TEXAS RUN

Written by
Mark Shaffer

Copyright (c) 2023

Contact: Mark@Mark-Shaffer.com (206) 478 5886

TEXAS RUN

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPERIMPOSE: ANTEBELLUM TEXAS, July 4, 1850

We hear TEENAGE BOYS talk.

TRAVIS CONNOLLY

(excited)

Hurry up.

AUSTIN CONNOLLY

I will, Stand back!

FADE IN:

EXT. COW PASTURE - NIGHT

close on - A MATCH HEAD ignites and touches the end of a FUSE. The fuse SPARKLES towards a large MEXICAN FIRECRACKER the size of a quarter stick of dynamite.

Twin brothers, AUSTIN and TRAVIS CONNOLLY, 15, run and stand with five other BOYS a safe distance away.

KABOOM! - THE FIRECRACKER EXPLODES.

A BLINDING WHITE FLASH illuminates the LOOK OF AWE on the boy's faces. Some have their FINGERS in their EARS.

BOYS CHEER!

TRAVIS

Austin, light another.

AUSTIN

That was our last one, we'd better head back.

BOYS

Aw.

Austin, Travis and the boys walk towards a brightly illuminated barn. Festive MUSIC AND LAUGHTER emanate from inside.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

An Independence Day celebration is in progress. Red, white and blue garlands line the walls. A massive Texas flag is proudly displayed over the entrance.

TOWN FOLK DANCE to a FIDDLER and a BANJO PLAYER who smiles and winks at an admiring TEENAGE GIRL.

CHILDREN gleefully run through the crowd playing tag.

WOMEN sit, visit and gossip behind a Potluck table proudly displaying pies and casseroles.

MEN stand around smoking pipes and conversing.

TWO OLD TIMERS pass a whiskey jug.

BILLY BRAVOS, 15, sits by the wall watching the festivities. Billy is the orphaned son of a Mexican prostitute, half Irish with dark features and green eyes.

KAY-LYNN McCULLOCH, 16, The prettiest school girl in town, dances past.

The song ends. Kay-Lynn curtsies to her enamored DANCE PARTNER, who bows and waits for another dance.

Kay-Lynn sees Billy sitting alone. She ignores her dance partner and sits beside him.

KAY-LYNN

Hi Billy.

BILLY

H-Hi.

Kay-Lynn is confident she could have her pick of any suitor, but...she has a crush on Billy.

The band plays a WALTZ.

KAY-LYNN

Dance with me Billy.

BILLY

I don't know how.

KAY-LYNN

It's easy, I'll teach you.

BILLY (smiles shyly and shakes his head)

No.

Kay-Lynn stands and extends her hand.

Billy processes her request. How can he say no to Kay-Lynn McCulloch?

He cautiously rises.

KAY-LYNN

Just take my hand and place your other hand here.

She guides his hand to the small of her back.

KAY-LYNN (cont'd)

Count, one-two-three, one-two-three. Start with your left foot. Ready?

Off they go, a little clumsy at first but Billy soon gets the rhythm.

Kay-Lynn sings to Billy, their faces only inches apart.

KAY-LYNN (cont'd)

"Green grow the Lilacs all covered with dew"

Billy smiles.

CONNOLLY TABLE

KIT CONNOLLY, 20, the eldest of the Connolly brothers, tall, handsome and cocky, displays a .44 revolver to his younger brothers TRAVIS and AUSTIN.

KIT

General Lane himself presented this Walker Colt to father.

The younger brothers stare in admiration.

KIT (cont'd)

Father said it would be mine when I turned twenty years old. Look at the engraving, it killed Mexicans at the battle of Angostura.

Kay-Lynn and Billy dance by.

TRAVIS

(excited)

Kit, Kit, there's Kay-Lynn McCulloch.

Kit turns to watch.

KTT

Why is she dancing with Billy Bravos?

TRAVIS

She looks happy.

KIT

Well, she's never danced with a "real man."

BACK TO BILLY AND KAY-LYNN

The songs ends, Billy waits, uncertain of his next move.

Kay-Lynn sits, then beckens Billy to sit next to her.

KAY-LYNN

You look very handsome tonight.

