



Season 3 | Episode 2 | On The Grand Stage

(Bus driving by)

Taylor Peters, Host: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY IN THE FALL.

(Walking)

Peters: THIS IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE LARGEST COLLEGE CAMPUSES IN THE COUNTRY... A MEDICAL SCHOOL, A LAW SCHOOL, STADIUMS FOR BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL... THE GREENHOUSES, THE PARKS... BUT NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE AROUND LUNCHTIME, YOU HEAR IT.

(Goin' Band rehearsing)

Joel Pagan, Director, Goin' Band: There is this really strong and long history with Goin' Band established in 1925. So, here in a couple of years we will be 100.

Peters: PREPARATION IS IN FULL SWING; THE FALL IS SHOWTIME FOR THE GOIN BAND. DAILY REHEARSALS ARE IMPORTANT LEADING UP TO THEIR WEEKLY PERFORMANCE BEFORE A CROWD OF TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FANS.

(March over)

Peters: AND IT BEGINS WITH THE CLASSIC MARCH OVER FROM THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THROUGH THE HEART OF CAMPUS AND INSIDE JONES AT&T STADIUM... GAMEDAY IN THE FALL IS SOMETHING SPECIAL. IT'S A SENTIMENT THAT RESONATES WITH EVERYONE IN THE STANDS AND ON THE FIELD.

(Music)

Bruce Bills, Head Coach, Texas Tech Cheer and Mascots: ...The traditions, that matter to me. I want to carry them on. There's a history before me.

Erin Alvarado, Head Coach, Texas Tech Pom: The Texas Tech brand is so recognizable- that it makes it more valuable to put on a big board.

Peters: THE OLDEST, MOST TREASURED TEXAS TECH TRADITIONS CAN BE ON DISPLAY IN THEIR GRANDEST FORM AT ANY HOME FOOTBALL GAME, LIKE A GROUP OF OLD FRIENDS, THERE'S THE GOIN BAND, THE MASKED RIDER AND RAIDER RED, POM AND CHEER...

Pagan: But there's purpose, there's significance in everything we do. And to be a part of that, to continue that legacy, I say it's terrifying because we want to honor those that came before us, right?

(Music)

Peters: THESE STUDENT GROUPS HAVE BEEN THE FACES OF SCHOOL SPIRIT AND TRADITIONS FOR DECADES, GENERATIONS EVEN. IN THIS EPISODE, WE GO INSIDE THE STORY OF THESE PROGRAMS AND THE PARTS OF THEIR WORK YOU DON'T SEE. THE CORD WOVEN TOGETHER OF COMPETITION AND TRADITION DISPLAYED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

THIS IS EPISODE 2, ON THE GRAND STAGE.

(Tires on gravel)

Peters: THE SKY OUTSIDE IS A VELVETY, RICH BLACK... A HALF EMPTY PARKING LOT IS ILLUMINATED BY SCATTERED LIGHTS SOFTLY CASTING AN ORANGE GLOW ON DOZENS OF CARS. SLOWLY, THEY PULL INTO THE LOT, FIND THEIR SPACE AND CUT THE HEADLIGHTS. IT'S 5:30 AND PRACTICE WILL START SOON.

(Walking through door)

Peters: ON THE MAIN COURT OF THE UNITED SUPERMARKETS ARENA, STIFF AND TIRED BODIES ARE WAKING UP, STRETCHING AND MOVING, WHITE ROLLS OF TAPE CIRCLING WRISTS, ANKLES. STARK WHITE BOWS STAND AT ATTENTION ATOP THE HEADS OF THE FEMALE CO-ED CHEERLEADERS. FEW PRACTICES REMAIN AS WE APPROACH NATIONALS IN DAYTONA... THE MECCA OF COLLEGE COMPETITIVE CHEER.

Bills: Right before running tumbling and pyramid you've got to think about it

Peters: BRUCE HAS BEEN AT THE HELM FOR 13 YEARS... BUT HE HAS BEEN PART OF TECH CHEER FOR 21- DATING BACK TO THE DAYS THAT HE WORE THAT RED AND BLACK UNIFORM HIMSELF.

