

IS IT TRUE A COWBOY LOVES HIS HORSE AS MUCH AS ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD?

I love mine.

WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN HORSES AND COWBOY STUFF?

I grew up in it. My grandparents and my father had a family ranch (in very rural British Columbia, Canada). It was 19,000 acres. Really huge. A cattle ranch. Originally that is what we used the horses for — taking the cattle to the mountains for the summer and then we'd go up and get 'em and bring 'em down for the fall. And the people I most admired, the guys I looked up to... I was just raised doing it so I didn't really know anything else.

THIS LOVE AFFAIR WITH HORSES AND THIS LIFESTYLE, HAS IT BEEN A HINDRANCE TO RELATIONSHIPS OR A HELP?

It's probably been a hindrance I would say. It's great. I meet a lot of new people all of the time and a lot of great people but it's hard to establish a long term. I'm not home every night. It's hard because it is not normal.

YOU PHYSICALLY LOOK LIKE A COWBOY. HAVE YOU BEEN AWARE OF THAT OVER YOUR LIFE?

What you see in photos is the real stuff I wear every day. It's all real.

For years I had no idea I had that image. I had very few pictures taken as a child. I just didn't see myself that way for years. I was unaware of it until I stepped into the gay community I had no idea. The first time I went out I felt embarrassed. What do people wear? I was thinking 'I can't wear what I wear.' But I couldn't do it. I tried. But I looked a dork.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT ON A HORSE?

There are so many of them. I'm so blessed. And new ones happen almost every day.

One that stands out is when we rescued a horse on the side of a mountain. The rescue team had given up on him. A buddy of mine and I hiked in with food and water and shovels and equipment — and guns, just in case — and we spent the

night on the mountain with him on the mountain. We had to dig a trail on the side of the hill because the stallion couldn't go up or down. The horse had slipped and gone down the hill. The girl that was on him was okay but he kept going.

He screamed when he saw us coming. How smart he was. He just stood there and stared at us as if he was saying 'Now what?' We picked with the shovel and dug out a 12 inch trail along this bluff. We dug it out 4 or 5 feet in front of him and then he'd follow us. If he'd gone even an inch left he'd be off and at the bottom of the river.

We got him out. It was great. I'll never forget it. We were really able to make a difference. That is a great memory. He was gonna die and we got him out of there. It was the best thing... there were a few tears.

IS IT DIFFICULT TO BE GAY AND BE AROUND SOME HORSE PEOPLE? SAY, REALLY RURAL CONSERVATIVE HORSE OWNERS AND RANCHERS?

Whether I'm sitting here in The Pearl or on the road at one of the ranches in Wyoming or Montana I don't care...I don't apologize for being gay. I hear some fag joke and I'm the first to interrupt it. It's bullshit. They all get over it. Even the roughest, toughest, drunkest ones are kind of embarrassed how they sound when you point it out to them. I'm not a hero. I think anyone comfortable with themselves will stand up and say... 'Did you just say that?'

The people that hire me as a horseman hire me because I'm really good at what I do. I know what works for me. Ninety-nine point nine percent of them know I'm gay. They don't care. I don't care. Many are religious. They could care less. They treat me respect and I treat them with respect.

People's minds get changed over a period of time. Most of these crazy red-necked guys, and I can say that because they are, they don't know I'm gay up front. We become friends. We spend years working together on projects and later they say 'Are you serious?' Some of them are my best friends. They'd be there for me for anything and I would be there for them.

It's kind of one person at a time. It's logical, right? They love you or they don't love you. If they don't love (me) I can't help that. But I doubt that it because I'm gay.

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