Billy smiles shyly. He wears his best white work shirt and a Bolo Tie made from a strip of rawhide. His worn cowboy boots are clean and polished. Billy is a lowly stable hand at the massive CONNOLLY RANCH.

CONNOLLY TABLE

BOYD CONNOLLY, Patriarch of the Connolly family, enters scene. He is a large, no nonsense father figure with a commanding presence.

BOYD CONNOLLY

Evening boys.

BOYS

Good evening father.

BOYD CONNOLLY

What are you young men up to?

TRAVIS

Kit was gonna' show us how a
"real man" sweet talks a gal.

The band plays a lively uptempo song.

Boyd, Austin and Travis took to Kit.

KIT

(Cocky but a little

uneasy)

Watch and learn boys.

Kit takes a sip from a silver flask, straightens himself, winks at his brothers, then walks directly to Billy and Kay-Lynn. He interrupts their conversation, ignores Billy and gives Kay-Lynn his best smile.

KIT (cont'd)

Kay-Lynn, might I be so bold as to request your company on the dance floor.

KAY-LYNN

(politely)

Perhaps later Kit. I'm visiting with Billy.

Kay-Lynn turns her attention back to Billy.

Kit stands, stunned by her refusal.

He glares at Billy who looks down and avoids eye contact.

Kit walks back to the table where his father and brothers are watching.

TRAVIS

Ha! You sure dazzled her with your
"manly charm."

KIT

Hush up before I wallop you... She said she was fatigued and required repose.

TRAVIS

Ha! She appears wide awake for Billy Bravos.

AUSTIN

(Teasing)

I think he's smitten.

BOYD CONNOLLY

Son, that filly is blossoming into fine breeding stock. You are a Connolly! Are you going to allow a cockerel like Billy Bravos to curtail your advances.

BILLY AND KAY-LYNN

KAY-LYNN

Shall we step outside. The moon is splendid tonight.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - NIGHT

Billy and Kay-Lynn stroll along the river, gazing at the stars, enjoying the cool summer air.

Kay-Lynn takes Billy's hand.

KAY-LYNN

Come.

She leads him to a willow tree by the river bank and sits down in the tall grass.

Billy sits next to her.

They sit in silence for a beat.

KAY-LYNN (cont'd)

Billy, do you think I'm pretty?

BILLY

Y-Yes.

Kay-Lynn turns and leans towards Billy.

KAY-LYNN

Kiss me Billy.

She purses her lips.

Billy hesitates, then meets her halfway. Their lips gently touch for an instant.

Kay-Lynn lays back in the tall grass, her face glows in the soft moonlight.

Billy gazes at her for a beat, then... bends down and tenderly kisses Kay-Lynn's lips, softer and longer this time.

Kay-Lynn takes Billy's hand and presses it to her breast.

Billy's eyes widen, a look of youthful innocence on his face.

KAY-LYNN - looks up at Billy, she lifts her petticoat.

KAY-LYNN (cont'd)

(breathless)

Billy... put it inside me.

Billy is taken by surprise. Can this be happening?

He eagerly unbuttons his trousers, slides them down to his knees and gently lays on top of her.

KAY-LYNN (cont'd)

Let me...

Kay-Lynn reaches down and guides him.

As he enters Kay-Lynn, she lets out a STIFLED CRY, then embraces Billy with a powerful hug, her hips move rapidly, her eyes are closed, a look of determination on her face.

DISOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVERSIDE - NIGHT - LATER

Kay-Lynn and Billy lie sleeping side by side under the willow tree.

CLOSE ON - A COWBOY BOOT - Kicks Billy in his flank.

Billy wakes to see Kit Connolly, drunk and angry, standing over him.

Travis and Austin stand off to the side.

KIT

God Damn half breed!

Billy scrambles to his feet.

KIT (cont'd)

What the hell you doing?

BILLY

I-

KIT

You don't go near her. Ever!

Kit is 20, over six feet tall, a grown man. Billy is a gangling teenager. He is forcefully backed to the river's edge.

They face each other.

KIT (cont'd)

I want you off of our ranch.

Billy is stunned.

BILLY

I-

KIT

(screams)

Ouiet!

