



Presents

THE RIDER

A film by Chloé Zhao
(104 min., USA, 2017)
Language: English

Distribution



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CAST

(in order of appearance)

Brady Jandreau as Brady Blackburn
Mooney as Gus
Tim Jandreau as Wayne Blackburn
Lilly Jandreau as Lilly Blackburn
Leroy Pourier as Frank
Cat Clifford as Cat Clifford
Tanner Langdeau as Tanner Langdeau
James Calhoon as James Calhoon
Lane Scott as Lane Scott
Cameron Wright as Rodeo cowboy #1
Jordon Slick Phelps as Rodeo cowboy #2
Donnie Whirlwind Horse as Rodeo cowboy #3
Terri Dawn Jandreau as Terri Dawn
Alan Reddy as Bill
Greg Barber as Bar Owner
Kevin Hunter as Bar patron #1
Marshall Byrne as Bar patron #2
Frank Steele as Miles
Ethan Steele as Miles's son
Helene Gaddie as Job Center Counselor
Derrick Janis as Victor Chasing Hawk
Todd O'Brian as Todd
Gabrielle Waln as Gabby
Griffin Grooms as Young cowgirl
Summer Boomer as Bartender
Peppy as Apollo
John Pfortmiller as Pawn Shop Owner
Amanda Reddy as Doctor
Alejandro Rama as Alejandro
Adriano Rama as Adriano
Steven DeWolfe as Rodeo cowboy #4

FILMMAKERS

WRITTEN and DIRECTED by

Chloé Zhao

PRODUCED BY

Chloé Zhao

Bert Hamelinck

Sacha Ben Harroche

Mollye Asher

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Michael Sagol

Jasper Thomlinson

Yuji Zhao

Dickey Abedon

Daniel Sbrega

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Joshua James Richards

MUSIC BY

Nathan Halpern

EDITOR

Alex O'Flinn

MUSIC SUPERVISOR

Ben Sokoler

SOUND DESIGN

Paul Knox & Ben Gieschen

SYNOPSIS

Brief Synopsis

After a tragic riding accident, young cowboy Brady (Brady Jandreau), once a rising star of the rodeo circuit, is warned that his competition days are over. Back home, Brady finds himself wondering what he has to live for when he can no longer do what gives him a sense of purpose: to ride and compete. In an attempt to regain control of his fate, Brady undertakes a search for new identity and tries to redefine his idea of what it means to be a man in the heartland of America.

Extended Synopsis

Young cowboy Brady Blackburn (Brady Jandreau), once a rising star of the rodeo circuit and an uniquely gifted horse trainer, is warned that his riding days are over after a horse badly crushed his skull at a rodeo and put him in a three-day coma.

Back home on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, Brady struggles with the physical and emotional complications of the accident. He is comforted by his inimitable little sister Lilly (Lilly Jandreau), who has Asperger's Syndrome, while tensions between him and his gambling father, Wayne (Tim Jandreau), approach a breaking point when Wayne resorts to selling Brady's favorite horse to keep their trailer home.

With few alternatives and little desire for a different way of life, Brady feels a growing sense of inadequacy unable to ride and rodeo - the essentials of being a cowboy, and the defining elements in his life. Frustrated, Brady starts to drift away from his rodeo friends and spend more time with his friend Lane (Lane Scott), who is in intensive rehab after his once promising bull-riding career ended in a tragic accident.

As time goes on, Brady can't stay away from his horses. He decides to start riding and training them again. However, the complications of his head injury soon puts him in dangerous situations and eventually back in the hospital. After another painful loss in his life, in an attempt to regain control of his own fate, Brady recklessly returns to the rodeo.

Locked in a battle he can't win, Brady has to decide between healing with the help of his family and friends, or risking it all to keep the only sense of self he's ever known.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

While making her first film “Songs My Brothers Taught Me” on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 2013, Chloé Zhao got to know a group of Lakota cowboys. Despite the fair complexion some of them have, they were born and raised on the reservation and are both Oglala Lakota Sioux and bonafide cowboys. They wear feathers in their hats to honor their Lakota ancestry - Indian cowboy - a true American contradiction. Chloé was fascinated with them and ended up casting some of them as supporting actors in the film.

In 2015, while visiting a ranch on Pine Ridge Reservation, Chloé met a twenty-year old Lakota cowboy named Brady Jandreau. Brady is a member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and currently resides on Pine Ridge. He is a saddle bronc rider and a horse trainer, who lives like a man of the land. He hunts on horseback, fishes in the white river, spends most of his days working with wild horses, breaking and training them until they're fit for selling. Like a fish to water, Brady seems to understand every movement of the horse, as if they are locked in some kind of telepathic dance routine. One giving way to the other, until slowly and gently, a trust is formed. He's been doing it since he was eight years old, and it's miraculous to observe. Chloé was immediately drawn to him and she started to gather ideas for a film about Brady.

