

THE BLACK HORSE NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 4 – FEBRUARY 2022 - William Jones

Shining a fierce light on the GREED, CORRUPTION, EXPLOITATION
and INJUSTICE in horse racing and bloodstock around the world.



Statues of Yeats (foreground) and Sadler's Wells (background)) at Coolmore Stud Photo: William Jones

CORRUPTION OF RACING

THIS IS NOT GOING TO
END WELL

ROLL UP! COME AND
GET YOUR EPO HERE

CRAZY BHA AND AN
OLIVER REED BENDER

TRAFFICKED TO WORK
IN IRISH RACING

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THIS IS NOT GOING TO END WELL



Two days before the Christmas holiday, HRI announced its budget for 2022, which was posted on its website with a couple of quotes from Suzanne Eade, the new chief executive, who was promoted to the top job recently after serving five years as HRI's finance director.

It was an insider promotion that was trumpeted very early after Brian Kavanagh decided his time was up. It was always going to be Eade, even though it was said the position was advertised globally.

It is widely viewed that Eade will be putty in the hands of the billionaires who control Irish racing, with Kavanagh the de facto power behind the throne now that he's moved just a few yards down the road as the new boss of the Curragh racecourse, which is controlled by the same billionaires.

Her first big shot in her new job did not look good. The proposed budget threw up questions which needed answers, but Eade was nowhere to be found. The idea, with a trick that is used somewhere in racing every year, was obvious - no one will want to know more with the clock ticking down to Christmas and it will be forgotten by the media come January, which is exactly what happened with one exception.

Only Mark Costello of the Irish Field followed up with a simple query on one stand-out issue which would have bothered anyone genuinely concerned about where Irish racing is heading.

Eade claimed in a written statement that this was a strong budget with a focus on "**investing in integrity and equine welfare.**" We get that, but can you give a breakdown of the gross figure of €13.4m for **Integrity and Equine Welfare?**

A brief explanation eventually provided by HRI's press office revealed the €13.4m, part of the total government funding to racing of €70.4m for 2022, comprised €10.3m for integrity, of which anti-doping measures are just one part of a large portfolio, and €3.1m for "**equine welfare support.**"

But it transpired the €3.1m consists of €2.2m destined for the Irish Equine Centre (IEC), which specialises in research and laboratory testing for a variety of animals and not just horses, in the form of a grant HRI makes every year.

It's nothing new and has no direct correlation to equine welfare - the kind that was shown to be badly needed in the fall-out from the Panorama exposé of the treatment in UK abattoirs of Irish trained horses considered no longer suitable to race on.

No details were given as to how the balance of €900,000 was to be spent supporting equine welfare; it would appear the food chain is still the main option for unwanted racehorses in Ireland.

If not, Ms Eade, what's the retirement plan for racehorses in Ireland, something that is taken very seriously in every other major racing jurisdiction worldwide? The Irish consider bloodstock as no different to livestock on farms, which doesn't have a retirement plan. It just gets eaten.

Which is fine if that's how racing wants to go, just don't pretend you have grand plans when slaughter is the only real option. All the big boys take this route with their horses - Magnier, O'Brien et al.

Across the road at the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB), which has quietly published its latest accounts, the same obfuscation is well advanced. Or you could just say the regulator continues to spew out lie after lie.

The Turf Club, which makes the Vatican look revolutionary, is controlled by Coolmore's John Magnier and a few other ageing gangsters. It became the IHRB in January 2018 in its first attempt at modernisation in 230 years, but now has to provide annual accounts to show how it is spending public funds.

It hid what was really going on when it produced its first accounts for 2018, but the government watchdog guarding the way taxpayers' money is spent - the Comptroller and Auditor General - stepped in and corrected the IHRB's dodgy figures and has stayed involved to put a stop to the ubiquitous deceit.

The true facts and figures are now officially documented to show how corrupt the IHRB, under chief executive Denis Egan, had become.

Dr Lynn Hillyer, the head of anti-doping, duped TD (Member of Parliament) Joe Cahill, the chair of an Oireachtas committee set up to investigate claims made by legendary trainer Jim Bolger there is a major drug cheat in Irish racing, into declaring the country has, in fact, a world class anti-doping programme in operation.

Cahill is from the Coolmore heartland of Tipperary, so you would expect him to be useful with a bit of propaganda. These figures show that Hillyer also suffers from quite a serious case of verbal diarrhoea.

The newly audited accounts reveal the regulator has actually spent substantially less in each year from 2018 analysing blood, urine and hair samples for illegal drugs - the opposite of what Hillyer told the Irish parliament.

2018: E1,717,025.00

2019: E1,232,397.00

2020: E 923,097.00

While Cahill brazenly perpetuated the lie peddled by Hillyer that Ireland is a world leader in anti-doping, the facts starkly paint a much different picture. In the space of three years between 2018 and 2020, the IHRB has reduced its spend on analysing samples by nearly 50 percent, from E1.7m to E0.9m.