Kit draws a fancy abalone handled hunting knife from a leather sheath attached to his belt. He turns to Austin and Travis.

KIT (cont'd)

Hell, I think I'll cut his huevos off so he never comes near a white woman again.

Billy stares at the KNIFE BLADE GLINTING in the moonlight. He back steps into the river.

Kay-Lynn attempts to run to Billy but Austin holds her in a bear hug.

AUSTIN

Stay out of this, you'll get injured.

KAY-LYNN

(shouts to Kit)

Leave us alone!

Billy backs knee deep into the water.

Kit follows but hesitates at the river's edge.

TRAVIS

What's the matter Kit, you afraid of gettin' your fancy boots wet? Ha!

AUSTIN

Leave him Kit, he ain't worth it.

KIT

Be quiet little brothers while I geld this half breed.

Kit takes a tentative step and sinks in the river's mud spinning sideways into Billy, waiving his arms for balance. Billy reaches and swiftly pulls Kit's revolver from it's holster.

Kit goes down and lands on his butt in the mud at the river's edge.

Billy aims the revolver at Kit's face.

Kit holds his hands out in defense.

KIT (cont'd)

No! Wait! I was just fixin' to scare ya.

KAY-LYNN

Billy! No!

Billy turns and meets Kay-Lynn's pleading eyes.

They share a moment.

Billy slowly lowers the pistol, tucks it into his waistband, turns and disappears silently into the rivers blackness.

Kit picks himself up and wipes the mud from his rear end.

KIT

That little thief stole my Colt Walker.

KAY-LYNN

That is most deserving, you indecorous oaf.

Kit glares angrily at Kay-Lynn, then... his face softens.

KIT

You boys get on back.

AUSTIN

Kit-

KIT

Goddamnit! You little shits, I'll beat your asses.

Austin and Travis leave.

Austin runs ahead to:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Austin scans the room and spots his father conversing with a GROUP OF MEN. He hesitates... then discreetly approaches and taps him. Boyd Connolly stops and turns to Austin.

AUSTIN

Father-

BOYD CONNOLLY

(scolds)

You were taught never to interrupt when men are conversing.

Austin looks down.

Boyd Connolly turns back to the group of men.

Austin stands there... uncertain.

Boyd Connolly tells an indistinguishable joke punchline. The men LAUGH.

AUSTIN

Father...

Boyd Connolly turns to Austin.

BOYS CONNOLLY

What? What is so damn important?

Austin is speechless.

Boyd Connolly recognizes Austin's concern and softens.

BOYD CONNOLLY

What is it son?

AUSTIN

(whispers)

Father, Kit is doing something bad.

BOYD CONNOLLY

What is he doing now?

AUSTIN

He is hurting Kay-Lynn McCulloch.

BOYD CONNOLLY

(smiles to the men)

Excuse me gentlemen, it appears my son needs assistance.

They exit the barn, Austin runs ahead, Boyd Connolly walks swiftly to:

EXT. RIVERSIDE - NIGHT

Kit is on top of Kay-Lynn, his hand over her mouth, attempting to force his knee between hers, trying to spread her legs apart.

KIT CONNOLLY

Goddamn you girl! Stop being so feisty.

A MASSIVE HAND - grips Kit's hair, pulls him off of Kay-Lynn and throws him to the ground.

Kit looks up, terrified, as Boyd Connolly stands over him.

Kit attempts to rise.

KIT

Father, I was just-

Boyd Connolly BITCH SLAPS Kit.

BOYD CONNOLLY

If I <u>ever</u> catch you mistreating a lady <u>again</u>, I will beat manners into you with your grandfather's razor strop. Now git!

Kit picks up his hat, scrambles up the river bank and slinks away in shame. Austin follows.

Kay-Lynn sobs uncontrollably, gasping for breath.

Boyd Connolly - unsure how to handle this looming scandal - attempts to comfort her.

BOYD CONNOLLY (cont'd)

Kay-Lynn...dear, please forgive my son's rascality, he sometimes gets a trifle wild. But...

(a wink and a nod)

In a young stud, that can be a desirable quality.

Kay-Lynn's sobbing slows and stops. She looks at Boyd Connolly in dis-belief.