Bills: I remember when I first got my driver's permit...I was able to come to a game by myself and I just walked around and found my way into the student section and, you know, it was just in awe with everything from the traditions, from the spirit, from and just I don't know what the game was like other than what the cheerleaders were reacting to because my eyes were glued on them the entire time.

Peters: BRUCE IS MEMORABLE, HIS STATUS IN THIS INDUSTRY SAILS HIGHER THAN THE OPENING BASKET TOSS IN THIS YEAR'S ROUTINE. HE HAS LED THIS PROGRAM TO TWO NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THE LAST 7 YEARS. BUT THEY HAVEN'T BROUGHT HOME THE TITLE SINCE 2019... SO THEY'RE ON THE HUNT.

Bills: Get a drink and come back and we'll run it.

Peters: IT'S 6 A.M. AND PRACTICE IS OFFICIALLY UNDERWAY. AND AS THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC, VOICES, CLAPPING FILL THE ARENA, THE HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS... THE PRESSURE- THEY ALL BEGIN TO BE REALIZED. ON THIS MORNING, WE ARE ONE MONTH FROM NATIONALS.

Bills: Breathe a second, then we'll do any pyramids and running tumbling. Get there to baskets, too. Some of y'all are still running late. Come on, we're better than that.

Bills: HE RECORDS EVERYTHING ON HIS PHONE, WATCHING FILM BETWEEN REPS...

Bills: The guys are dipping together but the girls seem like they're stalling or are quicker... you know what I mean?

Peters: THEY MUST BE PERFECT. THE SLIGHTEST SLIP COULD BE CATASTROPHIC. SOMEONE COULD GET SERIOUSLY HURT... AND SO COULD THEIR SCORE. A SINGLE DEDUCTION COULD COST THEM EVERYTHING. THIS IS THE SIDE OF TECH CHEER YOU PROBABLY DON'T SEE. WHEN THEY'RE NOT PERFORMING ON GAMEDAY, OR MAKING EVENT APPEARANCES... THEY'RE HERE.

Bills: ... you'll watch the video, and you'll see ahhh what am I doing? You've got to keep it consistent in your head, thinking, counting, working together on that trusting your skills. That's the main thing, too. Don't get antsy because something changes. The environment at Daytona is going to change. It's not going to be this, it's not going to be perfect weather, hopefully it is but we don't know. You can't let external things impact our technical, trained skills that you're able to do. Thank y'all, proud of you- go to class, stretch, rehydrate, stretch out and take care of your bodies. Good job, get the mats.

(Music)

Peters: THEY WILL DO WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN, EVEN IF THAT MEANS SPENDING 22 HOURS ON A BUS TO GET THERE. WHICH THEY DO... DAYTONA IS WORTH IT.

(Waves on the Beach)

THE WHITE FOAM WAVES THAT BRUSH THE HOT SANDY BEACHES MIGHT BE AS BEAUTIFUL AND POWERFUL AS THE ATHLETES ON THE GRAND STAGE. BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE, IT'S A DOGFIGHT OUT HERE.

Announcer: In our Large Co-Ed Division 1A from Lubbock Texas, Texas Tech University.

(5,6,7,8, Go Tech)

Peters: 14-HUNDRED MILES AWAY, MY CO-WORKERS AND I WATCH THE 2-MINUTE-LONG ROUTINE IN OUR CONFERENCE ROOM ON CAMPUS.

Peters: IT'S BEYOND COMPLICATED, IT'S TECHNICAL, IT'S COMPLEX, IT'S NEAR IMPOSSIBLE. THE FIRST PLACE TEAM IS ALWAYS RISKY... AND THERE'S NOTHING THIS TEAM RELISHES MORE THAN A GOOD CHALLENGE.