In that time it claims to have increased the number of samples taken from 2,000 to 4,000. If they really have hit that target there is only one possible explanation - many have been dumped in a rubbish skip instead of going to a laboratory, an accusation that has dogged Irish racing for years.

Egan and Hillyer lied to the parliamentary investigation into the doping scandals that have engulfed the sport. Egan did a runner last October with a golden handshake for destroying racing's reputation; Hillyer is just as culpable, everything she does now is an attempt to dig herself out of the hole she and her disastrous anti-doping strategy are in and telling the truth is the least of her worries.

While the Covid pandemic saw two barren months of racing in 2020, most of the lost fixtures were made up as the year progressed so that by the end there were only five percent fewer meetings compared to 2018. The total number of runners in the two years was almost identical.

Yet IHRB spent E794,000 less analysing samples and Hillyer has been found out again. And she knows it, which is why the accounts were filed under the cover of darkness - no public announcement, no press conference, no questions allowed.

In comparison, French racing devotes E10m a year just combating the threat of doping, analysing nearly 30,000 drug tests annually. Ireland spends its money on executives who are more concerned with making sure the gravy train is well stocked than protecting the reputation of

a once great sport now in serious decline.

The Oireachtas stood tall last summer and decided an independent audit into the drug testing operation the IHRB has run for the last five years should be carried out urgently to prove the anti-doping programme is as good as Hillyer and Cahill claim.

But the IHRB has made no move towards independence; its board of directors has become an even deeper shade of Coolmore blue. It has been reported former chief justice Frank Clarke has joined the board, but he is a longstanding member of the Turf Club and close friend of Magnier, so there's no independence there.

Let there be absolutely no doubt; Clarke has been appointed to ensure Magnier gets what he wants, which is exactly the same situation at HRI, where it is dominated by acolytes of Coolmore Stud. Both organisations serve the vested interests of one extremely wealthy man whose time is up, but he has no intention of loosening his grip around the throat of Irish racing.

It now transpires that the audit of IHRB's past anti-doping practices has already started and is cloaked in the usual secrecy. No official statement has been made that Craig Suann, a former New South Wales chief veterinary officer, is to conduct this crucial review.

Considering the hammering the IHRB has been subjected to over drugs in the last year, you would think it would hold a press conference to introduce Mr Suann to the Irish public which pumps so much money into the sport, to try and rebuild a

clearly broken relationship.

You would think Cliodhna Guy, interim chief executive with big designs on making the position permanent, would have come out from hiding in the shadows and explained what the terms of reference are, who is paying Mr Suann, how much will it cost, how long will it take, where will he be based, who will assist him, what will he actually be doing, and when will his report be made public?

And what does Guy say to the accusation that this can't be independent because Hillyer and Suann are colleagues and friends from serving on the same international veterinary committees in the past?.

You know, to show that Guy understands what integrity and transparency mean. Why does all this have to be top secret?

The truth is the IHRB doesn't want an honest and open chief executive because it is owned by the Turf Club, which is owned by Magnier, who does secrecy and nothing else. Guy looks like she is going to pass the test with honours.

It appears the IHRB is funding the audit and has total oversight and control. Considering the Turf Club's appalling record of not making previous reports public, Guy needs to put on record it will be different this time.

But this is what an anonymous spokesperson said last week in answer to a reporter's request for an update: "**He (Suann) has**



commenced his work. This is an independent equine anti-doping audit, so it is exactly that, it is independent." That's all there is, take it or leave it.

The question now, is what are the TDs going to do about the rogue regulator which has ignored the demand for change?

Guy (pictured) and Hillyer know where the bodies from Egan's reign are buried - they have even given a hand with some of the digging - so they want the status quo to prevail, nothing to see here, reputations will be shredded if another scandal is exposed, let's

move on quickly, no independence needed here.

But a change of attitude is absolutely vital immediately to restore the credibility of racing. This could be the chance to prove if Bolger is right, or wrong, about his reference to Lance Armstrong.

Is it Aidan O'Brien and Coolmore Stud, as many people believe?

The word on the street is that Magnier has been doing his utmost to stop the audit taking place. Why would anyone but the guilty be against it? So he'll get the next best result, a total whitewash that no one is going to believe. And Irish racing's reputation will be shredded if Suann delivers an adverse verdict on its anti-doping programme - that will not be allowed to happen under any circumstances. It's called corruption.

Irish racing must grab this opportunity to move forward. If the regulator doesn't get it right they can expect to hear from the politicians, who are coming under increasing pressure to justify the significant public funding doled out every year.

Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue, is especially twitchy; he has given racing's leaders a final chance to clean up the mess.

"It is important that I take this opportunity to remind everyone in the industry that our hard-earned reputation as a global leader is fragile. We are always just around the corner from the next crisis and we must take every proactive step to not only protect but to enhance our reputation."

