

SALTWATER COWBOY



The Diary of a Hopeless Bull Rider

A 3x one hr or 6x half hour Documentary Series

Aquarius Productions - Richard Todd

aquarius33@bigpond.com +61 417189323

Based on a concept by Sullivan McLeod

Documentary Copyright Aquarius Productions 11 Jan 2010

SYNOPSIS

What happens when you take a fish out of water? It squirms, flinches, gasps and tries to bounce its way back to the safety of the ocean in an effort to survive. Instinct kicks in and over rides all thoughts of panic, both rational and irrational. Sullivan McLeod, a self confessed pudgy, far from fit 33 year old surfer from the seaside town of Margaret



River, Western Australia, is one such fish.

Whilst most people are happy slouching around in their lounge chairs, fantasizing about what they are going to do in life, Sullivan just lunges in, boots and all, and literally grabs the bull by the horns. This year, he's about to embark on one of the most grueling, dangerous, physically and psychologically testing sports in the world: the National Bull Riding Tour of the good old U S of A. There is only one slight problem. Sull, currently, can't even ride a horse ... and unlike most of his competitors, who have been brought up on the ranch lassoing steers, Sullivan's bio maybe cause for concern. He's been a restaurant spy, a stand-up comedian, a professional surfer, a magician's stooge and currently gives recommendations on the best poets to read, from the safety of his family's bookshop.



So why on Earth would he contemplate being potentially jumped on by a fuming beast, 5 times his body weight, with a name like Crazy Train, Spitfire or Bad Blood?

"I was at a loose end having just published my first book, *Tunnel Vision*:

The true story of my probably insane quest to become a professional

surfer,” says Sullivan with a grin.

“One day, a real-life authentic cowboy from Texas came strolling through the front doors of the book store. I followed him around the shop for a while, pretending to be replacing books and finally struck up a conversation with him. He kept Dad and I totally engrossed in his stories, for over an hour. Just as he got to the front door, I yelled out, ‘Hey Tex, do you think I could become a bull rider?’ He turned around, tilted his cowboy hat and said, ‘Hell boy, you could try.’ From that day, the seed was planted. For the next four weeks I had nights when I just couldn’t sleep, Tex and his stories were gnawing away at me. Some dreams I was being bucked off but other times I’d just wake up and go, I’m going to do this, I’m really going to do this.”



But Sullivan has a mountain of hurdles to jump before he starts playing with the ‘big boys’ and he’s no fool. “Mate I realize this is potentially a life and death kinda sport. I’m not going in with any misconceptions and I’m going to get as prepared as I can before I hit the circuit. This is not just about me challenging my fears though. This is also about living the life of a bull rider in the US, delving deep into the sub culture of what makes bull riding one of the most popular, exciting and exhilarating sports in the world. That is really exciting me.”

So, first he has to get fit. ‘I heard that if you are really fit, there’s an endorphin that is released into your bloodstream that reduces pain. That’d be handy to have.’ Then, after convincing his girlfriend he ‘needs to do this thing’, he has to ask her to teach him to ride a horse. Next he’s going to attend an Australian country rodeo in South Western Australia, to rub shoulders with the



kinda cowboy he's planning on turning into. In April 2010, he's off to Vegas to watch the Professional Bull riders World Cup, where he'll be a guest of the Australian Team, witnessing 'the real thing' through the eyes of the pros. In May, the fun really begins; he's journeying to Twin Falls Idaho, to participate in Leffew's Bull Riding School. Then, for the rest of the summer he's jumping on the American Professional Bull Riding Touring Pro Division circuit to see if he's got what it takes, in and out of the ring.

Finally in October, he'll be invited to the World Finals in Vegas as a 'guest' rider where he'll have the opportunity to tell the audience about his amazing journey from non-bull rider to Saltwater Cowboy in less than 6 months.

Crazy...maybe, scared.....hell yeah, determined..... 'Ain't nothing gonna stop me from doing this.'

POTENTIAL SUB PLOTS

Scooter the Rodeo Clown

Between rides, Scooter's job is to keep the crowd amused by bantering with the announcers and performing comedic skits that can include props, explosions, fireworks and clown cars. This part of his job requires charisma, creativity, comic timing, and boundless energy.



But the real work - cowboy protection - begins the minute a bull rider enters the ring, hanging on for dear life. And this part requires nerves of steel, lightning reflexes, and a selfless devotion to someone else's well being. It falls to the rodeo clown to distract the angry bull from its toppled rider so the cowboy can get to his feet and make it to the safety of a fence.

