

Tooke “Bred to Buck” legacy now a feature documentary

An Exclusive Preview of the revealing new documentary about one of rodeo’s most influential bucking horse bloodlines, Feek’s Vision, will be presented during the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas this December 7 on the 50th Anniversary of the death of Chandler “Feek” Tooke.

In the 1930s, rancher and rodeo stock contractor Feek Tooke foresaw the end to the availability of wild horses as rodeo stock and envisioned a program for breeding horses with a strong propensity to buck. Amid skepticism, Feek pursued his vision, realized success and forever changed the future of rodeo. Recognizing the significance of Feek’s story, Documentary Filmmaker Ken Howie (*Special Cowboy Moments, Wild Rides, Hardship to Freedom*) was compelled to create a film that would capture this important rodeo history to be enjoyed by generations of rodeo fans and horse lovers, as well as enthusiasts of equine genetics.

Rodeo champions such as Larry Mahan, Deb Copenhaver, Clint Johnson, Dan Mortenson, Brad Gjermundson and Ty Murray share stories and historical details about the Tooke Bucking Horses and their profound impact on the sport of rodeo. Legendary stock contractors Harry Vold, Cotton Rosser and Mel Potter (Rodeo, Inc.), Matt Burch (Burch Rodeo), Sparky Dreesen (J Bar J) and Powder River Rodeo’s Franzen family share their testaments to Tooke bred horses, many still winning titles today. Traveling thousands of miles to capture original footage, Howie brings revered rodeo legends to the screen, sharing memories of their matches against Tooke bred horses in the arena.

The date of the exclusive preview of this film is significant, as December 7, 2018 will mark 50 years to the day of Feek's death during the 1968 National Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma City. On the next to last night of the rodeo, Feek received an award for Tooke bred champion bucking horse "Sheep Mountain", on behalf of Rodeo Inc. Immediately on exiting the arena he fell from his horse having suffered a fatal heart attack, award still in hand.

Adding to the momentous timing of the film preview is the passing of Feek’s eldest son, Ernest Tooke, this past April 3rd. Ernest was instrumental in the Tooke Bucking Horse operation, before and after his father’s death in 1968.

An exceptional and entertaining storyteller, Ernest remained to the end the most complete source of information on the Tooke string. His willingness to sit down with Ken on camera is compelling. A reserved man, Ernest felt comfortable enough with Ken to welcome him into his inner circle and, in so doing, laid the essential groundwork for this important record of rodeo history. Ernest’s grandson Toby Tooke, family historian and consultant on the film, commented on the relationship between Ken and Ernest. “I know from day one Ken has felt pressure for this project to be accurate, fun, and tell the story. From the beginning, I made Ken aware how tough Ernest was to please. I think he took that as a challenge and is striving for perfection. Ken is fully aware how big of a fan Grandpa was of his work with Special Cowboy Moments...he always said, 'the right people, at the right time, to tell the right story.' And now we have the most anticipated rodeo documentary in history on our hands. [Grandpa] was always surprised when I told him who we had lined up... Larry Mahan, Ty Murray, Harry Vold, Shawn Davis, Donnie Gay...I think he was shocked, and he realized that Tooke Bucking Horses have a special story and needs to be told from all aspects...from cowboys over the years, to contractors who carry on our genetics, to rodeo fans.”

In a post on the “Tooke Bucking Horses” Facebook page, Ken reflected, “When starting work on Feek's Vision, I felt that if Ernest is pleased with the finished film, I will have done a good job. I am grateful for

the time Ernest spent telling me the stories, both on camera and off, about the Tooke legacy. My respect for the man is not something I can describe, with words. It will have to come through, in the film.”

The Orleans Hotel & Casino will be the exclusive venue for previewing Feek’s Vision during the week of the NFR. In addition to the Exclusive Preview on December 7th, public screenings will take place at The Orleans on December 9th, 12th and 13th. All showings will be at 2:00pm. The Orleans Hotel & Casino hosts a number of organizations and events centered completely around the scores of rodeo fans who flood Las Vegas for the NFR, including Larry Jordan’s “The World of Rodeo Reunion and Gold Card Gathering”, an NFR viewing at Rump’s Rodeo Party, and the National Finals Tonight Show - a nightly re-cap of the rodeo action hosted by 8X World Champion Cowboys, Don Gay and Joe Beaver.

For more information visit feeksvision.com or call Tess Howie at (701) 495-1705.