On April 1st, 2016, Brady entered the PRCE rodeo in Fargo, North Dakota. He was to compete in the 'Saddle Bronc' section and felt confident after a string of successful rides during the season. But that night Brady was thrown off. The bucking horse stomped on his head and near fatally crashed his skull. Brady's brain bled internally. He had a seizure and fell into a three day coma.

Brady now has a metal plate in his head, and suffers from other health issues associated with a severe traumatic brain injury. The doctors advised him to never ride again. If he hits his head again, it could be fatal. But Brady was back breaking wild horses in no time. Chloé visited him and they talked about why he is risking his life.

“Last month, we had to shoot Apollo (a horse Brady was training) because his leg got cut badly by barbed wire.” Brady told Chloé. “If an animal around here gets hurt like I did, they'll get put down. I was only kept alive because I'm human and that's not enough. I'm useless if I can't do what I was born to do.”

Beyond the financial hardships that came with the injury, Brady's response made Chloé think about the psychological impact these injuries have on young men like him - what it must be like to live in the heartland of America, unable to match up to the ideal image of a cowboy, an image these young men have tried to live up to their whole lives. Chloé decided to make a film about Brady's struggles, both physically and emotionally, as he comes to terms with his injury.

As Chloé listened to Brady reflecting on the first few months of his life after the injury, she cast Brady, his family and friends to play the fictionalized versions of themselves. Everyone in the film came from in and around the reservation. This includes Brady's father, Tim, an old school cowboy who taught Brady all he knows. His bright and spirited little sister, Lilly, who has Asperger's Syndrome, and expressed herself completely free of inhibitions. His rodeo friends, all sharing in Brady's hopes, fears and dreams, and one of his best-friends Lane, who is completely paralyzed after an accident that ended his promising bull riding career.

“Working with Brady and Lane in a scene was one of the most humbling and inspiring moments of my life.” Chloé reflects, “We started production on September 3rd, 2016. The five-week filming mainly took place on the reservation and in the surrounding Badlands. Brady, who works as a professional horse trainer, trained horses for the first half of each day in order to have them ready for a horse sale. So we were able to capture a lot of authentic footage of Brady training and interacting with horses, while fully taking advantage of the magical South Dakota sunset. We worked with a small crew, filming in people's homes, real locations and events. This is my second collaboration with cinematographer Joshua James Richards. We strived to capture moments in an organic yet cinematic way in order to further integrate a complete sense of reality into the narrative. Through Brady's journey, both on and off screen, I hope to explore our culture of masculinity and to offer a more nuanced version of the classic American cowboy. I also want to offer an authentic portrait of the rough, honest and beautiful American heartland that I deeply love and respect.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Chloé Zhao (WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)

Chloé is a Chinese writer, director and producer. Her 2015 feature debut *SONGS MY BROTHERS TAUGHT ME* premiered in US Dramatic Competition at the Sundance Film Festival and Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. It was nominated for three 2016 Independent Spirit Awards. Chloé studied Political Science at Mount Holyoke College and Film Production at NYU. She was born in Beijing and currently resided in the United States.

Nathan Halpern (COMPOSER)

Nathan Halpern is a Brooklyn-based composer, recently named one of *Indiewire's* 'Composers to Watch.' The 2017 Oscar Shortlist for Best Documentary included two films he scored (*HOOLIGAN SPARROW* and *THE WITNESS*). His score for *RICH HILL*, winner of the Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary, was praised as "one of the best non-fiction scores we've heard in years" (*Indiewire*). He went on to re-team with *Rich Hill* co-director Andrew Droz Palermo for the Kiernan Shipka-starring supernatural thriller *One & Two* (IFC Films), which *Variety* called "hauntingly scored."

The 2017 Sundance Film Festival featured two films scored by Halpern – *Rancher Farmer Fisherman* and *The Workers Cup*, of which *Variety* wrote “prolific composer Nathan Halpern’s evocative score is another big plus.” Other recent Sundance Film Festival Official Selections have included the Emmy and Peabody Award-winning *MARINA ABRAMOVIC: THE ARTIST IS PRESENT* and *THE LOVERS AND THE DESPOT* RECENT film scores include *RICH HILL* co-director Tracy Droz Tragos’ *Abortion: STORIES WOMEN TELL*, *RACHEL CARSON*, the Emmy-nominated *Poisoner’s Handbook*, the Oscar-shortlisted & SXSW Grand Jury Prize-winning *KEHINDE WILEY: AN ECONOMY OF GRACE*, and Robert Redford’s Emmy-nominated *All the President’s Men Revisited* (Discovery).

His original music has been used in new dance works by the London Royal Ballet and the New English Ballet Theater (London). He was commissioned to create '1913' a three hour-music performance/installation presented at The Armory in New York City, commemorating the first International Exhibition of Modern Art. Other commissions include the *Cannes Lion*-nominated series *TB Unmasked*. Upcoming film scores include Liz Garcia's *One Percent More Humid* (Sony Pictures / Starring Juno Temple) and Amanda Sharp's *Sticky Notes* starring Rose Leslie (Game of Thrones) and Ray Liotta.

