

Dallas Young Pine

Lethbridge, Alberta

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DYP: I was born and raised on the Blood Indian Reserve. I'm a member of the Many Children Clan that still exists; they're alive and well today. Where I reside with my spouse Katie, we reside on the Bullhorn Coulee where the clan are known to have been very active. Today there's a lot of history there at Bullhorn Coulee. [Native language] That's where I currently reside today. I'm very proud of that heritage that we currently still experience today.

I would like to briefly talk about my upbringing. I just want to mention that I'm a residential school survivor. I went to the St. Mary Residential School for ten years. I left there. I didn't really get an education but I was very active in sports. At a young age, I went to Vernon, B.C. as a cadet. That little experience really taught me about the world outside the reserve. I was able to immediately find out about order. Your dress code was very important. When I say order, getting up at 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning, for your sleeping quarters everything had to be perfect. I learned that at a young age. Being active physically was utmost; you had to suck it up at a young age.

I came back from the reserve and kind of followed my father's life. He worked in the agricultural field, in the beef industry on the band ranch where they dealt with cattle. Working with him, that order that I got at a young age kind of integrated with that work I did with my dad. My dad was very strict. He too was in the Canadian armed forces. They were ready to go down to the Korean conflict and ready to get on the plane down to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Then, somehow, the conflict ended there, so he never went to war.

But I continued to work, started working, and being around my father and my grandfather, Joe Young Pine, I watched my grandfather farm his own land. We traveled with a team of horses hauling water. At a young age, we didn't have the luxuries of today. It was all hard work. They were instrumental in the horse industry. My grandfather in 1939 went down under to Australia. At that time they sailed from Vancouver down to Sidney, Australia. He, along with seven other cowboys, natives from Treaty 7 area, traveled down there on a ship to help promote the greatest outdoor show on earth, the Calgary Stampede. A lot of history there. They didn't have horse trailers to bring their wagons and horses to Calgary, they traveled from where we currently reside. It took them a few days to get to Calgary and they raced in the half mile of hell.

That history, that legacy, is very important to me. My father, Jerry, he rodeoed. He was one of those true all-around cowboys, worked both ends of the arena. I grew up watching him. We kind of separated when I started working in the agricultural field working in various places: Warner, Alberta, Foremost in the farms. I learned a lot about machinery and stuff like that, living off the reserve. But where we reside, that's home. We always came home. When my dad was working for the Blood band ranch dealing with cattle and horses, rounding up cattle, fencing, I grew up learning at an early age. But there was something that intrigued my interest in the sport of rodeo.

When the employees there got paid, usually with their families heading to [... 8:50], my little brother and my sister, we went to the rodeo pen, chasing the range bulls, and we started dreaming about being rodeo champions. Of course we didn't have the luxuries again or the money to go to a rodeo school; we just did it with passion and excitement. We were having fun. We were dreaming big. I started riding bulls, started riding bucking horses, and I started bulldogging at a very young age. All those that I did, watching my dad and my grandfather. I'm very proud of that heritage that I learned from my father and my forefathers. I just pursued that rodeo with a lot of hard work, practise. Running was very important. I believe today that, I always tell young kids and people that want to get into rodeo, if you can run, and I don't mean jogging, running. Running so important to be able to not only ride bulls but bucking horses, bulldogging, team roping, all those things, all the events in rodeo. That's what I did. I was having fun. By running and working hard, injuries were not ... like I never broke my legs, knock on wood. The running was, I was fit and was able to do a lot of things. I did marathons. We ran in the Jasper men's relay. Just going from a marathon to rodeo, powwows, just putting everything together was very important to me.

I started having clinics at the ranch where young kids were coming, teaching them how to ride horses. It was people from all over. Even the chief of police on the band from the Blood Reserve came to me. We had a private session. He wanted to bulldog, he wanted to go to the police rodeo in Cochrane. I had one week with him and he was very appreciative of going to that police rodeo and bulldogging. Some of the things that he gave me I still have today, that respect and appreciating that area of teaching. So with rodeo, going back to rodeo, I took off with the Indian Rodeo Cowboys Association that was formed on the Blood Reserve. They call it the Region 1; I always say that we're not Region 1 for nothing. Indian Rodeo Cowboys Association produced a lot. That region was just, people from all over North America came to that region. I've heard people say it's the toughest region because that's where all the pros are. When I rodeoed in that association you had to lift up your game, because the best of the best were there. I was able to compete against them.