But the facts reveal that Irish flat racing is in decline and is not the global leader it is professed to be. Only three of the country's leading flat races in 2021 made the Longines top one hundred Group 1s worldwide - the Irish Champion came in 12th best, the Irish 2000 Guineas was 74th and the Irish Derby, worth E1.5 million in prize money, scraped in at 94th in these prestigious global standings.

The list of countries with the most races in the top hundred was headed by Australia (25 races) and followed by the US (19), UK (17), Japan (11), Hong Kong (8), France (5), Germany (4) and South Africa (4).

Ireland was near the bottom of the pile in 9th place, one above UAE (2) with New Zealand and Uruguay joint last on one race each. Ireland was in eighth position in 2020, one ahead of Germany, so this isn't a one off.

While Irish bloodstock is sought the

world over, that is an anomaly - the best young horses are sold to race abroad leaving mostly second and third rate stock at home. And it's about to get much worse now that Galileo has departed the scene and Saudi Arabia has arrived with its Cup, worth \$20 million, and already granted Group 1 status. Bahrain is next up and China usually gets what it wants.

Winning 23 races at the Cheltenham Festival doesn't make a global leader but only means Ireland is much better than England in the very small pond of jump racing.

And as for anti-doping, Ireland is the only top tier nation without its own internationally accredited laboratory capable of testing for performance enhancing drugs to a level that means cheats will be caught and thrown out of the sport.

Meanwhile, Craig Suann has been sucked into the IHRB propaganda machine. It appears he is conducting the audit into the anti-doping programme without leaving Australia, which doesn't make it an audit at all. He is going to express a remote opinion on the wonderful job Hillyer has told him she is doing. It's another stitch-up.

It's now or never. Who is running this country - TDs elected by the people subsidising horse racing with over E70m of taxpayers' cash each year who have demanded change, or a billionaire tax exile elected by no one who is really clever at milking this cash cow and is determined to stay in control and change nothing?

ROLL UP! COME AND GET YOUR EPO HERE



Archie tells it straight. He has a cult following as a writer on all things racing Down Under. His words are strong and direct. What he told me about doping on his patch sounded a bell which doesn't stop ringing.

Australian racing is still coming to terms with its latest drug and money laundering scandal. Poster boy Damion Flower, seemingly a wealthy race horse and stallion owner who was one of the principal backers when Australia's richest race, The Everest, was launched in 2017, is actually a drug dealer who imported more than \$68 million worth of cocaine.

Lauded by the racing authorities as a hero, he was caught red handed FBI-style and is facing a sentence of life in prison.

There's another scandal across the Tasman Sea which hasn't garnered the same headlines, yet. Archie is a passionate advocate for harness racing, but the dopers have corrupted that like everything else.

The annual Harness Jewels is the most prestigious harness racing series in New Zealand, and the richest. It is thoroughbred racing's Golden Slipper, Derby and Golden Eagle combined. Each race is a Group 1, which ordinarily means they are not easy to win.

Mark Purdon and Natalie Rasmussen, trading as All Stars Stable, won 20 of the 30 Jewels run between 2016 and 2020, a strike rate of 66.66 percent. In Group 1 Classics. Impossible.

In the same period Mark's brother, Barry, arguably the greatest trainer in New Zealand harness racing history, won only four Jewels. No other trainer won more than one.

Great Australian Thoroughbreds like Winx, Black Caviar, Gloaming, Desert Gold, Mainbrace and Sunline all put together brilliant winning streaks and were champions. But the All Stars Stable was on a different planet.

Were they really twenty times better than the rest, or was there a special reason for their success?

Dr Andrew Grierson is an equine veter-

inary surgeon who worked in racing and bloodstock in County Kildare in Ireland in the 1980s. He is now a harness racing breeder and owner with a fifty percent stake in Woodlands Stud, the most successful breeding operation in New Zealand.

Grierson is also the chief vet at Harness Racing New Zealand since 2003. He decides which horses will be sampled and what they will be tested for. Some of the horses his stud owned won Harness Jewels and they were sired by stallions that stood at Woodlands. They were all trained by Natalie Rasmussen and Mark Purdon.

Grierson controlled the anti-doping programme. He could manipulate the tests by targeting the winners he had no interest in, making positive tests for his horses disappear or not even test any horse if he so decided.

There is no proof, yet, that Grierson did any of this, but he had every incentive to cheat if he was that way inclined. So far the sport's rulers have looked the other way, like they seem to do too often in racing around the world, but the indisputable facts are that on his watch the All Star Stable and Woodlands Stud enjoyed an unprecedented run of success which made him seriously richer.

Now look at the situation in Ireland. John Magnier owns the biggest stud farm and racing operation. Winning the biggest races with his horses not only earns him and his partners upwards of E10 million in prize money every year but makes stallions to stand at Coolmore which earn hundreds of millions in stud fees.