Joshua James Richards (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Joshua James Richards is an award-winning cinematographer based in Los Angeles. He won Cinematography Debut at the 2015 Camerimage Film Festival and was nominated for Best Cinematography at the 2016 Independent Spirit Awards for his work on Chloé Zhao’s *SONGS MY BROTHERS TAUGHT ME* (Sundance 2015, Cannes Directors' Fortnight) produced by

Forest Whitaker. His second feature GOD'S OWN COUNTRY (Sundance 2017, Berlin) was directed by Francis Lee and produced by the BFI. His commercial work included clients such as Sony, Adidas, Reebok, BMW, and AFI. Joshua is currently represented by Artistry in the US, and United Agency in Europe.

Alex O'Flinn (EDITOR)

Alex O'Flinn is a film editor based in Los Angeles, CA. Some of his credits include Ana Lily Amirpour's film A Girl WALKS HOME ALONE AT NIGHT (Sundance 2014), as well as her upcoming film THE BAD BATCH (Venice 2016) starring Suki Waterhouse, Jason Momoa, Jim Carrey and Keanu Reeves. He also had the pleasure of editing Andrew Droz Palermo's feature ONE AND TWO (Berlin 2015) and the PBS Independent Lens documentary *Autism In Love*. In 2014 Alex was awarded the Sally Menke Memorial Editing Fellowship from the Sundance Institute, and recently served as an editing advisor for Film Independents Director's Lab.

Bert Hamelinck (PRODUCER)

Bert Hamelinck is the Managing Director of Caviar Group and Head of Caviar's Film & Television department. Bert co-founded Caviar and has produced seventeen feature films and six television series. He relocated from Belgium to Los Angeles in 2014 to focus his efforts on developing stateside original content.

Bert's US projects include THE DIARY OF A TEENAGE GIRL starring Bel Powley, Kristen Wiig and Alexander Skarsgård. DIARY was released by Sony Pictures Classics and won the "Best First Feature Award" at the Independent Spirit Awards. In 2015, he produced a feature titled BETWEEN US which was selected for the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival. In 2016, he produced the film SUN DOGS directed by Jennifer Morrison, starring Michael Angarano, Melissa Benoist, Ed O'Neill, & Allison Janney.

His European projects have included the Belgian feature BLACK directed by Adil el Arbi & Bilall Fallah which won the Audience Award for "Best Film" at the 2015 Ghent International Film Festival, as well as the "Discovery Award" at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival. He also served as a co-producer on THE BRAND NEW TESTAMENT. Directed by Jaco Van Dormael, the film won the "Biografilm Europa Audience Award" at the 2015 Biografilm Festival. THE BRAND NEW TESTAMENT selected as the Belgian nominee for the 2016 Golden Globes. Prior to this, Bert co-produced Lars Von Trier's NYMPHOMANIAC which Caviar co-financed and co-produced alongside Zentropa. He also produced the pan-European miniseries THE SPIRAL which was broadcasted simultaneously in nine countries in September 2012 and was nominated for an International Digital Emmy.

Mollye Asher (PRODUCER)

Mollye Asher is a New York based producer and two time Spirit Award Nominee. Since she began producing features in 2013, Mollye has built a reputation for her keen eye for emerging auteur talent. *THE RIDER* was her second collaboration with Zhao. Their first film, *SONGS MY BROTHERS TAUGHT ME* (Sundance 2015, Cannes Directors' Fortnight) was nominated for three Spirit Awards and was distributed by Kino Lorber, screening in theaters nationwide. Mollye was also the producer of Anja Marquardt's *SHE'S LOST CONTROL* (Berlin 2015, New Directors/New Films, SXSW), a multiple Spirit Award. Her film *FORT TILDEN* (writer/directors Sarah-Violet Bliss and Charles Rogers) was the 2014 SXSW Grand Jury Prize Winner. Mollye is a FIND Producing Lab and Fast Track alum, IFP Narrative Lab alum, past TAP fellow and she earned her Masters in film from NYU's Graduate Film Program.

Sacha Ben Harroche (PRODUCER)

Sacha Ben Harroche is a producer based in Los Angeles. Originally from France, Sacha obtained his Master Degree from L'École Supérieure du Commerce Extérieur (ESCE) in Paris, La Défense. Sacha worked in the business sector for corporations such as American Express and Fowler Property Acquisitions before transitioning into the production world. For the past 7 years, Sacha has been a freelance producer of visual content, including short films, music videos, and documentaries. With personal interest in the art world, Sacha co-produced Jasmin Blasco's short film project: *The First Human Born In Space*. He also co-produced French/Algerian artist Neil Beloufa's feature length film, *TONIGHT AND THE PEOPLE*. Both works have been exhibited internationally. Currently, Sacha is an in-house producer at Caviar. He recently produced an untitled short film in Tahiti for director Arnaud Uyttenhove, which is currently in post-production. He has been following Chloe Zhao's career for some time and brought *THE RIDER* to Caviar with much excitement!