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H-E-B Texas Beef

Cowboys herding cattle on horseback, the open range, the expansive lands that stretch across the Texas landscape, and the old school ways of caring for animals — all hold an unmistakable romantic appeal, and those are the qualities that we want to bring to these stories. Granted, each has its own distinctive personality. The *Brown Family* spot has more of an epic quality that conjures a sort of *Lonesome Dove* cinematic grandeur. Whereas, the *Graham Family* story is more of a character piece built around the idiosyncratic personality of an 84-year-old rancher and veterinarian, who treats his cattle with tender loving care.

As different as those stories are, they both share the same Texas values, and tried-and-true tradition of raising cattle right — and that's the heart of the message we want to deliver. We want to treat our viewers to imagery that allows them to gain a genuine appreciation for doing things the right way. And as far as I'm concerned, the best and most engaging way to do that is to take an approach that combines the authenticity of documentary filmmaking with the intimacy, awe-inspiring beauty, and cinematic reality of a feature film. That will allow us to capture the scope, the scale, and the down-to-earth honesty needed for *The Brown Family*, while also providing us with the type of portrait-like human details that will make *The Graham Family* story resonate and ring true.

The Look & Feel

Each of these spots calls for a look all its own, but the one thing that they share is the need for taking an approach that is honest down to the last detail. It must never be about using the camera to simply capture a bunch of beautiful pictures. On the other hand, it can't be about just documenting slice of life moments either. We definitely want to capture those wide open vistas, beautiful skies, and dynamic cinematic views. And we'll want to use the camera to get intimately involved in the life, the practices, and the personality of our ranchers. But within those moments we want to make sure that we are able to bring these spots the heart and the soul of the people who have been following this Texas way of life for generations. That's where the magic of these spots can be found. It's in the humanity, the tradition, and the way in which those qualities directly effect the quality of the beef that you're able to find at H-E-B.

Gaining those cinematic and emotional qualities will involve taking a comprehensive approach to the storytelling. We'll want to shoot at different times of the day, so that we can capture these scenes in various types of natural light. We want to shoot those big, beautiful, cloud-dotted skies, tall grass undulating in the wind as we gaze across an open field, the sun coming up over the horizon or settling in the west, or the moon rising in the sky... In other moments we'll use the camera to capture authentic moments of cows grazing, ranchers herding cattle gently across fields or into pens, cowboys working the ranch, or just perched on a horse and watching over part of a herd. In addition to those scenes, we'll use the camera to simply take a breath and get to know know a rancher who has been doing things his way for decades upon decades. In these scenes we'll be more relaxed, and use a range of well-observed human and environmental details to tell our story.

In some instances, we'll employ the use of a drone to offer us those sweeping shots that literally take us flying across these beautiful stretches of open land. Those broader shots will be supported by detailed B Roll footage that offers viewers a great mix of environmental shots and touches of portraiture. The overall idea is to take more of a grand cinematic approach to *The Brown Family*, and then use hints of detailed shots to add touches of personality to the story. In contrast, *The Graham Family* is built mostly on the personality and practices of Dr. Graham himself — and we'll be using some of those bigger shots to add a little Texas color and flavor to that story. But in both instances, the focus will always be on raising cattle the right way — and why that matters to these ranchers, and to the customers who'll find that beef at H-E-B.

The Brown Family

This is a story about a family that has ranching in their blood — and the ranch where they have been raising cattle the same way, generation after generation. It's a big story, a big family tradition, and because of that it feels as if it needs to be told in a big Texas way.

That starts with an epic drone shot that will take us sweeping across the ranch. From this big opening, we transition fluidly to a shot of Jim Brown and his daughter sitting on horseback. And we'll want to make sure to shoot at a time of day when the sun is low on the horizon, which can help lend this scene a poetic but natural beauty.

As the VO plays out, we'll use the camera to explore the ranch, capturing shots of cowboys riding out toward a herd of cattle as the sun lifts up over the horizon, members of the Brown family working the ranch and herding and corralling cattle with a sort of gentle touch.

These shots can also be supported by detailed cutaways that bring the spot some added texture — like a wall of family photos, farm equipment, heroic shots of people on horseback looking over the ranch, and some low angle shot / high speed shots that

capture the grace and beauty of the grass — which is the key natural resource that makes their beef the best that you can ever want to put on your table.

In other moments, we'll capture shots of several members of the Brown Family herding cattle into a pen, riding along a path that cuts across the ranch, or standing along a fence line looking out on the cattle.

Within these scenes, we'll definitely want to take some time to film Austin's daughter riding and herding, while also capturing some observational moments of her interacting with her father. But she's still a little girl, so it might also be nice to catch a few scenes of her interacting with her mom — just so that we can see both the cowgirl and the farm girl sides of her personality.

This leads us to the moments spent with the H-E-B partner at the ranch, speaking to camera, talking to Austin, inspecting cattle, walking past a pen or barn, or involved in some other action on the ranch.

Then, after we've taken this tour of the ranch, and spent a nice part of a day with the Browns, we'll conclude this spot with a shot of Austin standing on top a hill, gazing out across these fields where cattle are grazing — backed by a beautifully lit Texas sky at sunset. We might even want to consider covering this with him standing alone — and then again with him standing alongside his daughter and/or son — in a quiet little family portrait that connects this family to their land.

The Graham Family

This is more of a character piece, and we'll want to establish that more intimate feel with the very first frame by opening on Dr. Graham inspecting a baby calf. Getting the camera close, we'll capture the gentleness of his touch, while also getting a sense of the joy he takes in caring for these animals.

As a way of supporting this personalized portrait, we can use the camera to capture some detailed shots that give us added insight into Dr. Graham's life. That might include exploring the home to capture family photos and memorabilia. Since he's in his 80s it might also be interesting to get footage of things like a well-worn veterinarian bag, a shelf full of old farm journals, or other items that we might discover on the ranch or in the barn.

Using the camera like a curious eye that's always seeking out new and interesting details, we'll follow Dr. Graham as he walks through his barn — inspecting cattle, or just taking a moment to give one or two of them a little attention.

In other moments, we take a moment of pause and capture him talking to camera in a ranch setting, or simply gazing out at his land to appreciate the simple beauty of nature. And there's no better way to bring this story to a close than to see this 84-year-

old veterinarian, who is still a cowboy at heart — sitting high in the saddle, smiling proudly, and watching his cattle walk through a field as the sun is setting on the horizon.

The overall idea is to get as much footage as possible, and cover off a nice range of imagery that will offer you all the editorial coverage you need to tell this story in the most rich and authentic way possible.

We'll want to capture the personality and character of Dr. Graham, the approach he takes to raising and caring for his cattle, and difference those values and traditions make in the products that you'll find at an H-E-B.

Summing up...

As a filmmaker, these are both the types of stories that I live to tell. They're unquestionably real, richly human, tied to a way of life that simply can't be improved upon — and in addition to that, they're also distinctly Texan. Those are the qualities I want to capture, and by doing that we'll be able to connect that uncompromising quality, and difference it makes, to the beef you'll find in an H-E-B store.

Thanks again for thinking of me, and I look forward to speaking with you further.