For thirty years Magnier has also controlled the sport's regulator, the Turf Club, a private organisation now called the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board. During this time the Ballydoyle Stable has risen to be arguably the most successful global thoroughbred racing operation and Coolmore Stud the biggest breeding empire.

And as Ireland's champion trainer for the last twenty years, Aidan O'Brien has enjoyed unprecedented success for Coolmore Stud amidst growing levels of disquiet that he is protected by a regulator which is effectively owned by Magnier.

Just like the harness racers in New Zealand, the Irish regulator can see nothing wrong. It's been much the same for decades in the US with Baffert, Asmussen and many others.

As racing scandals increase around the world, Archie's dogged detective work over the last two years has uncovered one of the major drugs used in New Zealand that enables trotters and pacers in harness racing to break track records by impossible margins.

Erythropoietin is a hormone produced naturally by the kidneys which assists the production of red blood cells. Anaemia occurs when an inadequate number of red cells are produced.

Scientists created a synthetic version of

the hormone in the 1980s called Epoxygen, now commonly known as EPO, to combat anaemia in human medicine, but there are so many cheats looking for a new angle it quickly crossed over to sport and there are countless great moments worldwide over the last thirty years that are almost certainly attributable to blood doping with EPO rather than amazing natural athletic talent.

In racing, equine athletes can run faster for longer if trainers illegally increase the number of cells carrying oxygen to muscles around the body. It was Lance Armstrong who put cycling on the front pages and provided the ultimate proof of how it works - he wouldn't have won seven editions of the Tour de France between 1999 and 2005 without a bucketful of EPO.

While steroids, which have a similar effect and have been around in sport just as long, are easier to detect because they remain in a horse's system and can even be detected in hair analysis a year and more after treatment, it's a completely different problem with

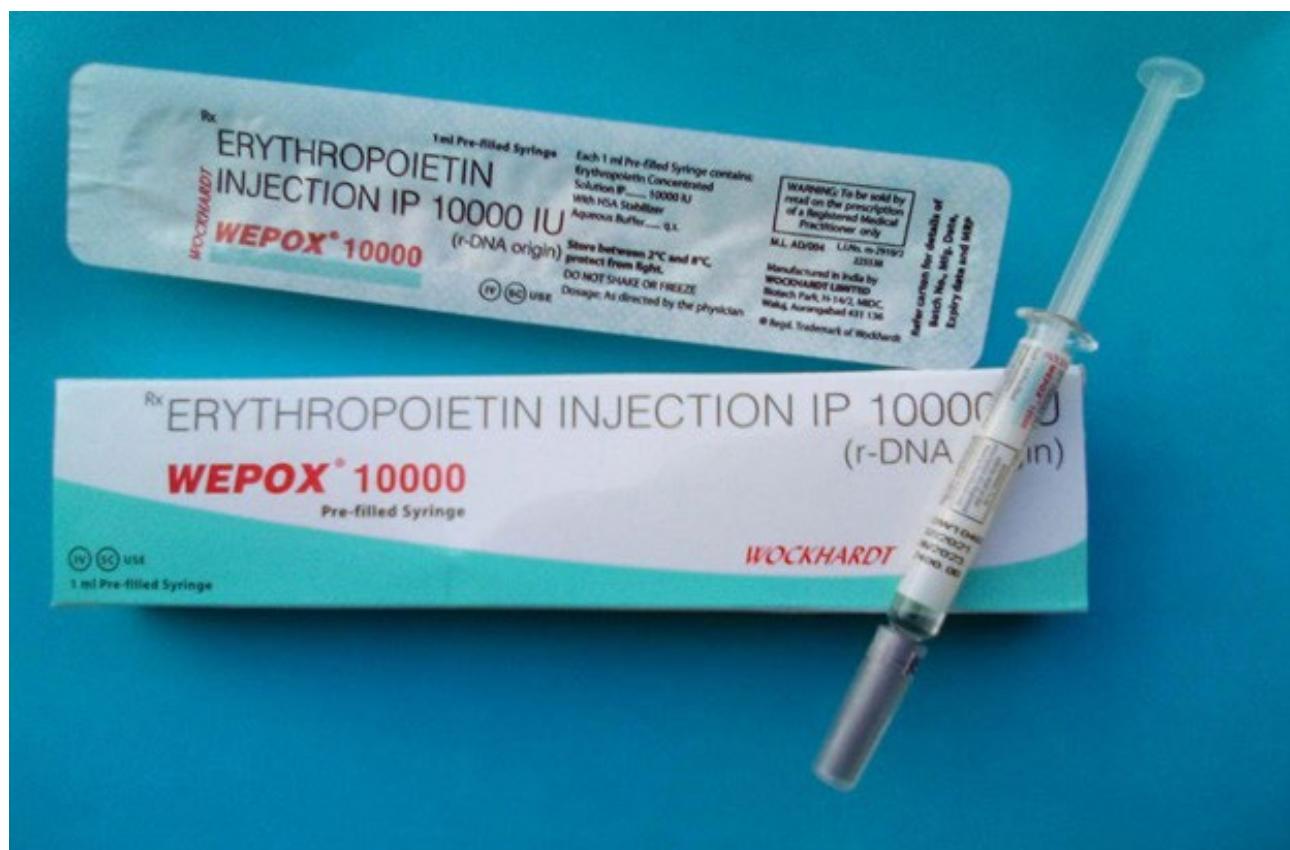


Photo: William Jones

EPO because that can leave no trace a day or two after administration while the benefits can linger for months.

