

**THERE'S A 200-FOOT
COWBOY IN ISTANBUL**

A Monologue

By Mike Folie

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THERE'S A TWO HUNDRED FOOT COWBOY IN ISTANBUL

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AT RISE: Lights up on an CHARLENE, a woman in HER 30s in a cowboy bar in West Texas. The setting is established by a blare of country music and the background sounds of people drinking and talking. CHARLENE holds an unlit cigarette and is looking around the room. Establishing music and crowd sounds fade down as SHE begins to speak.

CHARLENE

Hey, Cowboy! Yeah, I'm talking to you! You smoke? Well that don't mean you can't come over here and light a lady's cigarette for her, does it? C'mon! I'll buy you a drink. What!? You don't drink?! Jesus H. Christ, Slim! What kinda cowboy are you anyway?! Ain't you old enough to ... Oh, you just don't drink during the rodeo. Well the rodeo's over for today, ain't it, Slim?

Y'know I saw you out there today. I think you're gonna win this thing big tomorrow. I do. Sammy, set my boy Slim here up with whatever he wants to drink. Put it on my tab. Sit, sit!

Oh, no, you don't really have to light it for me, Sweetheart! I quit smokin' five years ago. I just like havin' somethin' to do with my hands. I can't seem to keep 'em still. Sometimes I actually dig my nails into my own hands so bad they bleed, and holding onto a cigarette seems to . . . Well, I get all the cigarettes I want for free.

Because I work for a tobacco company, Honey, that's why. Great Western Tobacco.

Oh, now, that ain't no way to talk! 'Specially seein' as you're working for a tobacco company, too. Who do you think's putting up the prize money for this here rodeo, Slim? That's tobacco money you're gonna be taking home after you win this thing tomorrow. No! We're not tryin' to hide! Jesus! If it was up to us we'd have our cigarette signs up all over the place. The goddamn organizers won't let us put our name on anything! They think some little kid might see our ads, go right out and start smokin' and drinkin' and snortin' heroin, too, for all I know.

Well, of course kids shouldn't smoke! Christ, if my mamma ever caught me smoking when I was little she would-a whupped me so's I wouldn't be able to sit down for a week!

CHARLENE (CONT.)

Oh, yeah! I may look like a big city girl nowadays, Slim, but I am one hundred percent country! And lemme tell you something, my mamma was so happy when they built that cigarette factory and I got a job workin' there in public relations right outta high school. 'Cuz all she ever wanted for me, my mamma, was that I didn't end up working in those goddamn cotton mills. She started workin' in one when she was fourteen, and she looked like she was a hundred and ten 'fore she was forty years old. Up and died 'fore she was fifty. She did. I was workin' in Europe when she passed and Great Western, they sent a private jet to fly me home for my mamma's funeral. They sure did.

Oh, look. You got me talkin' 'bout my mamma and I get all teary. But I got nothing to cry about. Cuz I work for the biggest and best damn tobacco company in this here country, and we have the most popular cigarette brand in this whole wide world. And do you know why we have the most popular brand of cigarette in the whole wide world? I'll give you a hint. 'Cause-a you! You cowboys! Great Western's got that cowboy thing goin' for 'em. And boy! -- do people just love that cowboy! All over the world they love that cowboy!

Like for instance, in Istanbul, we got one of our cowboy ads on the side of a building two hundred feet high facing right down the main drag. It's a magnificent sight. And I got that sign for Great Western. Me. Those good 'ol Turkish boys thought I was going to be a pushover. Bbut they didn't know what the hell hit 'em. I got a fifty-year lease on that damn sign, renewable in perpe-goddamn-tuity and dirt cheap at that! That 200-foot cowboy's gonna be lookin' down at those Turks when my grandchildren are grown up. Except it doesn't look like I'm gonna have any grandchildren seein' as you've gotta have kids first 'fore you can have grandchildren and I've been way too busy travellin' in my job an' all for any of that stuff.

Well, what I do, Slim, is I run a very special marketing program for Great Western Tobacco. See, we have all this money we used to spend on billboards and magazine ads that we can't spend on those things anymore, 'cuz, like, we no longer have the right to advertise our perfectly legal products. Y'know? And I thought, why don't we give some of this money right to the people? Why don't we just get ourselves some livin', breathin', walkin' advertisements of our very own? Guys like you, Slim! We put you under contract and pay you a ton of money. And you become a kinda waking advertisement for our cigarettes. You go out to bars and clubs like this one every night, and you just sorta hand out some of our product to people an' -- well -- just do your cowboy thing, y'know. It's like getting paid to party! You get to travel all over the country and . . .

Well hold on there! Before you get in a huff lemme tell you it's a lotta money I'm talking about here, Slim, and . . .

CHARLENE (CONT.)

Oh! Well, I am sorry about that. But nobody forced your Daddy to smoke, now did they? I'm sorry. Look, I'll give you my card and . . . Well it don't cost you nothin' to just take the goddamn card and if you change your mind you can . . . Okay. Okay then. Suit yourself, Slim. Hey. No hard feelings, okay? I'm over at the Ramada if you should change your mind. Room 2204.

(Calling after HIM)

And good luck tomorrow! I'm gonna be watchin' and I'm gonna be rootin' for you, boy!
Bye now!

(HE has left. An air of sadness envelops HER. SHE takes out a fresh cigarette from HER pack. SHE lights it, takes a deep drag, and rallies HERSELF. SHE looks around.)

Hey! You! Cowboy! Yeah, I'm talking to you! Why'nt you come on over for a few minutes and keep a lady company?

(Blackout.)

THE END