



**photo: Rodeo Lasso Steer**

You've got to have something special to ride the Big Bend Ranch Rodeo.

*A paycheck stub from a working ranch.*

A Ranch Rodeo is different.

It's real cowboys and cowgirls demonstrating skills they use in their day jobs, working on the ranch.





**photo: Young Girl Red Shirt Sitting Horse**

There's no Bull Riding here—that's the Ludicrous Mode of rodeo. A bull's job is to make more cows. A cowboy doesn't interfere with that. The non-profit rodeo in Alpine, Texas, provides young riders the chance to compete, where a fearless 70-pound girl and her horse bring a 700-pound steer to a standstill.





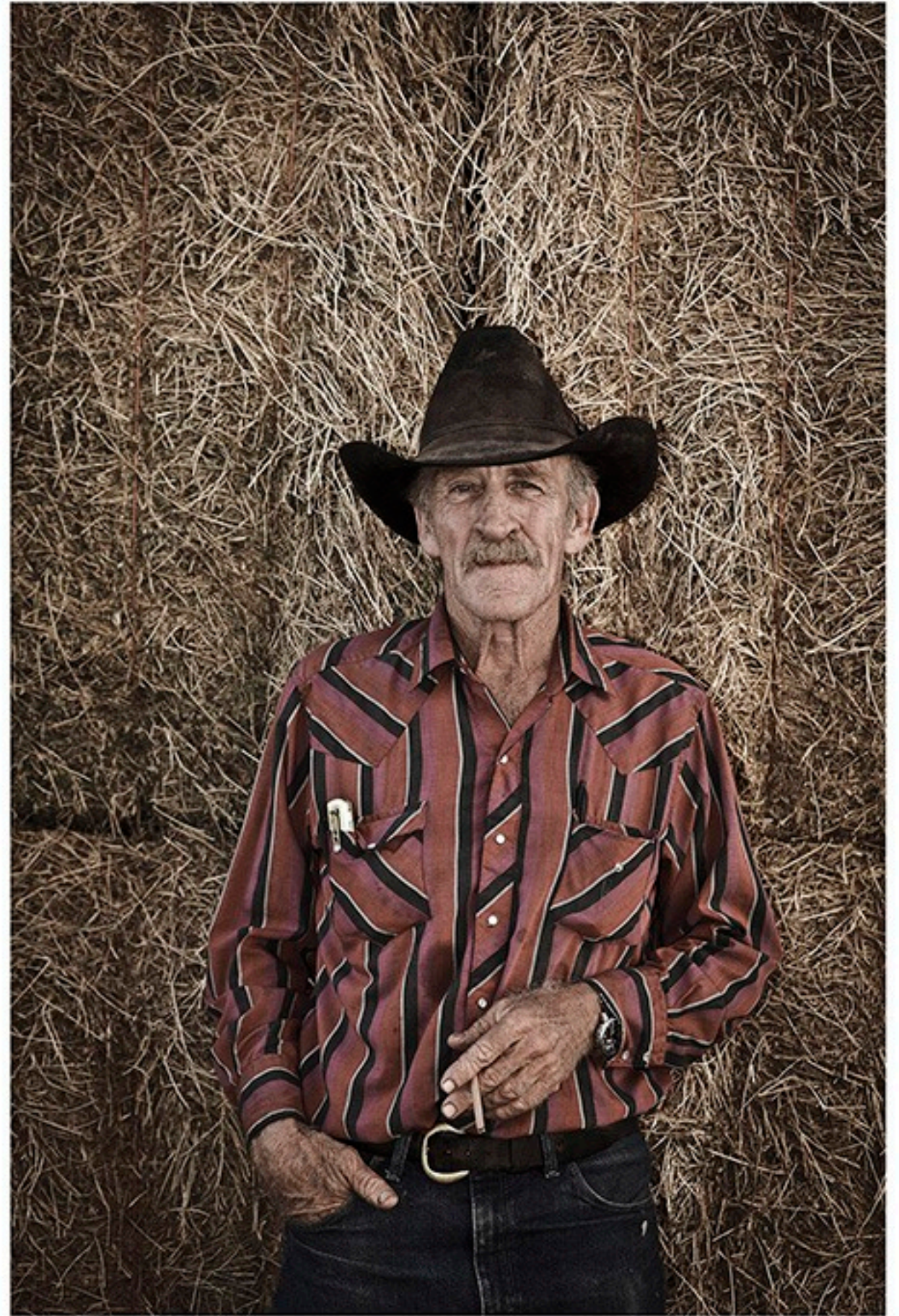
**photo: 3 Young Ropers**

For six years I've shot the rodeo. It took a while for folks to accept me-- clearly, I'm all hat and no cattle.