And there is still even now no quick affordable test that can prove definitively EPO has been administered. Armstrong, for example, never tested positive for it at any time in his glorious career as a cheat of the worst kind.

Racing authorities are noticeably quiet about the growing threat from blood doping. The truth is most of them are clueless about what is really going on, the easy option is to look the other way and just let the cheats get on with it, which is how it's playing out in Ireland and the UK.

Experts like Dr Mark Cheney of the Kentucky Equine Drug Research Council argue the use of blood dopers in US racing reached epidemic levels three years ago.

Dr Mary Scollay, equine medical director of the Kentucky Horseracing Commission, highlighted risks presented by microdosing EPO:

"The effect exerted by these substances far exceeds the window of detection of these substances which are typically present in the blood for less than 48 hours following administration."

She sought backing from the commission for a two year study that aimed to develop an affordable test to detect the drug quickly. The result of that study is due now and can't come soon enough, except for the cheats. The rest of the racing world watches and waits.

The US has more than enough bent chemists and veterinarians who manufacture performance enhancing substances like EPO for their own use and to sell on, as seen in the Jorge Navarro doping scandal.

In the latest trial taking place in New York this week, veterinarian Seth Fishman is said to have created his own drugs over the last twenty years which were undetectable in tests available to racing regulators, making millions of dollars in profits. Fishman described one of his concoctions as "**The Holy Grail of drugs.**"

He had a lucrative export business to Europe and the Middle East before he was busted by the FBI and the unpalatable truth is that even with him out of the game there is no shortage of alternative suppliers to satisfy the wanton greed of cheating trainers and owners in every racing jurisdiction, as I found out.

Archie has a contact on the inside of harness racing who told him where they were getting their gear - India.

So I decided to follow the money and see if I could get the drug the harness racers are said to be using to rewrite the record books.

Home to a fifth of the world's population, India has made remarkable strides in the pharmaceutical industry in recent times, developing and producing affordable generic drugs which have changed the lives of its 1.4 billion people.

Wockhardt is a global pharmaceutical and biotechnology company based in Mumbai. It has manufacturing plants in India, UK, France, USA and, intriguingly, Clonmel, County Tipperary, Ireland, with over 8,600 employees and gross revenues of US\$380 million in 2021, over half of which came from Europe. The drug of interest, Wepox, is one of its products.

IndiaMART is India's largest online marketplace which connects buyers with suppliers. I was quickly put in touch with four suppliers when I enquired about Wepox and in no time I had completed a purchase of five

syringes at \$12.00 each with shipping to Ireland by express post costing \$40.00 the lot.

With IndiaMART guaranteeing delivery there was no risk paying by bank transfer. I could have bought any quantity including in bulk, but settled for pre-filled and sealed syringes to make sure I was buying the genuine article made by Wockhardt.

It arrived a week later. It's the real stuff.

There is a written instruction with each syringe: **WARNING: To be sold by retail on the prescription of a Registered Medical Practitioner only.** The purchase was made with an established medical supplier in Nagpur in Central India, which is projected by economists to be the fifth fastest growing city in the world by 2035, and the Customs Declaration clearly identified the package contained a medical product and the name of the supplier.

It was a first class experience from start to finish. Except for one quite important point: no mention was made at any stage about producing a prescription signed by a registered medical practitioner. This is how it often plays out when acquiring medicines, drugs and chemicals online; put a notice up that a product is subject to prescription just to cover your back and let's get it delivered.

Not only that, the equine veterinary profession in every jurisdiction is coming under growing criticism for doling out drugs for trainers to administer without first carrying out a physical examination to determine what is wrong with a horse. Without setting eyes on it a vet signs a prescription anyway and the horse gets the drug on the trainer's instructions irrespective of whether it needs it medically.

This now common practice is totally against the ethics of the veterinary profession. A prescription means

nothing these days and equine welfare has gone up in smoke.

Acquiring the EPO was that easy. And the point to make here is that there isn't a trainer anywhere who doesn't know how to give a horse an injection, a vet is not essential. Once upon a time, racehorses were given only water, hay and oats and the art of training was bringing a horse along gradually to full fitness, knowing when to push on and when to go easy.