Then I went to the Chinook Rodeo Association, FCA. I went professional, CPRA. When you compete in that level you have to have your game plan up there. One of the things that I found that was very important was, you have to have horses, you had to have the horses to compete in that level. We had a good team. The hazing horse's name was Billy Bob; everybody knew Billy Bob. That horse enjoyed what he did. He was kind of a one man horse. There's a story behind that horse, but I won't get into it. My dogging horse's name was Smokin.' When you talk about rodeo, everybody knew who Smokin' was. Everybody wanted to get on that horse. He loved the game. That horse took us to Las Vegas, Albuquerque New Mexico, all over. Eight times I qualified for the Indian National Finals. Our granddaughter in '08 she started coming on strong. She took us everywhere – Albuquerque, Gallup New Mexico, Vegas – and there was that passion. It was rewarding, the miles that we put in there. It's something that I'm very proud of. If I was to encourage young kids to rodeo today, of course rodeo today is changing, but I feel that we have talent that can compete with the best. It's taken a whole new dimension. It's all about

money today. I would encourage any young cowboy or cowgirl to go professional if they believe that they can make it.

Q: When you go to the big competitions, do you go by yourself or with a group of people?

DYP: It's kind of going up the ladder. If you're going down the rodeo trail, if you want to 'buddy up' is what they call it, you can buddy up with three other contestants. You will all enter at the same time, so that entry system is important: I'm going to be entering so and so with me, set us up the same. Of course you have to be a full-fledged member like professional. I was going to say, Calgary Stampede, currently it's kind of an invitational now. They only pick the top 20 contestants that are separated in A and B category. The A will compete for four days, the B four days, and then they have a semi-final round, and then the top ten showdown on the final day of Calgary. So it depends on the Indian Cowboys Association, which has changed today to the INFR Commission. The way it's set up today is I think they have two regions in Canada – the one in Standoff and the one up further north; those are two regions. Then there's regions in the Midwest, the northwest states. They've got a region up in Florida. Those regions have their own top ten contestants. They'll break it down to their finals where they pick the top two in each region, and those contestants go to the Indian National Finals Rodeo. A system that I disagree with, because today they're set up where Standoff are going to have a qualifying round. You go to Standoff, enter through INFR Commission in Browning, Montana. You win standoff, that's your ticket to Vegas, and so on with the other. I believe Morley, the Stoneys, are having a qualifying rodeo. Siksika I heard are having a qualifying rodeo. So those qualifiers, the winners make it to Vegas, which I don't agree with.

Q: So you used to be able to buddy up with people even if they didn't qualify?

DYP: Yes, back then, I'd pack up my horses and there were four of us and we're all going to chip in. Before we'd take off to Albuquerque, I'm gonna fill up here with my tax card, and when we get to Billings, Katie's gonna pay for the fuel; we get to Denver, we take turns like that. But we're responsible for the entry fees. Depending on how long you're on the road, I like to unload my horses every six hours and stretch them out so they don't get sore, loosen them up, clean the trailer out. You want everybody to be comfortable. We stop in Rapid City, and Katie Joe will pay for the meal there. So we all kind of chip in. Well, I'm going to take off and I'm going to sleep for a while, Katie Joe or Wayne is going to take over the wheel. So it's all everybody doing their part in this trip. It's a long haul. We could be set up for like we go down to Albuquerque, we go down to Window Rock, Arizona. We're not just hitting one rodeo; we're going off to another rodeo. But that membership is very important; which association. I've experienced all that.

Q: When you're on the road, does it feel more like an us versus them kind of deal? Do you see the same faces at different rodeos?

DYP: In rodeo, it's very important to have camaraderie. That camaraderie - let's say there's ten bareback riders; these are your fellow competitors, but with that camaraderie you've gotta be

helping each other out. You even want to include a newcomer that's coming, because you want them to win. Win, win, win is very important. It doesn't matter if you don't do well, but you want to support your traveling partners or the fellow competitors. Camaraderie was very important. I don't know if they have that today.

Just an example: one time we went up to Fort Vermilion. I traveled up there with two world champions and a young boy steer rider, a son of one of those world champions. I was with a relative of mine. That relative of mine was on cloud nine traveling with these cowboys. He had a dream; I want to be like these guys. Anyway, to make a long story short, we exchanged the driving and we got up to Fort Vermilion. We were all vying for a championship, the year end championship. One of those, Calvin Fox, came out in the bareback riding, and as he was getting ready to ride this horse, Toughen Up. I told my cousin, watch him. Anyway, he stood there and I wanted him to see what he was doing. He went out there and he won the rodeo. Those guys up there were presenting the awards right after the event ended. They received a plaque. He just kind of gave it to us and we were all looking at it. When I looked at that plaque - I looked at it and I thought, I'm going to get me one of these too. I went out and Larry Boo mounted me, and I won the bulldogging. So we went up there and kind of cleaned up and took all the hardware, the money, and came back home. Those are some of the memorable trips in rodeo that I always think about. That's the camaraderie. We didn't say too much going up there, but just the presence and good feeling. Of course, there was no alcohol involved. We were very competitive. So camaraderie was very important and I believe that it's important in any level in any association that you're competing in.

