



National Anthem (2024)

Description

A Heartfelt Exploration of Identity and Community

In 2020, photographer Luke Gilford released “National Anthem,” a monograph [capturing](#) the vibrant queer [community](#) within the International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA). The photographs are striking and [beautiful](#), reflecting Gilford’s [deep connection](#) to the Southwest and his childhood [love](#) for rodeos. However, the traditional rodeo culture, often macho and homophobic, did not embrace him. It wasn’t until he discovered the IGRA that he found a space where he could safely exist and find community. As Gilford shared with Vogue, “It was a revelation because I was, like, wow, you can exist safely in these spaces and find community and do so many of the things that I love doing – but in a queer community.” Over several years, he traveled through Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, documenting this unique sub-[culture](#). His first [feature film](#), “National Anthem,” is set within this community.











The story follows Dylan, who, after struggling to support his family as the de facto father figure to his younger brother, finds an opportunity to work at a local ranch. Here, he is welcomed into a close-knit community of queer ranchers and rodeo performers who embrace their identities and celebrate their differences. As Dylan becomes more involved in this world, he begins to explore his own identity and desires, ultimately discovering what it means to truly belong.

Visually, *“National Anthem”* captures the [stunning landscapes](#) of New Mexico, using the natural beauty of the region to enhance the emotional depth of the narrative. The cinematography is both vibrant and intimate, [allowing viewers](#) to connect with the characters and their experiences. Critics have praised the film for its authentic portrayal of queer culture and the warmth of the community it depicts.

Charlie Plummer delivers a heartfelt performance as Dylan, embodying the character’s struggles and growth with sincerity. The supporting cast, particularly Eve Lindley and Rene Rosado, adds richness to the story, creating a tapestry of relationships that highlight the importance of acceptance and love.

Positive Aspects

1. Beautiful Cinematography:

- “National Anthem” is praised for its [stunning visuals](#), capturing the landscape of the queer American West with a sense of familiarity and intimacy. The film’s cinematography is described as having a down-to-earth beauty that translates into the characters and the world of the rodeo [1](#).

2. Focus on Atmosphere:

- The film prioritizes atmosphere over story, creating an immersive experience that washes over the audience. This approach allows viewers to remember the atmosphere and imagery long after the credits roll [2](#).

3. Compelling Protagonist’s Journey:

- The film’s focus on the protagonist Dylan’s journey of self-discovery is a compelling thread that drives the narrative. Dylan, played by Charlie Plummer, finds a sense of belonging and space within the queer rodeo community [3](#).

4. Representation of the Queer Rodeo Community:

- “National Anthem” serves as a love letter to the resilience and pride of the queer rodeo community. It provides a temporary reprieve by spotlighting a proud and resilient community, offering a contrast to the well-trodden iconography of the American West [1](#).

5. Director’s Personal Connection:

- Director Luke Gilford’s personal connection to the rodeo scene, though not specifically the queer rodeo, adds authenticity to the film. His insight shines through, making the depiction of the queer rodeo community feel genuine and necessary [45](#).

Mixed to Negative Aspects

1. Minimal Storyline:

- Critics have noted that the film’s minimal storyline can be a drawback, as it leans heavily into atmosphere at the expense of a more developed narrative. This can make the [film feel](#) more like an experience than a cohesive story [2](#).

2. Reliance on Tropes:

- The film has been criticized for leaning into unfortunate tropes, which can undermine its originality and impact. This reliance on [familiar elements](#) may detract from the film’s overall effectiveness [6](#).

3. Character Development:

- While the film’s atmosphere and visuals are memorable, the characters themselves may not leave a lasting impression. The focus on the visual and atmospheric elements sometimes comes at the expense of deeper [character development](#) [7](#).

4. Limited Exploration of Themes:

- Although the film introduces themes such as class and religion, it fails to explore them meaningfully. These themes remain as vague allusions rather than [fully developed elements](#) within the narrative [8](#).

User ratings for “National Anthem” currently stand at **6.1/10** on IMDb, reflecting a [positive reception](#) from audiences who appreciate its heartfelt storytelling and representation of queer

experiences.

Expanded Factual Table:

Aspect	Details
Title	National Anthem (2024)
Director	Luke Gilford
Runtime	1 hour 39 minutes
Genre	Drama, LGBTQ+
Themes	Identity, Community, Belonging, The American Dream
Main Cast	Charlie Plummer (Dylan), Eve Lindley, Rene Rosado, Jesse Tyler Ferguson
Production Company	Produced by Lionsgate and Apple Original Films
Cinematography	Stunning visuals that highlight the landscapes of rural New Mexico.
Visual Effects	Minimal use of visual effects, focusing on practical elements and authentic settings.
Music	Original score that complements the film's emotional tone and enhances character moments.
User Ratings	IMDb: 6.1/10
Release Date	Theatrical release on July 18, 2024
Distribution	Distributed by Lionsgate and available on Apple TV for streaming.
Filming Locations	Primarily filmed in New Mexico , showcasing the region's natural beauty.
Production Budget	Estimated at \$10 million , reflecting the film's independent production scale .
Target Audience	LGBTQ+ audiences, drama enthusiasts, and those interested in stories of identity and community.
Critical Reception	Generally positive reviews, with praise for its authenticity and character development.
Sequel Potential	The film's themes and character arcs leave room for potential sequels or further exploration of the characters' lives.

In conclusion, "National Anthem" is a heartfelt and [visually](#) stunning exploration of identity and community, making it a significant addition to LGBTQ+ cinema. With its engaging performances and authentic storytelling, it resonates with audiences seeking meaningful narratives about belonging and self-discovery.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is "National Anthem" about?

“National Anthem” follows Dylan, a young construction worker who joins a community of queer ranchers and rodeo performers in rural New Mexico, exploring his identity and the meaning of belonging.

Is “National Anthem” suitable for all audiences?

The film is rated R, indicating it contains mature themes and content, making it more suitable for adult viewers.

Who directed “National Anthem”?

The film was directed by Luke Gilford, known for his work in independent cinema.

How does this film compare to other LGBTQ+ dramas?

“National Anthem” stands out for its authentic portrayal of queer culture within a [rural setting](#), focusing on community and identity in a way that resonates with [contemporary audiences](#).

Where can I watch “National Anthem”?

“National Anthem” is available in theaters and will be streaming on Apple TV following its theatrical release.

Sources

- IMDb: [National Anthem \(2024\)](#)
- iWatchOnline: [National Anthem](#)
- Rotten Tomatoes: [National Anthem](#)

In summary, “National Anthem” (2024) is a touching and visually captivating film that explores the complexities of identity and community, making it a must-watch for those interested in heartfelt narratives.

CATEGORY

1. Reviews
2. Movies

POST TAG

1. 2024
2. Community
3. cultural symbol
4. Discovering Identity
5. Identity
6. music

7. National Anthem
8. national pride
9. patriotism

DIRECTOR

1. Luke Gilford

GENRE

1. Drama

RATING

1. 6

STREAMING-PLATFORM

1. iwatchonline

MOVIE YEAR

1. 2024

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