leading into the bowels of the building. But before he disappears, we hear--

BART  
...Man, I hate when that happens.

A COWBOY on a stick horse passes Bart in the tunnel on his way into the oval.

FADE OUT.

-The End-