Q: Back then, was it easier to make a living in rodeo?

DYP: Rodeo, I'm going to look at the PRCA, the CPRA. Money is getting up there - sponsorship, added purses. You go to Vegas today, what you win there, that's yours; this is my hard work. You can live off that money. You can buy a ranch, cattle, maybe new horses - your rig. You can invest what you win there, the same as the CPRA. At the Canadian finals, what they win there is overall after the finals are over, what you win there? Yes you can invest in that money. You can buy a home. I believe that in the Indian National Finals, the INFR, they need to put more money into the finals in Las Vegas. I don't think the money's there. But I would encourage a young guy to go professionally PRCA or CPRA, where the money is. A newcomer can go to the American in Texas in March and be an instant millionaire. That all depends on if you think you're good. If you think you've got the talent, by all means you go that route. I had two tribal members from the Blood Reserve that I believe could have made it to the American, provided they were well mounted, if they had the horse. But of course they didn't believe in themselves, or other things were more important to them. Does that answer your question?

Q: Yes. One thing I forgot to mention: When were you born?

DYP: I was born October 12, 1957.

Q: When did you become involved in rodeo?

DYP: I started riding in amateur circuits, boy steer riding. My dad wanted me to dress particular. I wasn't interested in the cotton ties and that straw hat; I didn't like it. But I guess when I was ten years old, I started entering rodeos, boy steer riding. In 1970, I started riding in the novice bareback at the first Calgary Rodeo Royal in Calgary, at the corral. I don't know if that corral is still standing. But that's where I started in the novice bareback. Then in the Indian rodeo in 1974, I started, then. I kind of left on a different direction, but then I came back in '78 when the Indian Rodeo Cowboys Association was thriving. I remember in 1978 the entries were almost 800 entries - 800 entries. They had over a million dollar purse. That figure there was a lot, but it was dwindled down to 200 today. We've got to get the newcomers back up; we've got to get the youngsters too. We've got to get the right stock that they're going to learn on. By doing that, we have to have strong people supporting that professionalism; that's key. You want a newcomer to get on a proven horse. When I say a proven horse, a horse that's going to come out and jump and kick, and they've got their spurring, like they say, poetry in motion. When that happens, that newcomer most likely is going to be hooked; that rodeo blood is going to flow through that person. That's what you want. A newcomer, you're not going to get him on a horse that's gonna run out and duck and dive. Chances are they'll fall off, and there's the end of a dream. I really picked up in '85, I really picked up rodeo, riding bulls, bucking horses, I started bulldogging.

Q: When you started to make that transition to teaching people, was that just a natural response to the attitude of mentoring others, or was it a business decision?

DYP: More natural. I didn't get rich on rodeo. But it was a passion - that mixture of having fun in life, that camaraderie, that competitiveness, that motivation to win. Of course there was challenges. I always say, when you get hit by a negative part where somebody doesn't want you to use their horses, well you have to have a Plan B. There's a lot of people out there that have good horses. You prove to those owners that you can win and bulldog, they'll let you use their horses, because they're winning too when you win on their horses.

Q: By reputation?

DYP: They get a quarter of your winnings or like that. It happens. The Cassidys who owned Wet Willie? I think four different cowboys won world titles on that horse. So it's the same in the Indian.

Q: Is the Indian rodeo association separate from another type? Were you not allowed to participate in the non-indigenous rodeos?

DYP: No, it was open. Like I mentioned, I rodeoed Indian. For a while there, I kind of competed with the non-Natives; the majority were non-Natives. It was kind of a rare thing to see, being the only Native. I think a lot of Natives were discouraged to go that route, maybe intimidated or racism or like that. You had to prove that I could compete with these guys. Even some of the

African American, like Fred Whitfield. If you read his book, *Gold Buckles Don't Lie*, he faced a lot of that because he was black. But I believe he won eight world titles. It's that drive, that determination that you can win. With the majority, it's the same thing. I guess it kind of depends on, if you want to talk Native, where they want to rodeo. But I've rodeoed in every level – Indian, non-native, professionally and senior professionals, like that.