(Clapping)

Peters: FOR NOW, THEY'VE DONE THEIR PART. BUT THE HARD PART ISN'T OVER YET. THE WAIT FOR THE JUDGES SCORE CAN BE JUST AS STRESSFUL. STAY WITH US, WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

(Music)

Hey, my name is Allen Ramsey... I'm a writer in the office of communications and marketing. I believe that there are few things more meaningful than the opportunity to share a person's story. It's a privilege, and one that, as storytellers, we don't take lightly. There are so many ways that people on our campus are doing work that could change our society... even our world. In season two of Fearless, you were taken on this journey of how researchers are doing just that. It was *those stories* that inspired a new series we're calling Foundations. It's simple- Foundations is a roundtable conversation between researchers in different fields, gathered to talk about important issues that impact all of us. You can watch Foundations on our YouTube channel- just search Texas Tech University.

(Music Playing from Speaker)

Peters: MUSIC POURS FROM THE SPEAKER AS THE CREATIVE MOVEMENT STUDIO STARTS TO COME ALIVE. BARE FEET ARE REFLECTED ON THE GLOSSY BLACK FLOOR, BLUE RESISTANCE BANDS AROUND ANKLES AND KNEES ARE STRETCHING AND PULLING. THERE ARE 24 IDENTICAL MIDDLE PARTED LOW BUNS PINNED UP AND SPRAYED DOWN TO PERFECTION. IN THE CORNER, A DOUBLE T HAS BEEN CRAFTED ON THE FLOOR USING LARGE, SHINY SILVER AND RED-JEWEL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS. IT'S MOTIVATION FOR THIS POM SQUAD WHO'S CONSTANTLY SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER TITLE.

(1, 2, and 3, 4 and 5, 6, 7 and 8)

Peters: THEIR MOVEMENTS ARE RAW, HARNESSSED POWER IN PERFECT SYNC. EVERY MOVEMENT AND MUSCLE IS REFLECTED ACROSS 2 DOZEN PEOPLE MIRRORING EACH OTHER. EVEN THEIR RESPONSES TO POM COACH ERIN ALVARADO RING OUT AS A COLLECTIVE 'YES' IN PERFECT HARMONY.

Alvarado: The more efficient we are, the more time we'll have at the end. Yes.

Peters: THIS IS JUST THE WARMUP. THE PIECE THEY'RE PERFECTING IS AN EMOTIONAL ONE.

Jorie Knysz, Texas Tech Pom: So, the song was about, like, death of a loved one.

Peters: THAT'S JORIE... SHE'S A JUNIOR. ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS THEY DID WHEN THEY GOT THE SONG AND COREOGRAPHY FOR THIS YEAR, WAS SAT TOGETHER AND WATCH THE MUSIC VIDEO AS A TEAM. TO REALLY UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE OF THIS SONG, TO CHANNEL THAT EMOTION INTO THE PERFORMANCE.

Haley Scalabrin, Texas Tech Pom: I when I was younger, my dad passed away.

Peters: THAT'S HALEY, SHE'S A JUNIOR TOO.

Scalabrin: So, my story is my mom and she always tells me after he passed, she's like, you know, Haley, like he was my soulmate. Like, I will never find anyone that was like him.

Peters: HALEY IS AN ONLY CHILD. SO, HER WHOLE LIFE, HER MOM HAS BEEN THE ROCK. HER BEST FRIEND. THE SONG HITS DIFFERENT FOR EACH OF THESE GIRLS. WHETHER LOSS OF A LOVED ONE, OR LOSS OF SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

Knysz: I connected it to like when I look through scrapbooks, it's like my parents and like, you see the old memory. See, it's coming. So, like looking through those scrapbooks, they like so, so happy. But it's sad because we're all like, two of us are in college now, it's like just kind of crazy how much we've grown up. So then connecting that to the story of the dance really made it like that true raw emotion that I was able to portray and get that through all of us dancing. We all have our own story, obviously Haley's is super different than me.