Then supplements were invented with all manner of useful and useless ingredients which expanded the idea that corners could be cut. Now, with blood dopers like EPO, experts advise it is best not to exercise a horse too hard because it's the drug which will make it run faster for longer and not the training regime. A reasonably fit but healthy horse is the best way to go when EPO is on the menu..

There is, of course, a lot more to it than that, including that administering too much of the drug too quickly can cause a fatal heart attack and related disasters.

But the truth is EPO is so easy to acquire and it's so easy to administer and avoid detection as long as a trainer or his veterinarian pays attention in their private chemistry class and uses a bit of common sense.

There is so much anecdotal evidence that blood doping in various guises is prevalent wherever and whenever horses race, with the biggest trainers unquestionably the biggest crooks because the rewards that so many million dollar plus races around the world bring to the sport far outweigh the risk. For now, anyway.

Archie's website: www.peterprofit.com



CRAZY BHA AND AN OLIVER REED BENDER

THE LETTER

Joe Cocker

**Give me a ticket for an aeroplane
I ain't got time to take no fast train
Oh, the lonely days are gone
I'm coming home
My baby, she wrote me a letter**

She isn't my baby, actually.

She is Catherine Beloff, Director of Legal and Compliance for the British Horseracing Authority. She wrote me a letter but she didn't say she couldn't live without me no more. In fact, I'm pretty sure she wanted me flogged to death, or even worse. Maybe dismembered to death, slowly.

A few days before the recent inquiry into Bryony Frost's complaint Robbie Dunne had

subjected her to a prolonged campaign of bullying and harassment, BHA top brass decided to threaten me over my involvement in blowing the whistle on the BHA's abject failure to regulate racing to a standard befitting a key player in a global sport.

They didn't want people to know what really goes on in British racing, which explains why it stumbles from one disaster to another; they tried to suppress details of the investigation, which had been finalised last April, but Rome burned while they fiddled around for the next eight months.

Issue 3 of the Black Horse Newsletter told how a whistleblower was deeply troubled by what was in a dossier containing all the documents involved in the investigation the BHA carried out. He felt it was vital the racing world knew the full story immediately because there was no guarantee the BHA was going to deal with this case in an honest and transparent manner.

Their default position is to cover-up bad news and they have proved yet again in this latest scandal their main concern is to save the BHA's reputation, such that it is.

But the game was changed by leaking the dossier to David Walsh, who then wrote two dramatic stories in the Sunday Times which set the tone for an inquiry which will reverberate around the racing world for some time to come and guarantee far reaching reform. Or not.

For some reason the BHA, totally unfit for purpose as a modern regulator, threatened

me as the smallest pebble on the beach thinking they were demonstrating how tough they are. They didn't challenge the Sunday Times, which has a copy of the full dossier containing all the documents, from which it published substantial extracts for their explosive stories.

The letter written by Ms Beloff referred to the story headlined **The Bryony Papers**.

"In that article and others contained in that edition, you make several allegations concerning the British Horseracing Authority. While we take issue with a number of these allegations, we respect your right to express your views and do not intend to respond in this correspondence. For the avoidance of doubt, the fact that we do not take issue in this letter with the allegations made in your newsletter against various individuals and organisations in British (and Irish) racing does not mean that we agree with them or accept their accuracy in any regard."

Ms Beloff signed off by writing: **"In these circumstances, please confirm by return that you will not publish the report or any documents contained in the report, whether in whole or in part. We invite you to destroy the documents forthwith."**

I replied a few days later saying they were badly mistaken.

"I have not damaged the reputation of British racing. The BHA has done far more harm to the sport than I could ever do by its totally inept handling of Bryony Frost's complaint made over 15 months

ago. Moreover, the BHA's announcement this week that it is now finally carrying out a substantial modernisation of the weighing room which is central to the Frost complaint shows that the lack of previous action over many years represents a gross dereliction of its legal duty to regulate racing in a fit and proper manner. This is a scandal lying at BHA's door and no one else's.

"It seems to me you have two choices: you can either hold the inquiry scheduled for next Tuesday in a fully transparent and honest way, or you can continue to cover-up and suppress serious wrongdoing which is not just confined to this particular case. If the BHA decides to follow the second route I will have no hesitation in publishing the full report, which would clearly be in the public interest."

It's clear the evidence supplied to the inquiry a few days later by Frost, former jockey Hannah Welch and an unnamed fence attendant, who all witnessed Dunne's appalling behaviour, was compelling and credible. So, too, was the performance of counsel Louis Weston, who met fire with fire when faced with an ill-advised personal attack on Frost by the defendant's legal team, which only highlighted even more the relentless animosity which led to Dunne's utterly unacceptable behaviour in the first place.

With the Independent Disciplinary Panel, chaired by former Court of Appeal judge, Brian Barker, also conducting an overwhelmingly fair hearing and handing down a penalty that was more lenient than harsh, there

is now no need to revisit the scene of the crime by publishing the full report, at least not for the moment.

