

The Rider

Cert 15 USA 2017 104 mins

Crew

Director / Screenplay	Chloé Zhao	
Cinematography	Joshua James Richards	
Film Editing	Alex O'Flinn	
Original music	Nathan Halpern	

Cast

Brady Jandreau	Brady Blackburn
Tim Jandreau	Wayne Blackburn
Lilly Jandreau	Lilly Blackburn
Cat Clifford	himself
Terri Dawn Pourier	herself
Lane Scott	himself
Tanner Langdeau	himself
James Calhoon	himself
Gus	Mooney

Synopsis

South Dakota, the present. Brady, a rising star in the rodeo circuit, has a devastating riding accident, and is warned that his competition days are over.

Back home in the trailer park with his unreliable father Wayne and his autistic sister Lilly, Brady finds himself wondering what he has to live for.

How can he create a future for himself when the only thing he has ever wanted to do is ride and compete?



Booking Information

Distributor: Altitude Film Distribution

DVD bookings:

CINEMA for ALL Booking Scheme

see page 12 for more information

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Available: now



Review

Chloe Zhao's *The Rider* is a wistful ode to a lost America and to the folks who remain pointedly out of synch with the steady march of progress.

Brady's dilemma is a pertinent one: does he risk life and limb to do the thing he loves, or does he get into boring lockstep with the traditional capitalist system?If there's any criticism here, it's that this tried-and-tested story arc doesn't really offer potential for big surprises. From the first five minutes of footage, you can guess exactly where this one is going to go.

Yet the film is blessed with a number of magical sequences, usually when Zhao's documentary instinct kicks in and she just observes as Brady weaves his equine magic. Sometimes that's just nattering to Lilly against the half-light, detailing the bright future he has promised her. Other times it involves his various interactions with horses which channel an aching desire to be cantering across the prairies once more.

....While Brady blindly romanticises the ways of the Old West and the flinty demands of manhood, Zhao largely dismisses it all as macho bullshit. The film is about Brady developing a sense of his own mortality, and not being able to work with horses is, for him, its own type of slow death. In the end, Zhao suggests that only by living will we discover new possibilities, new hopes and new turns in the road.

There are so many individual moments here that are brilliant, and you might want to bet your life savings that this amazing director will deliver her first masterpiece sooner rather than later.

David Jenkins, Little White Lies, September 2018

....Brady gives an extraordinary performance for an untrained star, while his family and friends are similarly naturalistic and engaging.

But it's Zhao who must take the lion's share of the credit, for spotting the cinematic potential in Jandreau's face, for shooting her subjects so well that she gets great performances even from horses, and for keeping the story riveting even in wordless scenes. Zhao captures the weight and almost the smell of the rodeo horses, the dust hanging in the air and the wide prairies at magic hour. John Ford and Terrence Malick would be impressed.

Helen O'Hara, Empire Magazine, September 2018

FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered at Cannes Film Festival 2017, winning the Art Cinema (C.I.C.A.E.) Award. It has been lauded at many international film festivals.
- ☆ It was shot and set in South Dakota's Lakota-Sioux Pine Ridge Reservation.
- ☆ Writer/director Chloé Zhao met Brady Jandreau when researching her film *Songs My Brothers Taught Me (2015)* - he was working on a ranch, and taught her how to ride. The film's script is loosely based on his own life story.