

THE PONY NO ONE COULD RIDE

Written by

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Based on a true story

Address
Phone Number

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EXT. DESERT CANYON

1

Music plays as we pan across the lush green of Carbon Canyon. The chaparral and sage brush is surround by mustard grass on rolling hills. We look down on a horse barn with six stalls, one of which has a brown and white paint standing lazily and staring across the arena. The camera crosses a large roping arena and we see a bullpen off to the left as the picture narrows onto a double wide trailer nestled under a grove of Eucalyptus trees.

Margo is standing with Billie beside the barn:

BILLIE

Hey Mom, ya know what, yep I looked this morning and there still was no pony in the barn. I know it ain't my birthday yet but you did promise me a pony. A boy can hope that his birthday comes early; I will be ten years old in June? Well gonna go get my chores done before school.

Margo turns and walks towards the trailer as Billie begins her chores.

2

EXT. THE STABLES

2

With modern technology even the most traditional cowboy has given way to modern times. Margo reaches into her breast pocket and pulls out her phone.

MARGO

El Rodeo Ranch, Margo speaking, how can I help you friend?

On the other end of the phone is TANNON O'BANNON - a longtime friend of Margo's and the owner of a very successful nursery and greenhouse in Fullerton years earlier:

TANNON

Hey Margo, you still interested in a pony? Well I have on for you. It is a little paint mare. Some time ago she took up residency here, don't know if someone dumped her or what but one day she just showed up.

MARGO

Sounds good so far, how come you don't want to keep her?

TANNON

Well it's like this, the pony has been eating my wife's prize flowers and we are getting to the prime gardening season so she said it was the pony or me. When can you come and get her?

A big grin appears on Margo's face as she thinks how lucky. *

MARGO *

I can be there in a couple of hours. Can you have her ready to go?

TANNON

Well that kind of is a problem. See the pony has been running free, but as Irish luck would have it we managed to get a halter on her and she is tied to a tree, come on down.

3 EXT. THE TRAILERS

3

Margo is next to his truck. *

LADONNA

Glad you called me to go help. Must be times like this being a widow makes it hard to get things done. *

LADONNA chuckles at that and pats Margo on the shoulder. *

Ladonna is a tall blond with skin like leather that has been burned brown by years in the sun. She is a Canadian transplant almost born on the back of a horse. She looks old for her 35 years from too much time in the sun and she has a permanent limp from a broken leg, courtesy of a horse. Her skills are unmatched when on horseback and can rope as good as any man.

Margo just nods in agreement: *

MARGO *

I can always use the company, climb in.

LADONNA

Way ahead of ya. You were so busy getting ready you didn't even see me pull in did ya?

4 EXT. THE TRAILERS

4 *

We see Margo's dust boots hit the ground and hear the creek of the door on the old truck. She is wearing the silver studded spurs she won at a rodeo and the rowels are kind when used on a horse. Dust billows up around her boots as she slams the door and heads to the back of the trailer. *

Meanwhile Ladonna has already beaten him to it and opened the wide door waiting for the pony. *

TANNON

You probably will save my marriage, you have no idea what that little pony has done, thanks for coming and getting her. *

MARGO

This is gonna be good for the both of us, my kid has been buggin me about this for months now and his birthday is just a few months away. Where can we find her, might as well get her off your hands once and for all. *

Tannon looks over Margo's shoulder and we see a 13 hand yellow, grey pony looking suspiciously at them through the branches of a Eucalyptus tree. *

TANNON

Right there she be. *

MARGO

Hey pony, how the heck is ya? Come quietly now, we mean you no harm. *

The pony easy walks with them to the back of the trailer and jumps right in.

LADONNA

Kinda makes me wonder a little more about her. She definitely has handled before.

TANNON

Well look at that. That was easier than I thought it would be.

(MORE)

TANNON (CONT'D)

Your boy should really be happy when he sees that. Thanks for keeping my family happy.

MARGO

That really surprises me. It is as if she has been there before. She has obviously been tied and taught to lead which means she has had some handling at some point in time.

By now Ladonna has loaded the pony.

Pleasantries are exchanged with all and Margo maneuvers the four horse down the drive and onto Bastenchury Road.

5 THE TRAILERS - LATER

5

They pull into the ranch.

LADONNA

Looks cute. I think Billie will love it. When we gonna tell him. He will be home from school in about an hour.

MARGO

Put her in the round pen and I will be working her when Billie comes walking up.