Quite simply, the exemplary manner in which the Disciplinary Panel conducted the live inquiry and reached its verdict got the BHA out of jail. The panel said everything that needed to be said in its impressive written explanation of the findings they made and the 18 month suspension handed down to Dunne, who has now lodged an appeal against the verdict and the sentence.

But it has to be said that the time it took to bring this matter to a conclusion made the whole situation infinitely worse and seriously questions the BHA's competence.

The report reveals documentation which is too often incomplete with witness statements left unsigned, highlighting the regulator's lack of professionalism. This is why they threatened me when I said in the newsletter I was going to publish the documents in full so everyone could see what it looks like inside.

Excuses were offered for its presentation, but considering the power and resources at the BHA's disposal the report was a shambles which Dunne was perfectly entitled to target and still may do so.

The BHA has promised immediate reforms, but time will tell, its record for change is usually reactive as a last resort. This could easily turn out just another talking shop with

nothing worthwhile achieved despite many promises.

Some players on social media have suggested the full dossier sent to the Sunday Times must have come from the Bryony Frost side. To be perfectly clear, I know exactly where it came from and it had absolutely nothing to do with Frost personally, who I have never spoken to, or any ally, friend or acquaintance.

The mysterious circumstances of how the BHA lost its Head of Integrity in the build-up to the inquiry is a much more serious matter; it took a bizarre twist in the same week its legal department was writing its letter.

Chris Watts had left the BHA as the case was being readied, but no one seemed to know what had happened or if he would be taking part in the inquiry.

Until Charlie Brooks livened things up in his own inimitable way with an explanation in his column in the Telegraph.

He reported Watts had left the BHA after going on an “**Oliver Reed-style bender**” in Newmarket. For any readers in the dark, Reed was a famous actor who appeared in over fifty films including the acclaimed Women In Love. He was even more well known for his drunken hellraising.

In his later years he settled in Churchtown, County Cork, the home parish of legendary trainer Vincent O’Brien, but died suddenly aged 61 in 1999 when on another bender while shooting a film in Malta - taking on crew members of HMS Cumberland, docked in Valletta Harbour, in one drinking competition too far.

It’s fair to say, then, that this was quite a serious accusation and not made lightly. Brooks suggested Watts, a former senior officer with

the Metropolitan Police who was the anti-corruption manager for the England and Wales Cricket Board before joining the BHA in 2017, was also involved in an alcohol-fuelled incident at the British Racing School. The BHA was unusually fast out of the stalls to refute Brooks’ claims.

“The article is misleading and inaccurate and we can categorically deny the suggestion that an incident of this nature was linked in any way to a BHA regulatory investigation or led to the departure of any staff member from the BHA. The Daily Telegraph have been contacted to inform them of these facts.”

So it appears something did happen which may or may not have involved Watts and it may or may not have been quite as colourful as Brooks described.

Crisis? What crisis? Which leaves one final question: What does Julie Harrington do all day?

TRAFFICKED TO WORK IN IRISH RACING



A man from Pakistan was homeless on the streets of Kilkenny over Christmas just gone. It is alleged he was trafficked into Ireland to work in the horse industry two years ago.

When he broke his ribs doing his job he was treated by a vet because he has no official papers which would give him access to a doctor.

The terms of his employment reveal shocking exploitation, which is the way it has been for years in horse work in the country, and not just for foreign nationals.

I emailed Senator Paul Gavan and Councillor Denis Hynes, who raised the harrowing

story, to ask for further information and to facilitate a meeting with the desperate man.

Neither replied, showing yet again that politicians talk a good game but, ultimately, protecting the horse industry always comes first in Ireland.

This is a story which needs to be told, because I have now received information it is the racing industry which has exploited this man. Some of the biggest trainers in the land operate in the Kilkenny area, including the O'Brien and Mullins clans.