(Music and breathing)

Peters: WHEN THEY'RE AT THEIR BEST, IT'S A BREATHTAKING, GRIPPING EXPERIENCE. IT'S POWERFUL. THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE ON THE SIDELINE AT FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL GAMES, IT'S ANOTHER WORLD ENTIRELY. AND IT'S UNDERSTOOD THAT ERIN RUNS A TIGHT SHIP. I MEAN, IT IS CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON, AFTER ALL.

Alvarado: If Fatigue is why your head is not going down on the right count, it's not good enough y'all.

Peters: ERIN DOESN'T HOLD BACK... AND SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO. THE THING ABOUT POTENTIAL IS THAT ANYTHING LESS THAT FIRST SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE SETTling.

Alvarado: Who is going to step up and say that our energy and our focus has to be better right now? I don't see that as negative; I see that as leadership.

Peters: WE ARE 5 DAYS FROM NATIONALS AND THE GIRLS KNOW THAT. THIS MIGHT BE A YOUNG TEAM, BUT THEY TAKE THEIR JOB SERIOUSLY. THEY HAVE BEEN PRACTICING IN 3-HOUR BLOCKS TWICE A DAY FOR WEEKS. REPETITION, INTENSITY, SYNCRONICITY. OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN. AND PERFECTION IS THE ONLY OPTION. THEY KNOW THAT IN A FEW DAYS, THEY ONLY HAVE 3 SHORT MINUTES TO PROVE EXACTLY WHO THEY ARE.

Lee, Choreographer: I'm blown away by how different we feel than last time.

Pom Squad Members: We are too, Lee. We are too.

Peters: THIS IS LEE, SHE AND ERIN COREOGRAPHED THIS PIECE TOGETHER. THE GIRLS FACETIME WITH HER DURING THE FINAL PRACTICE BEFORE NATIONALS.

Alvarado: Alright, y'all say bye to Lee.

Breakout: 'Thank you dad, thank you mom, thank you Lord for Tech Pom. Team! -- Texas Tech, yee haw, ahh Tech Pom.

(Counting and cheering)

Peters: THINGS THIS YEAR DIDN'T GO QUITE ACCORDING TO PLAN. THEY FINISHED 7TH, A DISAPPOINTING ENDING AFTER SUCH AN EMOTIONAL BUILD. BUT IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME THEY'VE BEEN POSITIONED TO WRITE A POWERFUL COMEBACK STORY... THE LAST TIME THEY FINISHED OUTSIDE THE TOP 3 WAS ALMOST 10 YEARS AGO, IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST PIVOTAL POINTS IN THEIR JOURNEY AS A PROGRAM.

Alvarado: Maybe it was something that we needed. Back in 2015, there we got seventh and we had been on a trajectory of like second, third, second, third, and then we got seventh and I was like, Dang, what are we supposed to do with this?

Alvarado: Like, you think you're building towards this top spot and then you get shot back down and then the next year we got second, and after that we won every year after that. So, it's like the seventh propelled us to second. I mean, it was like a huge jump that then allowed us to know what that felt like to be able to move forward.

Knysz: ... there's like 30 something teams and everyone has the same goal. So, I think it's really important that we hit our personal goal, which was to like hit and be as clean as we possibly could.

(Music Breathes)

Scalabrin: ...knowing that we did everything that we could, regardless of what the judges said... that's the hardest part about dance, is it's all it's all judgment, it's all opinion. There's no point. You don't run to the end zone and get six points. You don't shoot a basket. You know, it's all very subjective in the sense that if the judges like it, they like it. They could not like the music, the costumes, the type of dance you're performing.

Scalabrin: So regardless of what they think, we know that when we came off that stage, we didn't leave any stone, any stone unturned.

Peters: THIS YEAR GIVES THEM SOMETHING TO TAKE BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD, SOMEWHERE TO START WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING NEXT YEAR'S SHOW.

NATS competition cheers

Peters: HALEY'S MOM GOT TO BE IN THE CROWD FOR THIS PERFORMANCE. A MOMENT SHE DIDN'T GET THE PREVIOUS YEAR AND ONE THAT SHE WILL NEVER FORGET.

