

# QUEER CATTLE CALL

What sometimes happens when Mommas let their babies grow up to be cowboys

LARRY DVOSKIN



FRANK CEFALO

“CALLING ALL (GAY) COWBOYS,” read the release.

And the word soon spread like wildfire, across the Internet, through fax lines, telephones, and tell-a-queen. From Kansas City, Phoenix, Wichita, and the Bronx, they descended on midtown Manhattan in cowboy hats (or baseball caps), embroidered suits (or wifebeaters), two-steppin' boots (or straw-covered originals), and heaps of denim—although three arrived in Day-glo gingham and “subtle” day drag. They came to answer the call of multi-platinum producer, Larry Dvoskin, and Academy and Emmy Awards' director, Jeff Margolis: namely, to lasso the country's first openly gay country singer, y'all. (With all due respect to the cowboy in the Village People, who hardly sang country.)

The two showmen, along with Blinkmedia's Frank Cefalo, are chronicling the audition process for a proposed reality show called *American Pride*, which they plan to air on an as-yet-TBD network (they've pitched to many, only one will be chosen). New York City's open audition was just one stop—albeit a media-heavy one—on a national search that will touch down in San Francisco, Hawaii, San Antonio, and Lynchburg (!), among other places, culminating in Nashville, where 50 finalists from the thousands of potential man-loving Tim McGraws, or Shania Twains with Adam's apples, will compete for the number one spot.

It's a little bit *American Idol*, a little bit karaoke night in a gay bar in Dallas. But it's all gay, all country and, according to Dvoskin, “about time.”

GENRE caught up with the *American Pride* team, their camera crew, PR handlers, and a throng of reporters. Together we endured a long afternoon of yodelers, fiddlers, and more than a few tone-deaf posers. All of them, however, were more than ready for their close-ups, and we were more than ready to oblige.



If you're looking to audition for *American Pride*, or just want to see who's made the cut, you can check out Larry Dvoskin's website at [www.coolguymusic.com](http://www.coolguymusic.com).



#### CODE LEVEL: TAWNY

Throwing caution to the wind, Tawny (born Goose Creek, SC) charmed the audience with an original song entitled, *Wipe and Go*. Reason for auditioning: "I thought, 'Why not be the first pop act to cross over to country. Everybody tries to cross over to pop. Why not reverse it?'" Come again? "I'm already a Southeastern regional pop sensation and I'm not offended you don't recognize me." (From this point on, we will never have that problem.)



#### THE REAL DEAL

Matt Alber (born Wichita, KS) lives in San Francisco and performs regularly at the Sundance Saloon. Matt drew gasps, goosebumps, and a mighty round of applause once he had finished belting out his original song, *What Took You So Long?*



#### HOEDOWN IN MIDTOWN

Refusing to let a little thing like no tape deck to play his cassette slow him down, Johnny Walker (born El Paso, TX) thrilled the studio audience with an impromptu rendition of *Cotton-Eyed Joe*, accompanied by his electric fiddle.

#### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Jolanda Lynn (born Mussel Shoals, AL), Portia Lynn (born Dallas, reared Austin, TX), and Hedda Lynn-Lettuce (parts unknown) are The Dixie Chicks with Dicks ("for print and television, The Chixie Dicks"). Reason for auditioning: "This country needs a good drag country trio. America is heavy. We bring you light." Song choices: "A pu-pu platter of 3 songs: a touching ballad called *Angels*, another song called *Don't Sing Along with This Drag Queen Song*, and our closer, *Goodbye Everybody Song*."



#### CUTE WAY BEFORE COUNTRY WAS COOL

Zack Dobbins (born Belvedere, IL), who's been singing country and gospel music since he could talk, sang his Faith Hill-loving heart out with a cover of her *Let Me Let Go*. His first reason for auditioning: "I had a gay record label executive tell me that it would never happen because I'm gay. And then he said, if you want to stay in the closet, we can probably work something out." His second reason: shattering stereotypes and increasing visibility. "My mom's a champion of gay rights now because she sees how it affects her life. My 92-year-old grandmother's an Evangelical Christian who spent two days in her Bible finding me a loophole."