BOYD CONNOLLY (cont'd)

I mean, who could be faulted for desiring a beautiful young woman such as yourself.

(tenderly)

My carriage is at your call, if you would like me to escort you home.

Kay-Lynn processes his overture then shakes her head.

KAY-LYNN

(whispers)

No.

BOYD CONNOLLY

Kay-Lynn dear-

She stands, raises her head high and exits scene, leaving Boyd Connolly at that sacred spot, where earlier in the evening she had made love for the first time.

INT. CONNOLLY RANCH HOUSE KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Boyd Connolly sits at a table reading a bible. Outside the window, RANCH HANDS lead a spirited horse past.

A MEXICAN HOUSEMAID refills his coffee cup.

Boyd Connolly GRUNTS, ignores her, and continues to read his bible.

The Mexican Housemaid stands at a wood stove stirring a pot.

Kit Connolly, hungover, a SCRATCH above his eye, stumbles into scene.

BOYD CONNOLLY

(reads aloud)

If a man find a damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die:

Boyd Connolly closes his bible.

BOYD CONNOLLY (cont'd)

Sit down son, I have a story to share with you.

KIT

Yes Father.

Kit sits and rests his head in his hands.

BOYD CONNOLLY

Son, look at me.

Kit attentively looks at his father with bloodshot eyes.

Boyd Connolly sits back and speaks slowly, choosing his words carefully.

BOYD CONNOLLY (cont'd)

When I was your age, I was attending Boston university. I was young and handsome.

(ponders)

I deflowered many a maiden - including your mother - but never did I force my will upon them, nor declare false pledges of affection, unlike other cads who would boast about their conquests using these deceitful tactics. I found their deeds distasteful...and ungentlemanly.

KIT

Father, I wasn't-

BOYD CONNOLLY

Now... this girl, Kay-Lynn, her grand father is Judge Winston McCulloch, an old family friend who helped me acquire the water rights to the north aquifer that enables our beef cattle to prosper and multiply. You do understand the importance of this arrangement?

KIT CONNOLLY

Yes father.

BOYD CONNOLLY

I want you to write a letter of apology to Miss McCulloch explaining how the scourge of liquor clouded your judgment and you - being a fine christian - are truly apologetic for actions caused by the demon whiskey.

(beat)

I want it written and personally delivered today.

KIT

Father, must I?

BOYD CONNOLLY

Son, I have striven to raise you and your brothers as men of virtue and principle.

Boyd Connolly pauses, sips his coffee, then takes on a more intimate demeanor.

BOYD CONNOLLY (cont'd)

Now...your brother Travis, he's a bit slow, Austin is soft - he takes after your mother. You are my first born, the strongest of our kin. When I am gone, the Connolly ranch will be yours.

KIT

Thank you father.

BOYD CONNOLLY

But first, there are lessons in life you must learn...the most important being...

(raises his voice)
Never piss on the King's boot!

(Beat)

Now, write the god-damn apology!

Boyd Connolly rises to leave.

Travis and Austin enter, they appear curious.

AUSTIN

Father?

BOYD CONNOLLY

I was explaining to your brother, how god did not bequeath this land of abundance to the feeble.

Boyd Connolly opens his shirt and displays a thick scar on his breast.

BOYD CONNOLLY (cont'd)

Never forget, I killed an Indian with my own hands on this very ground you stand upon. I did it so you boys would have advantages over these ignorant breeding hicks around us.

(MORE)

BOYD CONNOLLY (cont'd)
If there is one truth in Texas, it is this: "If you don't claim it... some other man will."

Boyd Connolly exits scene, leaving Kit sitting, rubbing his aching head.

- END PART ONE -

MEXICO, TEN YEARS LATER

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

On a slight hill, overlooking a valley, sits a humble ranch house. CHICKENS and PIGS roam free, a vegetable GARDEN blooms, HORSES graze in a small pasture.

Billy Bravos, 25, now a grown man, lean and muscular, vigorously pumps water into a raised wooden barrel shower on a tripod just to the rear of his ranch house.

Billy's spouse, CAMILLA, sits under a nearby shade tree. Their son ELADIO, 5, sits between her legs as she trims his hair with a knife.

CAMILLA IS DEAF.

