

TITLE (in OKLAHOMA!-style lettering): MEDEIRA, NORTH DAKOTA.  
An ambulance SIREN gets increasingly loud until-

STAR WIPE TO:

EXT: MUSICAL SET - SUNSET

300 audience members sit in a 1,000-seat amphitheater overlooking an open-air stage made to look like a FRONTIER TOWN. Storefronts with words like "Saloon" and "Dry Goods" flank the stage. We're talking Hollywood-level budget.

Center stage, a BAND dressed like gold prospectors plays lively bluegrass. Beyond the set lies an open plain surrounded by dusty mountains. A small town in the distance dots the otherwise empty landscape. A large hill to the right of the stage has "MEDEIRA" spelled out like the Hollywood Sign. Red, white, and blue fireworks ERUPT over the stage. The crowd CHEERS as the show reaches its climax.

One of the hosts, COWGIRL KATIE (37), comes out in a red, white, and blue pageant gown.

KATIE

(Singing)

Oh, Medeira! Medeira!/ A place for  
lovers and kisses and friends!

Katie belts with a slow pop-ballad voice. She prioritizes emotion over breath control. Another host, COWBOY CARL (35), joins her. His cowboy outfit shares the American Flag ombre.

CARL

So! That's the big story of this  
little town! From Teddy Roosevelt's  
time here to our "uh oh" standoff  
with the FBI in 1962 ...

KATIE

Medeira! Medeira!/ I love her till  
my dying end!

CARL

... Medeira has had a lot of  
stories. Special thanks to the  
Bismarck county orphanage for  
making the trip! Now let's hear it  
for the Medeira Town Players!

The crowd applauds as the Cast (20 performers in fluorescent cowboy outfits) sashays across the stage.

CARL (CONT'D)  
My cohost, Cowgirl Katie -

Katie twirls and attempts arpeggios.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Our Mascot Shale-y, brought to you  
by our generous sponsor, Coal  
Americorp!

A MASCOT dressed as a piece of coal with huge googly eyes saunters on stage. The kids in the crowd go wild.

CARL (CONT'D)  
And a round of applause for the  
show's producer and founder,  
Charles Mulch!

CHARLES (80s), oldest looking man in America, begins an inordinately long trek onto the stage from the audience.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Now give it up for the greatest  
story ever told... America!

The Cast performs their high-energy finale with tap and gymnastics. A HORSE with "USA" shaved into its side gallops up the tall hill. A spotlight follows it.

CAST  
We believe that the best is yet to  
be/ We believe in Manifest destiny

The Americana horse is halfway up the hill. Charles braces his way up the final steps.

CAST (CONT'D)  
America! You're standing strong!/  
America! You can't do wrong!

Charles arrives on stage. A firework that spells out the word "COAL" ERUPTS. The fireworks spook the horse, who REARS and knocks off the rider. The horse charges down the hill.

CAST (CONT'D)  
America! You're the best of all!  
America! You'll never fall!

The crowd YELLS to warn Charles as the horse charges on set. It rears and COLLAPSES onto him. The majority-child audience erupts into chaos.

The final note plays.

INT. COAL AMERICORP BOARDROOM - DAY

The video of the horse kicking Charles plays on a flatscreen TV. It gets shut off.

Two Americorp PR reps sit at one end of a long mahogany conference table. GLENN (30s) leans against the table doing serious damage to a stress ball. The second rep, TONY (50s), fidgets in his chair. Behind them, the Americorp logo is laser-cut into the dark wood paneling. Tony is on edge.

GLENN

So you can see why this situation  
has been a PR nightmare for us.

The room is silent. A ceiling fan WHIRS overhead.

MEDEIRA VII (57), the director of the musical and cultural maven of the town, sits calmly across the table. She's curt, acidic, and a hurricane dressed in culottes. But for now, she's sweet.

MEDEIRA

I don't see the problem.

GLENN

A 2,000-pound Clydesdale trampled  
the spirit of our town in front of  
an audience of children -

MEDEIRA

I thought we worked that  
possibility into the budget.

TONY

Our, uh, trampling contingency  
didn't include the settlements -

GLENN

- We did a number to those orphans -

TONY

- They were sitting in the "splash  
zone" so to speak, and since you  
insisted on that horse segment -

GLENN

- The board has no choice but to  
let you go.

Medeira stiffens in her chair.

MEDEIRA

What? It's not like their parents care.

GLENN

Medeira, you don't understand how bad this horse stunt is for us. Do you know how many podcasters I've had to hit away with a broom? They're crawling around this town -

TONY

(whispering)

- It's madness. Tote bags, strewn like falling leaves -

GLENN

- And with your accounts drained, we had to look into your ticket sales. We did not like what we saw.

Medeira bristles.

GLENN (CONT'D)

I had someone whip up a photo of your average ticket buyer. Tony -

Tony reluctantly takes out a large MOCK-UP of a horrifyingly old person. Methuselah or Baba Yaga on a bad day. Medeira doesn't flinch.

GLENN (CONT'D)

So effective immediately, the board has relieved you of your writing and directorial duties -

TONY

Besides, ticket sales were already down due to the show being, well, a bit outdated.

Medeira scoffs.

MEDEIRA

Outdated? Name one thing -

TONY

- Your act break song is, um, called 'long live manifest destiny' -

MEDEIRA

Three more.

Glenn takes out a thick stack of papers.

GLENN

The human bones instruments, your villain is Slavico: the sneaky Polish Man -

TONY

- and technically, if we cast a woman over 27, we have to buy her a funeral plot -

MEDEIRA

So you want to make a fruity, commie, Antifa show?

Tony stands up and GASPS in horror. Glenn sits him down.

GLENN

We just don't want an overly-criticized money pit. Also, you never had enough coal references. The board loves coal.

Medeira stands up and grabs her enormous purse.

MEDEIRA

I've been running this show for 18 years, and you two come in and destroy my life's work for what? An itsy-bitsy OSHA violation?

TONY

Think of it as an opportunity to get your life back.

MEDEIRA

Opportunity is the name of a dressage horse I had to put down. The show is my life.

GLENN

Our hands are tied. The town council -

Mysterious wind chimes RING on the words 'town council.'

GLENN (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

- Already sent a new writer to take over the show.

MEDEIRA

Who?

TONY

Medeira, it's best for everyone if you don't know.

Medeira takes a deep breath. Tony is relieved she's taking the news so well. Medeira SMASHES a nearby ficus.

MEDEIRA

You two are effing this show in the face for me. Tony, what's going on?

GLENN

Tony, don't fold. I swear to god.

Medeira leans on the table.

MEDEIRA

Tony, It's just you and me, tell Medeira. Come on. I know your wife. And I will ostracize her from both the Ladies' book club and the PTA. I will render her a freaking leper.

TONY

They brought in some fancy-schmancy writer from New York. His first rehearsal's today.

Glenn throws a stack of PAPER in the air. Medeira is pleased.

EXT: MEDEIRA BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

An old bus deposits JAMIE FLETCHER (29) at the edge of town. Jaded as he is neurotic, he wears wide pants and a shirt from a band that was cool 5 years ago. He is the natural evolution of your liberal arts college boyfriend.

A sweeping orchestral flourish PLAYS in the same vein as "I Think I'm Gonna Like it Here" from Annie. He holds two suitcases and takes in the town.

JAMIE

Well, this certainly can't be far from rock bottom.

The bus drives away. Jamie looks around for any sign of life. A GOLF CART approaches. Cowgirl Katie BEEPS her horn. She wears a graphic tee that reads, "I can't, I have rehearsal."

KATIE

Welcome, Welcome,! Jamie, Jamie!