Scalabrin: Being able to, like, go out there and actually see her and, like, have a piece of my heart with me on stage, like doing it for my dad, in the sense of like the story was very, very meaningful to me.

(Music Close)

Announcer: In third place with 95.98 points... Texas Tech University.

Bills: I mean, it's a hard pill to swallow at the moment, you know, because, you know, with whatever deduction it was you don't want to dwell on that... again, backtrack here... third place is still great.

Peters: BRUCE IS AS COMPETITIVE AS ANY COACH YOU'LL FIND AT DAYTONA. THEY ALL WANT TO SEE THEIR MONTHS OF PLANNING, PRACTICING, SACRIFICE PAY OFF WITH THE TROPHY.

Bills: Yes, obviously, the placement that's important, again, because we are competitors and we want to win for Tech, but also for the athletes themselves, too. I told them after nationals, look, this placement does not define our whole year. So, there's a lot of victories that we're going to celebrate and continually build on for this year.

Peters: AND THERE'S ALMOST NO TIME TO DWELL... BECAUSE THE NEXT SEASON BEGINS ALMOST AS SOON AS THE CURRENT ONE ENDS. JUST MORE THAN ONE MONTH AFTER DAYTONA, WE FIND BRUCE SCOUTING HIS NEXT CROP OF ATHLETES FOR THE 2023-2024 SQUAD.

NATS UNDERNEATH all girl or coed practicing, (counting or Bruce talking at practice underneath VO)

Peters: BOTH CO-ED AND ALL GIRL TRYOUTS ARE STRESSFUL- NOT EVERYBODY MAKES THE CUT. CHEERLEADERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY COME IN TO BE PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE AND MANY WILL GO HOME BROKENHEARTED. BUT FOR OTHERS, LIKE ADDISON BELMAREZ, THINGS ARE WORKING OUT EXACTLY AS SHE HAD HOPED.

Addison Belmarez, Texas Tech All-Girl Cheer: My name is Addison Belmarez, and I'm a fourth-year member of all girl cheer.

Peters: SHE'S FROM THE LAKE TRAVIS AREA, CAME TO TEXAS TECH AFTER BEING A FAN OF TECH CHEER FOR YEARS. SHE WAS ATTRACTED TO THE UNIVERSITY THROUGH THEIR ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES, SHE WANTS TO BE A PHARMACIST SOMEDAY. RIGHT NOW, WE'RE SITTING CROSSLEGGED ON A SPONGY BLUE TUMBLING MAT INSIDE A CHEER GYM IN SOUTH LUBBOCK. IT'S WHERE ADDISON AND OTHER VETERAN ALL-GIRL MEMBERS ARE HELPING TEACH THE NEW SQUAD MEMBERS THE CLASSIC GAMEDAY CHEERS AND CHANTS.

(Bruce coaching and critiquing)

Bruce: That's not bad for the first time doing it.

Peters: FOR ADDISON, SHE KNOWS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING PART OF THIS TEAM. THE ATHLETES ON THIS ALL-GIRL SQUAD ONLY HAVE A FEW SHORT YEARS ON THE COURT, OR FIELD, OR TO BEAR THE DOUBLE T PROUDLY AT EVENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. BUT THEY'RE HELPING TO UPHOLD AND ELEVATE A LEGACY THAT STARTED LONG BEFORE THEY WERE EVEN ALIVE.

Belmarez: This is our home. We don't go anywhere else outside of this. And so, I think, for alumni who come back, they just get that strong feeling of all the great memories they had here. As a student, I've never had a bad experience here. It has been so welcoming.

Peters: AND THAT RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN AMPLIFIED IN LIGHT OF THIS YEAR AND WHAT IT REPRESENTS.

Belmarez: It's been incredible. I actually got to graduate in the centennial year and just hearing the commencement speeches that year and hear people talk about, people who have been at Texas Tech for 40, 50 years, talk about the evolution of how it's grown, where we are now, how well our fanbase travels. It's just such an honor. It's hard to even put into words how incredible this organization, this university is.