I wear Levis. They wear pressed Lee Jeans.

They tuck in their ironed western shirts. I wear Dickies work shirts, untucked.









5

**photo: Rodeo Girl, Father Proudly Looks On**

The pictures appear on the rodeo website and promotional materials.

I print photo booklets and give them away for free.

They asked for a copy of this photo to give to the young woman's family.

She was killed in a car wreck shortly after the photo was taken.









7

**photo: Rode Lewis Morning Mount Up**

The myth tells us Cowboys don't die, they ride off into the sunset.

As you'd expect, real life is more complex than that.

This is Rode Lewis, a cow hand at the Kokernot 06 Ranch.

Rode lives with End Stage Renal Disease.





8

**photo: Rode Lewis Smile**

Rode is a life-long ranch hand.

He herds cows, ropes and brands steers.

He “starts” horses, introducing them to the saddle and bridle with soft words and a gentle touch.

Rode drives to Ft. Stockton to get 4 hours of dialysis 3 days a week, 90 miles each way.

This keeps him alive.





9. **photo: Lewis Family**

Rode and his wife Taj live with two lovely girls on a remote ranch south of Alpine--Cathedral Mountain Ranch. As you might expect, living with Rode's disease is hard on them. They hope to raise \$15,000 to build a home dialysis room which would give Rode back 20 hours a week to spend with his family.





10. **photo: Rode Herding**  
Rode is a proud man.  
He doesn't want to accept charity.  
He doesn't want his friends to throw a fundraiser for him.  
He doesn't want to use GoFundMe, which would probably raise the money in a month.  
Instead, he wants to pay for the build-out and dialysis machine himself.





11.

**photo: Rode Saddle Hands**

Ranch hands don't make much money.

Unless they make it on the professional rodeo circuit, they're poor as church mice.

So we began talking about how we might sell Rode's story to a pharmaceutical company, as a testimonial.

It's a great story—mythic, heroic, full of great visuals—kids and animals, and cowboys—rode hard and put up wet.





12. **photo: Daughter Leaning on Horse**

If there's one thing I've learned in my 16 years on the board of the Austin Ad Fed and 12 years volunteering as Marketing Director of the Hill Country Ride for AIDS is that if you need help, just ask. Folks will step up. Austin is a special place, that way.





13. **photo: Daughter Chicken**

We've got the story, we've got the photos, but we've don't quite know how to take the next step, selling it to a Big Pharma company.

I have marketing tools that list creative directors and art buyers for ad agencies that handle the companies which make the drugs Rode takes.





14. **photo: Rode Brush Horse**

But that's not granular enough.

I need to make the pitch directly to the CD or Account Director working with the pharmaceuticals.

I need help from someone who has worked with a drug company, knows the culture and how decisions are made, and can suggest the best way to make this pitch.





15. **photo: Daughter Herding**  
If anyone here tonight has experience working with pharmaceutical clients,  
and knows the right path to make this happen,  
I'd love to talk to you.





16. **photo: Rode Daughter Hat**

I owe Rode plenty.

The Workbook spread with his photo brought me a national campaign shooting for Nocona Boots.

McGarrah Jesse Creative Director James Mikus used to ride ranch rodeo.

He's got the belt buckle to prove it.

James introduced me to the Yeti production team. Nice account, that.





17. **photo: Hand Hold**  
So telling Rode's story is the least I can do to pay him back.  
Home dialysis would give Rode 20 hours a week to spend working with his daughters,  
teaching them to ride and train horses.





18. **photo: Bronc Rider**

If you'd like to see some real rodeo--authentic, the way it's done on the ranch--go see the Big Bend Ranch Rodeo next August. It's 10 degrees cooler than Austin, and the Davis Mountains are spectacular.





19. **photo: Cowboys Praying**  
Wear your hat and shine your boots. Iron your jeans and press your shirt.  
Or not.  
Folks are friendly, and will make you feel welcome even if, like me,  
you're all Hat and no Cattle.





20.

**photo: Cowboy Silhouette**

Our host tonight, DJ Stout, is an Alpine Home Boy.

He's the author of "The Amazing Tale of Mr. Herbert and His Fabulous Alpine Cowboys Baseball Club".

That and his years at Texas Monthly give him a bit of street cred in Alpine.

You can always say "Me and DJ, we're like that."

You'll be treated like family.