NOTE: All interaction between Billy, Eladio and Camilla will be in SIGN LANGUAGE / subtitled, indicated by being enclosed in brackets.

Billy looks tenderly at Camilla and Eladio. He tosses a pebble that lands by Camilla's feet. She looks up and smiles.

BILLY [Camilla come, I need you.]

Camilla laboriously stands. She is pregnant, showing a MEDIUM BABY BUMP. She and Eladio join Billy.

Billy points to the bottom of the barrel shower.

Camilla and Eladio look up.

Billy pulls a rope, the barrel pivots and empties it's chilly contents on all three.

Camilla is shocked! She angrily pounds on Billy's chest.

Eladio laughs.

Billy SPITS a fountain of water on Camilla, then takes her hand and HUMMS a Mexican folk song as they dance in the mud.

Camilla finally gives in, smiles, and embraces Billy.

NITA, their mongrel dog, lies in the shade and barks happily,

A HEN approaches and has a drink of water.

JESUS CAVALLERO, 50, Camilla's father, smiles as he watches from the side.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE TRAIL - DAY

Two MEN, driving a small herd of cattle, approach.

Billy and Jesus go to greet them.

JESUS

Bien dia Senior MORELOS.

MORELOS

Bad news mi amigos. The governor is demanding a portion of all cattle as a tax. An official will be coming to collect yours tomorrow.

BILLY

How can the government collect our cattle, what have they ever done for us?

MORELOS

(shrugs)

The Army must eat.

Morelos produces a poster and hands it to Jesus.

MORELOS (cont'd)

There is a man in Texas buying livestock.

Billy and Jesus study the poster.

CLOSE ON POSTER - WANTED BEEF CATTLE, \$22 IN GOLD.

MORELOS (cont'd)

I am much to old to go, but...if you will take my cattle with yours to Texas, I will hide your bull and a few heifers with mine in Canyon Verde.

Jesus and Billy look seriously at each other.

EXT. COW PASTURE - DAY - LATER

Jesus counts their cattle.

JESUS

The CALVING HEIFER is missing.

Jesus scans the terrain.

JESUS (cont'd)

(excitedly points)

There.

EXT. WOODED GROVE - DAY

Among the trees, the calving heifer lies on her side, deep in labor.

Billy and Jesus dismount, walk softly and watch from a discreet distance away.

The heifer squirms, the calf's front hoofs appear in a skin of membrane, followed by the calf's snout.

The heifer gives a final push and the newborn calf squirts out.

The calf lies still, not moving.

The heifer turns to inspect her calf, licks it vigorously, then blares out.

HEIFER

Moooooo!

The calf lies still.

The heifer stands.

HEIFER (cont'd)

Mooooooo!

The calf opens it eyes. It struggles to stand, wobbles sideways for a step or two, then finally finds it's balance.

BILLY

It's a boy!

The Heifer slowly leaves the grove and re-enters the pasture followed by her newborn calf. The other heifers approach to inspect their new member.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Billy and Jesus watch Senior Morelos leave with their bull, two of their cows, the heifer and her newborn calf.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Billy, Jesus, Camilla and Eladio sit in a circle at a wooden table holding hands.

JESUS

(Spanish)

Lord, we thank you for this nourishment, we ask that you guide and protect us on our journey, amen.

ELADIO

Papi, can I go to Texas with you.

Billy laughs and scruffs Eladio's hair.

BILLY

Not this time, someday, when you're bigger.

Eladio pouts.

Camilla seems distant, she pokes at the food on her plate.

Eladio feeds a food scrap to their dog, Nita, who stands on her hind legs with her paws on the table.

CAMILLA

(bangs on table)

[No!]

Nita cowers.

Camilla abruptly rises and clears the table.

Billy and Jesus exchange looks.

Jesus pours tequila from a jug into a cup.

ELADIO

Abuelo, let me try.

Jesus looks to Billy, who smiles and shrugs, "Okay."

Jesus slides his cup to Eladio.

Eladio sniffs it, then takes a small sip.

ELADIO (cont'd)

(coughs)

Ewe!

Billy and Jesus break out laughing as Eladio's face turns red and his eyes water.

Jesus finishes the shot of tequila with relish and slams the cup on the table.