LADONNA

That's a great idea.

FADE TO:

6 EXT. THE ARENA - LATER

6

Billie walking down the gravel drive.

Margo is in the pen with the pony waiting to surprise Billie.

Billie peers over the top with a big smile starts to say hello when she sees the pony.

BILLIE

Hey, hey, is that for me? Happy birthday to me.

MARGO

Come here boy take the lead and
keep her looping in a circle.

Margo steps back and wipes sweat from her head and admires
how her daughter takes so easily to the pony.

MARGO (CONT'D)

One thing at a time. We need to
make sure everything else works
first. She stood nicely when you
cleaned her feet, let's take her
down to the round pen and see if
she lunges ok.

He smiles at his parents and clucks at the pony, a big grin
on his face.

After a few minutes she tugs on the line stopping the pony
and turns it in the other direction. Again no problem, the
pony does as told.

BILLIE

Whoa, Mom, this is fun. Can I
saddle her now, please? She has
done everything I've asked of her.

While Billie was working the pony Margo has gone to the tack
shed and lifted several blankets to reveal a brand new shiny
western saddle. She grabs a saddle pad, lifts the light
saddle and is standing outside the bull pen when Billie asks
if she can ride.

Here is the tack, give it a try.

Margo is holding the line loosely while Billie picks up the
saddle pad and swings it over the back of the pony. The paint
immediately starts to run away from the saddle pad as fast as
it can move spinning in a circle contained only by the lead
rope that Margo is holding onto so she can't get away.

MARGO

Whoa, pony, that's a girl, easy
now. What the heck set her off.
Calm now girl.

Margo is talking calmly to her to gentle her down. As soon as
Billie backs off the pony stops and stands quietly. When they
try a second time the pony starts running in a circle again.

The two of them fight gently with the pony for the next 30
minutes until Margo has had enough.

MARGO (CONT'D)

Look Billie, the sun is starting to set, maybe the little paint is just too excited from her change of environment to let us saddle her today. How bout we put her away and try again tomorrow after school? Then it will be Saturday and you have the whole weekend to work her.

*
*

BILLIE

You know best Mom. I bet she will be just great come tomorrow. You will won't you girl?

*
*

Billie has put down the blanket and saddle and is gently stroking the pony's neck before leading her off to the barn.

*
*

8

EXT. THE STABLE - THE NEXT MORNING

8

*

Billie is up before everyone. She is staring through the bars of the stall looking at the pony.

*

BILLIE

I shall call you Dynamo, like dynamite only smaller. Me and you gonna be good friends yes? Now move over while I clean up after you.

*

MARGO

I entered a ropin' tomorrow to keep my hand in but things are a bit worse than I had thought. Tip really needs to work well.

*

(MORE)

MARGO (CONT'D)

The horse business is just really slow right now.

MARGO (CONT'D)

I just know you will do well tomorrow. All we can do is trust in Tip and Ladonna. She is gonna heel for you, right? Now let's forget that and get back to Bill's pony. He will be home soon and need your help.

9

EXT. THE RANCH - LATER

9

Dawn is not yet breaking as Margo and Ladonna emerge from the barn both leading a horse. They load the horses in silence. *

Billie is standing by the barn and says to himself out loud. *

They leave in the trailer and Billie is seen taking out the pony. *

BILLIE *

I got a pony to ride.

Billie leads the pony to the round pen and drops the lead rope. The pony stands quietly as Billie brushes her and gets the tack. She has the lead in her left hand and the saddle pad in her right. The moment he swings the pad up toward her back the pony takes off in a dead run with Billy trying to run and keep up. *

BILLIE (CONT'D) *

Whoa, dang it, whoa Dynamo. What is wrong with you. What did they do to you?

Billie looses her footing and is now face down in the pen holding the lead rope and being dragged in a circle. Through mouthfuls of dirt she is yelling at the pony to stop. *

Margo gets to the gate of the round pen and pulls it open only to see Billie standing by the pony. The front of her shirt and pants are covered in dirt and her face is smeared, but she is smiling ear to ear. *

BILLIE (CONT'D) *

I think we had a breakthrough today Mom. I think she understands me now.

The saddle pad lies in the dirt as Billie rubs the ponies neck. Paint just stands as if there is nothing to fear. *

MARGO

Well ain't you a sight. Your Dad is gonna skin you if he hears bout this. Come on now. Let's get you some breakfast. Then we will come back and try again.