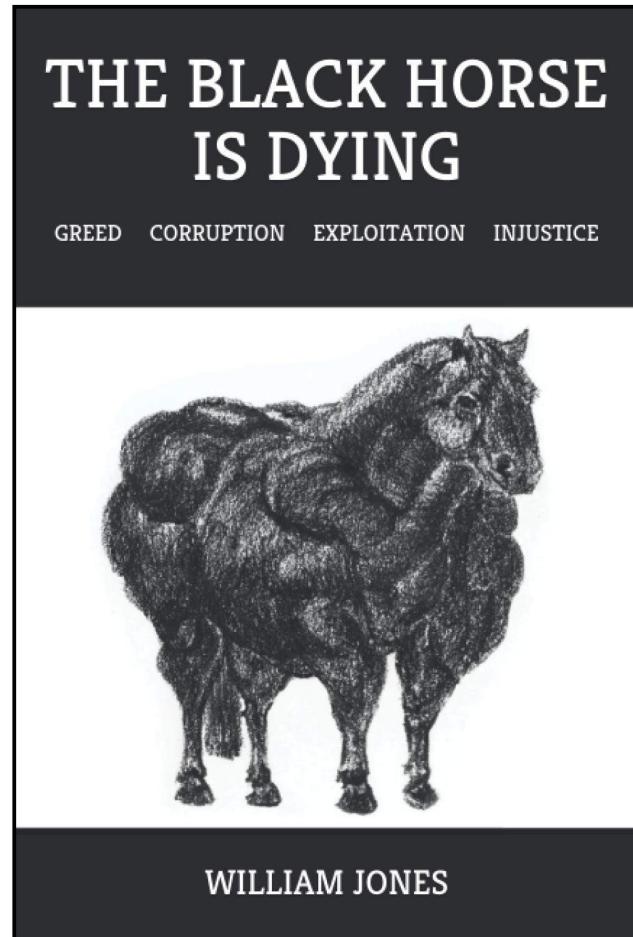
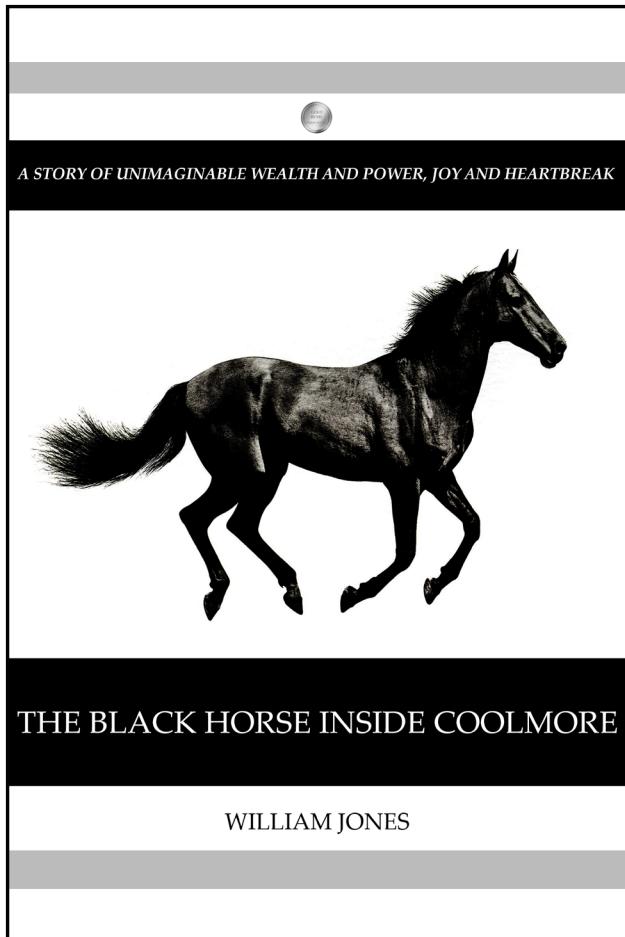
Perhaps they will use their influence to find out who is responsible. Whoever it is should be named and shamed, otherwise this will stay another racing secret.

Official report of the speech made by Senator Gavan to Seanad Eireann as the Upper House of the Irish Parliament was about to break up for the Christmas Holidays on 19 December 2021.

I was not going to say much more until I got a call this morning from my colleague, Councillor Denis Hynes, in Kilkenny. He told me a harrowing story. There is a Pakistani national - I will not name him - who is homeless on the streets of Kilkenny this evening. He was trafficked into the country to work for a prominent horse industry - I will not name it - where he worked seven days per week for €300. After 15 days of work, he would get one day off. When he broke his ribs in the course of his work, he was treated by a vet. He has put in his papers over being human trafficked. He was afraid to do so for many weeks because his family in Pakistan were being threatened by the traffickers. Of the €300 per week, he was paying half of it back to the traffickers every month for the promise of a visa. He has been through hell. The worst part of it as we approach Christmas is that Kilkenny County Council has refused to do anything for him. The homeless emergency services are saying that, because he does not have a PPS number, they will not help him. He is facing Christmas on the streets of Kilkenny. The lack of humanity is horrendous and shocking.

Will the Acting Leader be kind enough to write a letter to Kilkenny County Council - I will supply him with the details afterwards - and make not a political request, but a humanitarian one to look after this man as we approach Christmas and ensure that he is not left out on the streets after the living hell he has been put through for the past two years? I will be writing to the council as well. This case gives just a small insight into the horrors of human trafficking that have been swept under the carpet in this State for too long. When this story comes to the public's attention, the details will be shocking and have particular reverberations for the horse industry.

COMING NEXT TIME: The truth about John Warwick and Coolmore's yearlings



The Black Horse Inside Coolmore and
The Black Horse Is Dying are available on
Amazon or contact the author at
will.r.jones@hotmail.com or see
www.golddrashpublications.com

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