JESUS

Ahhh.

BILLY

(to Eladio)

I have something for you.

Billy reaches into his pocket and presents Eladio with a small hand carved wooden pony.

Eladio's eyes light up. He studies the wooden pony, grinning at the realistic craftsmanship.

ELADIO

(excited)

Papi, me gusta.

Eladio runs and lays on his cot, galloping the wooden pony across his pillow.

Camilla silently washes plates in a tub at the kitchen window.

Jesus lays a crude MAP on the table, Billy watches as Jesus traces their route to Texas with his finger, arriving at Matamoros.

JESUS

... And your enemies?

Billy reaches and makes a circle encompassing a large area to the west.

JESUS (cont'd)

Dios mio!

BILLY

They are very powerful.

JESUS

The gringos have stolen much of Mexico.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE VERANDA - NIGHT - LATER

Jesus sits on a bench, under the stars, playing a Spanish guitar, a jug of tequila by his side.

A COYOTE HOWLS in the distance.

JESUS

(calls)

Mijo, fetch SANTANA.

Billy fetches Santana, a beautiful oiled and polished rifle from Jesus's Soldier days. Jesus pulls a bandanna from his pocket and lovingly wipes the action, then gently leans it against the wall.

BILLY

You should sleep Abuelo.

JESUS

The coyotes are out.

Billy nods, then places his hand on Jesus's shoulder.

BILLY

Buenos notches.

Jesus pats Billy's hand.

Billy exits scene.

Jesus takes a drink from his tequila jug and scans the darkness, squinting his eyes.

JESUS P.O.V. - CHICKENS quietly rest in their coop twenty yards from their ranch house.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Camilla lies in bed, wide awake, staring at the ceiling.

Jesus's guitar plays softly outside.

Billy slips into bed and turns to Camilla.

BILLY

[What is wrong?]

She turns and faces him.

CAMILLA`

[I had a vision; Something bad will happen.]

BILLY

(smiles reassuringly)

[No, we will be fine.]

CAMILLA

[Will She be there?]

BILLY

(shrugs)

[I don't know.]

CAMILLA

[I fear you will see her and leave us.]

BILLY

(sincerely)

[You, Eladio and our baby are my life, my life is here with you.]

Camilla smiles.

BILLY (cont'd)

[When I return, I will bring a bag of gold.]

Camilla grins, relieved. She wraps her arms around Billy and snuggles closer. She kisses his cheek, then climbs atop and straddles him, making SOFT COOING NOISES.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - VERANDA - NIGHT

Jesus plays his guitar, he hears Camilla's cooing, looks towards the bedroom and smiles.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY - DAWN

Camilla and Eladio stand on the veranda watching Billy and Jesus pack their horses.

The two vaqueros are dressed in leather chaps, boots with spurs, large brimmed sombreros and long sleeve shirts.

Billy carries KIT CONNOLLY'S COLT WALKER PISTOL in a tanned handmade leather cross-draw holster.

Jesus slides his rifle into a scabbard strapped to his saddle, then he mounts NAPOLEON, a giant six year old appaloosa stallion.

Billy kneels to say good-bye to Eladio. He reaches into his pocket and presents Eladio with a small folding knife.

BILLY

(intimately)

This was my father's one possession, given to me by my mother when I was your age.

Eladio beams.

BILLY (cont'd)

I want you to have it. Keep it clean and oiled. It is very sharp so be careful.

ELADIO

Si Papi.

BILLY

(serious)

Remember, when I am away, you are the "Man of the house," obey and protect your Mother.

ELADIO

Si Papi

Billy stands.

Eladio looks up to his father, then clings to his thigh.

Billy takes a half step and drags Eladio with him.

BILLY

(laughs)

Eladio, I must go.

Eladio reluctantly releases his hold.

Billy turns to leave but Camilla stands before him, a serious look on her face.

She removes her Saint Christopher medal from around her neck and places it on Billy's.

CAMILLA

[Regreso a mi.]

Billy nods, hugs Camilla one last time, then mounts his horse.

With a tip of his hat, Jesus, Billy and Nita set out for Texas with their herd of twelve cattle and five horses.

- END PART ONE -