Bills: 5, 6, 7, down 8, then out... This is what I'm getting at. Step...

(Goin' Band Music)

Peters: WHEN IT COMES TO FINDING THE RIGHT STUDENTS TO REPRESENT ALL OF THESE SPIRIT ORGANIZATIONS, THE SELECTION PROCESS IS TIGHT.

(Band Rehearsing)

Peters: AND THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THE LARGEST SPIRIT GROUP ON CAMPUS. THE GOIN BAND MIGHT BE LARGE IN NUMBERS, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S NOT STILL HIGHLY COMPETITIVE.

Pagan: Okay, relax. Did we say that on the second time we would go horns down?

Peters: IT'S LED BY FEARLESS LEADER, JOEL PAGAN.

Pagan: The tempo in the beginning was a little on the hot side. But by the end we kind of settled it down with just the six to five. So, bing bing, ba, da, ba, ba da bing... Can you take it to page one of traditions block?

Peters: JOEL DID ONLINE AUDITIONS THIS YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME... AND WHEN I SAY THEY CAME IN FROM EVERYWHERE. JOEL SAYS HE EVALUATED THREE TIMES THE NUMBER OF AUDITION TAPES THIS YEAR. TALK ABOUT COMPETITIVE. AND IT'S JUST WHAT HE EXPECTED TO SEE DURING THIS CENTENNIAL YEAR

Pagan: And I actually think about this a lot because it is... The words that come to mind. Humbling, terrifying, almost. Right? Because there is this really strong and long history. And those same traditions that they did in the fifties are things that we're still doing today. And something that I've been trying to do better each year is to try to educate our own students about, this is why we do this.

(Music)

Peters: THERE'S THIS OLD, CLASSIC PICTURE OF ONE OF THE FIRST TEXAS TECH BANDS- 31 PEOPLE POSE WITH THEIR INSTRUMENTS OUTSIDE THE ICONIC ARCH OF THE ADMIN BUILDING. AT THE CENTER, A DRUM READS 'TEXAS TECHNOLOGICAL COLLEGE'... SINCE THEN, IT HAS COME A LONG WAY, CARRYING A STEADY 300+ MEMBERS, GIVE OR TAKE A FEW. LAST YEAR THERE WERE 335 TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE GOIN BAND, THIS YEAR THEY HAD MORE THAN 500 AUDITION.

Pagan: Lubbock is a special place and people come back to Lubbock, you know, families come back and I don't know how many times I have people come up and say, Oh, my, you know, when they apply for a going band scholarship, they write an essay. And probably half of those essays that we receive is I just can't wait to be part of the organization that my mom or that my dad or that my uncle, that my grandfather was a part of. And it's going to it's a dream come true to share, to be on the same field that they were on.

Peters: JOEL IS ENTHUSIASTIC AND FOCUSED... HE'S DETAILED AND METICULOUS, DOWN THE YARD LINE AND HASH MARK IN EACH MEMBER'S PLACEMENT ON THE FIELD DURING A PERFORMANCE. AS WE SIT AROUND A TABLE IN HIS OFFICE, YOU CAN TELL HE'S PROUD OF HIS GROUP AND THEIR WORK.

(Music)

Peters: ONE STORY BELOW WHERE WE ARE SITTING, FLORESCENT LIGHTS ILLUMINATE THE CINDER BLOCK WALLS AND CONCRETE FLOOR OF A ROOM THE SIZE OF A SMALL LOCKER ROOM. THERE'S NOT MUCH ROOM FOR WALKING BETWEEN CLOTHING RACKS THAT CONTAIN HUNDREDS OF HANGERS HOLDING SHINY PLASTIC COVERED BLACK UNIFORMS.

Pagan: They uniforms in here; they're going to be building a storage...