Margo has her arm around Billie's neck as the two head to the trailer. *

10 EXT. THE ROPING ARENA 10

Margo and Ladonna ride up. *

FIRST ROPER

Oh, man, why did they come. Every time I save enough to enter, they seem to know and show up and beat me.

SECOND ROPER

I guess we is ridin' for second place, again.

Margo miss his head catch. *

ANNOUNCER

That is a no time ladies and gentlemen. Give them a big hand.

MARGO

Time to go home. *

LADONNA

We will get the next one.

The camera watches the rear ends of the horses as they ride to a shady spot and then segues back to

11 THE RANCH 11

Where Margo is talking to Margo. *

MARGO

Mimi, we got a problem and need your advice. Something is really wrong with Dynamo and we needs to find out what it is. Any ideas? *

Margo looks quizzically a short moment then snaps her fingers.

12

EXT. THE RANCH

12

Billie is looking at his watch and pacing up and down in the dirt. *

BILLIE

It is almost noon pony, she should be here anytime. *

LILLIAN, a gypsy, arrives.

MARGO

I am so glad you could come. That pony there is a real mystery to us. I hope you can tell us what is the problem.

LILLIAN

Let me touch her.

Lillian walks over and puts both hands on the ponies neck and closes her eyes. Her body shudders after a few seconds and she pulls her hands back as if they were burned.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

This is such a sad tale. She has been horribly abused by someone. I can see her tied to a telephone pole in the middle of the arena. She has a saddle on her that is much to tight and two heavy sand bags tied to the saddle. I see the sun rising and setting, no food, and no water. Where did you get this poor pony?

MARGO

He was a gift from a friend but I can assure you he had nothing to do with the pony. She just showed up at his place one morning. *

LILLIAN

Hum, well I don't see any way you can overcome this. The pony was treated so badly it won't let anyone saddle her ever again. I can only see a dim outline of the owners. Not nice people.

(MORE)

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

I think they are just in the
business to fleece people.

MARGO

Oh dear, the poor thing. Thank you
for coming.

LILLIAN

I wish there was more I could do
for you but it seems the pony is
just too badly damaged.

Margo gives her a goodbye hug and slips twenty dollars into
her palm as Lillian gets into the van and drives away.

MARGO

Well that didn't go well. Well I
need to decide what to do with that
pony. It could break Bill's heart.
I got an idea, let me make a call.

*
*
*

13

EXT. STABLES - LATER

13

MARGO

(on the phone)

Hey Big John, how the heck are
things up in Oregon? Haven't talked
to ya in awhile.

JOHN

Ah, you know.

John is five feet ten and muscular, his voice is raspy and
his speech is clipped, but he and Margo are close friends
from childhood.

*

*

JOHN (CONT'D)

Not much changes up here.

MARGO

Billie and I are hoping you will
take a cantankerous pony off my
hands.

*
*

JOHN

That bad huh?

MARGO

Great so we will leave on Monday
should be there by Wednesday at the
latest. Thanks my friend.

*

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

14

EXT. JOHN'S RANCH

14

JOHN

Good to see you my old friend.
Follow me up to the high pasture.
Let her out here. Hey Billie, your
Mom filled me in on this little
critter. I hear you tried as best
you could. Well have no fear. She
will be safe here. There is over
500 acres of graze for her. And all
the water she can drink.

*
*
*

BILLIE

I know, it's just hard letting her
go. I had such high hopes.

*

They open the trailer and Billie takes the pony to a high
spot on a ridge. Margo and John are beside her as she pulls
off the halter and turns Dynamo loose.

*
*

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Run free pony, run free.

*

Billie turns her loose and walks away, tears in her eyes.

*

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

MARGO

Well my friend, thanks for
everything.

*

(MORE)

MARGO (CONT'D)

Billie wants to see Dynamo one more
time even though I...

*
*

15 EXT. THE RANCH

15

*

Days later they pull into the ranch.

*

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

Margo greets them at the trailer. Hugs all around.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

*

16 INT. BEDROOM - THREE MONTHS LATER

16

*

A major early winter storm has struck the ranch and the wind
is blowing with 40 mph gusts. It is 2 am and Billie is
suddenly awakened from a fitful sleep.

*

Billie is standing in the doorway, shivering from fear.

*

BILLIE

*

Did you bring that pony back? I
swear I heard it early this morning
during the storm.

THE END