

### Biting the Dust: The Wild Ride and Dark Romance of the Rodeo Cowboy and the American West

Dirk Johnson



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To the fan, the rodeo cowboy is the distinctly American embodiment of the romantic Old West. But to the young men who live the profession, the realities are modest pay, continuous travel, and the constant threat of injury. While he was the Denver bureau chief of the *New York Times*, Dirk Johnson spent a year on the professional rodeo circuit with cowboys, watching them try to hang on to bucking horses and Brahma bulls—and to wives and livelihoods that seemed only one fall away from disappearing. *Biting the Dust* covers the circuit's biggest events in Denver, the capital of the New West, to small towns on the Great Plains like McCook, Nebraska, where rodeo continues to thrive even as the population shrinks. Johnson takes the reader beyond sentimental visions of the rodeo cowboy and the American West and provides an unforgettable and authentic story of the rodeo today.

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