So why the hell would he do it? There'd have to be cushier gigs at a country circus. Scooter sums it up this way. "It's a great feeling when the crowd applauds and appreciates your efforts. But the greatest is when the cowboys come to you and let you know how much they appreciate you being



there for them night after night."

Whilst most people can't understand why Scooter would risk his life to help someone else, Scooter is just as bemused as to why Sullivan would want to ride a bull without any previous experience. Their meeting and eventual friendship is sure to answer the core question of why the average Joe is attracted to this wild sport.

Rodeo Hero and Potential Mentor

Slumped against a wall inside the medical trailer, J.W. Harris wriggles his dirt-stained jeans up his wiry legs, revealing messes of hair, fleshy raspberries and tattered medical tape.



To his left on a bench, a bullfighter fastens the buckles on two clunky knee braces. At the opposite end of the dimly lit, door closed trailer a bald trainer with a perspiring scalp uncoils an Ace bandage.

Harris currently leads the 2009 PRCA world bull riding standings with \$162,186 in earnings. Yet Harris says, "The best part about bull riding isn't the money, but rather life on the road with 'the guys'."

"They are your extended family," he adds. "They are your best friends; you can count on them for anything. You're on the road more than you're at home," Harris says. "And whenever you are home, you're having to work to make up for the days you're gone."

The product of a rodeo family, Harris first sat on a bull at the age of 4. "It becomes second nature; you don't have to think about it to do it, you just do it. It's just a reaction to what's going on out there." Sullivan hopes to get some tips from one of the best bull riders on the tour and eventually, if he agrees, ask him to act as his Mentor. Harris will be there at the critical times; his first and his last bull ride of the tour.



The recipe for a quality bull ride is simple, at least for Harris." Just keep your hand in the rope for eight seconds," he tells Sullivan. "That's the basic thing; just ride everything you get on for 8 seconds."

"If only it were that simple", sighs Sullivan.

Leffew's Bull Riding School

Apart from following the lives of two other Riding School hopefuls from the US, we'll be meeting the man himself, Gary Leffew. He has quite an impressive C.V. A former World Champion Bull Rider, Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame Inductee, and 8-time NFR qualifier, he has the exact credentials Sullivan is looking for in a coach.



As a pro rodeo contestant & coach, Gary has helped countless numbers of athletes enter the exciting world of big time rodeo and he'll be on hand to give Sullivan as much assistance as possible as the Saltwater Cowboy attempts to hone his skills. The pressure is on, cause this will be the

first time Gary has to try to turn a non-rider into a Professional Bull Rider in less than six months!

He'll be measuring Sullivan up during those first critical rides and we'll learn first hand whether Gary thinks Sull has got what it takes to go all the way.

SULLIVAN'S 2010 SCHEDULE

EP 1: Now 'til April 2010

Life in Margaret River for a non-bull riding-bull rider.

Sull gets fit; gym, boxing and surfing. He goes on a health diet, learns to ride a horse and attends an Australian Rodeo. He chooses an America Bull Riding school and starts to blog and email the other students to tell them of his plans. People try to talk him out of it as he says goodbye to his friends and family and a very tearful farewell to his new love, who he met just after he hatched his crazy bull riding idea.

EP 2: April /May 2010

Sull attends Leffew's Bull Riding School, works on a ranch, goes to the PBR World Cup in Vegas in preparation for



hitting the PBR circuit. Thrills, spills and more thrills as he carves out the fastest apprenticeship in bull riding history. Will Sull have what it takes both mentally and physically?

EP 3 : May – September 2010

The cameras will follow Sullivan on the PBR's Pro Division circuit as he travels from North to South and from West to East. Now it's time to play with the big boysand the big bulls.

Events Sullivan will be participating in on the Touring Pro Division

May 22-23 Palo Casino Pala CA,

May 29 Mildland, Texas.

June 19 Twin Falls, Idaho

July 24 Adams County Fair Hastings, NE

Aug 4 West Plains Chute Out Kansas

Aug 13 Cowboy Capital Steamboat Springs Colorado

Sep 18 Mesquite Texas

Oct 20-24 World Bull Riding Finals Las Vegas. We plan to ask the PBR to give Sullivan a guest ride...where he'll tell the crowd about his eventful journey.