Peters: JOEL EXPLAINS THAT THESE ARE NEW ADDITIONS TO THE GOIN BAND STOCK- CUSTOM, HANDMADE

UNIFORMS THAT RING TRUE TO THAT TRADITIONAL LOOK WE CAN ALL PICTURE IN OUR HEADS RIGHT NOW. IT'S THE EXACT SAME DESIGN WE'VE COME TO KNOW AND LOVE, THE CRISP WHITE TOP WITH BLACK CAPPED SLEEVES, THE ORNATE WHITE TULING ACROSS THE CHEST, THE REVERSABLE RED AND BLACK CAPE HEMMED JUST BELOW THE WAIST. THE BLACK FLAT BRIM HAT WITH THE RED RIBBON.

(Music)

Pagan: They flew me up there and I walked through the factory and it was, it was crazy because the factory was basically it was all our uniforms were everywhere and all the workers who were there were like, You're the guy, you're the one. These are all yours, all these are yours. And you know, it's like, Yeah, and we were watching them. I mean, they were showing us things like, like the if you look at the pants for the drum majors, they had this really intricate stitching on the side. Well, this lady showed me I took video of it and how she does it.

Peters: HE PLAYS THE VIDEO FOR US... SHE USES A STENCIL AND CHALK TO MAKE THE MARKINGS... THEN SHE GOES OVER AND HAND STICHES THE PATTERN FOR ALL 400 UNIFORMS.

Pagan: Another interesting thing, we talked about these double T's. They had all of these. I think they said like 10,000 and they had to order a ridiculous amount because every uniform you have, you have one on the cape, you have one here, you have a big Double T on the back. And then the cape has lots too, one on each side, they're reversible, so depending on what show we are doing...

Peters: IT TOOK A LOT OF TIME, EFFORT AND ENERGY TO GET THESE NEW UNIFORMS IN HAND, AND IT'S SOMETHING THAT JOEL WANTS TO STUDENTS TO APPRECIATE.

Pagan: ...I'm going to show them videos and pictures. So, this person, one of you, is wearing the uniform of this person, you know, put together. And so it's just a whole different appreciation because you would think they would have these massive machine. I expected to walk in and they'd be like this, you know, kind of like an assembly line, right?

Pagan: It was all about, you know, 45, 50 people in there and they're all just hand sewing everything together, putting it together, and then all the way to the end where a guy was steaming every single uniform, hanging up, putting in a box, (Fade out)

(Checking in and busy, crowded School of Music)

(Joel talking)

Peters: AROUND JULY IS WHEN THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC STARTS TO WAKE BACK UP FROM A SLEEPY SUMMER. DOWNSTAIRS IN ROOM 10 WE FIND JOEL... DRESSED IN BLACK FROM HEAD TO TOE- CONCERT ATTIRE. HE JUST FINISHED UP A CONCERT IN THE ALLEN THEATRE WITH MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL KIDS HERE FOR A BAND AND ORCHESTRA CAMP.

Students: And you've registered for class? Perfect.

Peters: SOME OF THOSE STUDENTS HAVE STUCK AROUND AND ARE FILING THROUGH THE DOOR, TAKING THEIR SEATS IN A SEMICIRCLE. THESE ARE SOME OF THE NEW FIRST-YEAR MEMBERS OF THE GOIN BAND.

Pagan: Hi everyone! How are you today?

Students: Good.

Pagan: Know that this is a pretty special honor for you this year. There are close to 100 people on the waitlist, some of them were part of the Goin' Band.

Peters: FINALLY GETTING TO THIS POINT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING FOR JOEL... SIFTING THROUGH AUDITIONS, GIVING EVERYONE THE ATTENTION THEY DESERVE, MAKING SELECTIONS, HAVING HARD CONVERSATIONS AND NOW, FINALLY, GETTING TO THE MUSIC.

Pagan: We expect you to learn pretty quickly and you will. We'll do that together. We have a great team here behind us, this is the visual team...

Peters: JOEL RELIES HEAVILY ON HIS GOIN' BAND LEADERSHIP, ABOUT 50 VETERAN MEMBERS.