Q: How does racism manifest itself?

DYP: I experienced that in the Indian rodeo association where I asked somebody if I could use their horse, and they didn't want me to use their horse. That's why I said, you have to have a Plan B. If you know that you can win in this level, I believe that if you can do these things when you're younger. . . . When I got into the pro level, I was kind of in my 30s, and it was a little tough going down the trail. I didn't have people to go down the rodeo trail with. It was a little tough. I believe that if you do your part in that camaraderie, you get that respect. If you feel that you can win in that level, that respect is upmost. It also depends on that seriousness of - I believe you've got to give it your all. You can't be giving it a half assed effort. People will see that. If somebody comes up to you, can I use your horse? If you haven't proven yourself, chances are you'll get kind of denied: no, I don't want you riding my horse. You don't want to mix inexperience with experience; there's going to be a clash there. That's why in my clinics, I always tell these young guys, you wanna be a cowboy, first and foremost dress the part. Don't be jumping into a rodeo arena with a T-shirt and cap or runners or like that. You wanna be a cowboy, dress the part. People will see that. But respect comes in. So you work hard like I did, go home and train hard. Prepare yourself for the rodeo and let your actions go do the talking. That experience.

Q: You've got to treat it professionally, and professionals need a uniform.

DYP: Yes. I've seen a lot of people like my grandfather and my father. I watched them when they worked. I worked with them and I like to imitate them today, what they did. That's how your actions, people see it: I wanna be like that guy.

Q: How did you get into the movies?

DYP: Very interesting. I'll make it short. Allan Bruce had probably seen us, what we did in rodeo. There was a movie coming up, 'Dreamkeeper.' He was really bugging us at a rodeo, they need some riders at Dreamkeeper. You guys go, go, please go. My brother told him, well if you get me a part we'll go. So we went to Dreamkeeper and our first day there, Wright Bruised Head was the guy below the main wrangler. So the riders all arrived and the horses were there and that guy told Wright, okay Wright, you know the riders, you know the horses – pair them up. What does Wright do? My name was the first name called. There was this bad dude, his name was Red Dog. Nobody liked Red Dog. He was a paint. Wright paired with that horse. I got on that horse, and that horse and I just connected. My younger days kind of paid off, riding bareback at a young age. With the long hair that we had, working hard, our riding skills came in in the movies and we just took off with that. We started doing stunts and riding. The last movie we did was

‘The Revenant,’ where we were the main Arikaras in that movie. I always say about that movie, it was us that Leonardo won his first Oscar. That hard work, our riding skills. I went to a powwow. Have you been to a powwow?

Q: A couple of times, yes.

DYP: That drumbeat, you hear that drumbeat. When that drumbeat connects with your heartbeat, that feeling you have is like rodeo. It’s in your blood, it flows through your bloodstream. You can never get rid of it. I went to a powwow and I said, I’m not going to be sitting there watching, I’m going to be out there dancing. Rodeo, powwows, whatever. Being professional is the key.

Q: So you got involved in the movies.

DYP: That’s where I feel the money came in, doing the stunts.

Q: What’s a big stunt that you remember?

DYP: Well we did a lot of stunts in “I Buried My Heart at Wounded Knee.” Then Dreamkeeper; we did some stunts there. The money that I made on that movie was rewarding. I didn’t earn that kind of money rodeoing. We did some stunts on the Kootenay River just outside Rigby, Montana. They say that Kootenay River was a dangerous river where many lives had perished, so to go into that setting, we had to be brought into some of the sites on a boat. That was the only way in and out of those areas. Those stunts that we did were dangerous. So just a few of those. Riding bareback full speed was dangerous. But at a young age to have done that, now it’s like in a movie. I always say, we relived history in ‘Dreamkeeper’ when we chased 1,600 head of buffalo, 1,600 head of buffalo full throttle. Three of us were kind of put in front of all that herd. The movie people were down in the valley. When those buffalo got to that corner they started trotting, then they started running towards three of us riders. I thought to myself at that time, what are we gonna do? We can’t stop that 1,600 head to stand still there. The only thing that came into my mind was, “we gotta move with them.” By the time they got to where we were at, they were full throttle and we had to move with them full speed. When we got down into the coulee there was a big swamp. There comes Red Dog, that horse I mentioned. There was no way I could run around that swamp. That’s where I had to have all my faith in that horse, was to go through that swamp full speed.

Q: I guess Red Dog had something to lose too.

DYP: We got over the Milk River Ridge and that herd of buffalo just left a black trail. There was 26 of us riders. . . I just thought we just relived history.

[END]