(Counting)

Peters: RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE GOING OVER THE BASICS- GOIN BAND MARCHING STYLE AND TIMING.

(Music)

Peters: IN MID-AUGUST, THE REST OF THE GOIN BAND WILL REPORT.... VETERANS RETURNING TO POSITIONS THAT HAVE BECOME SO FAMILIAR. WIDE-EYED ROOKIES EAGER TO GET THEIR START. BEING PART OF THE GOIN BAND IS AN EXPERIENCE SO UNIQUE AND VALUABLE THAT IT'S HARD TO FORGET. IT'S PART OF THE REASON ALUMNI SUPPORT IS SO STRONG AND CONSISTENT. EVERY FALL, THE ALUMNI BAND WILL MAKE AN APPEARANCE AT A TEXAS TECH FOOTBALL GAME. IT'S SOMETHING THESE FORMER MEMBERS LOOK FORWARD TO EVERY YEAR- IT KEEPS THE GOIN BAND LEGACY ALIVE.

(Gameday drumline)

Peters: IN NOVEMBER, THE GOIN BAND AND ITS NEW UNIFORMS WILL BE ON FULL DISPLAY IN THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS. THEY'LL SPEND NEARLY A WEEK IN NEW YORK CITY DURING THANKSGIVING AS JOEL WILL LEAD THE GOIN BAND IN ITS FIRST EVER APPEARANCE IN THE MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE. THEIR SHINY HORNS, SNARE DRUMS AND DOUBLE T BRANDED UNIFORMS WILL BE SEEN BY MILLIONS. AND WE'LL BE THERE TOO... TUNE IN LATER THIS FALL FOR A SPECIAL, BIG APPLE SIZED BONUS EPISODE OF FEARLESS.

(Music)

Peters: ACROSS THE COUNTRY, OVER THE LAST YEAR, CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS HAVE BEEN KEEPING ALL OF SPIRIT VERY BUSY, THERE HAVE BEEN MORE REQUESTS FOR APPEARANCES THAN EVER BEFORE FOR THE MASKED RIDER AND RAIDER RED, CHEER AND POM AND THE GOIN' BAND... THESE GROUPS EMBODY TEXAS TECH TRADITION, HISTORY, CULTURE. THEY ARE THE LIFE BLOOD OF SCHOOL SPIRIT REPRESENTING EVERYTHING WE TREASURE ABOUT THE DECADES OF RED RAIDER HISTORY.

Alvarado: You know, you're the keepers of tradition. You're the gateway to alumni feeling still connected or, you know, walking, breathing, living Double T.

Bills: And so it's a special honor to be a part of that and to kind of bring back those memories for those alumni and, you know, also be a driver for the future. You know, to where we want to continue to do our excellence, you know, in all elements to make sure that we continue to pique their interest and their support for tech.

Belmarez: And you can hear how Texas Tech has impacted their life and it just motivates you to really pour into your academic career here and then go on and represent your university after you graduate.

Bills: You go to these events and you see donors or fans or just alumni from, you know, 50 years ago, you know, and they can still remember the fight song...

Pagan: It's humbling because I've seen what people have done before me, and it's terrifying because we want to uphold those traditions and the excellence and the expectations that everybody has.

Belmarez: And there you just really realize how much of a figure you are for this university. And that you represent something so much bigger than yourself.

(Music)

Peters: FEARLESS IS WRITTEN AND HOSTED BY ME, TAYLOR PETERS, AND CO-PRODUCED BY ALLISON HIRTH. EDITING AND SOUND DESIGN BY THOMAS BOYD. FEARLESS IS A TEXAS TECH PRODUCTION, FROM HERE IT'S POSSIBLE. IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS YOU MET TODAY OR SEE PHOTOS FROM THE INTERVIEWS- LOG ON TO OUR WEBSITE AT TODAY.TTU.EDU/FEARLESS. PLEASE LIKE, REVIEW AND SUBSCRIBE!