



THE BLACK HORSE NEWSLETTER

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

DAMNED BY HIS OWN WORDS

August Rodin bled from the nose when he won the Breeders' Cup Turf for trainer Aidan O'Brien. And when he won the Irish Champion Stakes. He also bombed in the English 2000 Guineas and the King George, beaten by miles. Yet he was being considered as a future stallion who could pass on a fault which could devastate future generations of the Thoroughbred. All because of naked greed. The story and exclusive photograph is from page two.

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DAMNED BY HIS OWN WORDS

Aidan O'Brien appears to believe the average mental age of racing fans is about five. Just who does he think he's kidding, apart from his mouthpiece at the Racing Post, Deputy Ireland Editor David Jennings, who rates about three.

Following Auguste Rodin's impressive win in the \$4 million Breeders' Cup Turf, they fed the racing world a line that retirement beckoned and his new home would be Coolmore Stud and its infamous breeding shed.

"We're not sure yet whether he will stay in training or not and that will be spoken about in the next week to ten days. I do know how important he is to the breed. He's a unique horse, a complete one-off. I know a lot of breeders are looking for him and I know the lads (the Coolmore owners who O'Brien insists on calling "the lads" in the same way children believe in Santa until they grow up a bit) are under pressure that way. He brings the two continents together and there won't ever be another one of him."

So we were led to believe Auguste Rodin is in huge demand as a stallion and it's inevitable he would be retired. Everyone thought that anyway, it's what Magnier, Tabor and Smith do, race horses to create stallions who will go to stud and make millions for their billionaire owners. They always need the money, it's an expensive auld game.

But there is a problem. Auguste Rodin, an outstanding racehorse on his good days, is a bleeder and shouldn't be allowed anywhere near the breeding shed.

He is a bleeder and always will be but O'Brien is keeing quiet about it. It's a fault, a vice, that any of his offspring in the future could well inherit if he became a stallion, just like he has from his own dam, Rhododendron, who bled in the French Oaks in 2017. O'Brien said then:

"It was the worst you've ever seen. She sprayed blood everywhere. We put it down to a very hot day and she's never done it before or since but they very rarely come back from something like that."

If Auguste Rodin was fully sound, or even half sound, he would have been retired to stallion duties immediately after his impressive win at the Breeders' Cup. Coolmore Stud, arch stallion masters of the modern age, know how to make stallions, and when to retire them is a key consideration.

The road to the breeding shed is paved with gold for a dual Derby winner with victories in important Group 1 races like the Irish Champion at Leopardstown and the Breeders' Cup in California. As a stallion he was worth well over E100 million in stud fees to the Coolmore owners over the next few years. Now was his time to go.

After all, Coolmore retired Blackbeard at the end of his debut season in 2021, supposedly because of injury, but this was a horse who was a very fast two year old with no guarantee he would train on to be an equally effective or even better three year old, so away he went and covered 297 mares at an advertised fee of E25K. He went to stud at his optimum time after just one year of racing.

That's the cynical Thoroughbred breeding world Coolmore Stud has created over the last forty years, which is all about exploitation - the right time to retire a racehorse and make a stallion according to the John Magnier template with not a care that racing fans might prefer to see them race on for just one more season. It's supposed to be a sport, you know, but at this level it's all about business.

So O'Brien is economical with the truth as he spins yarn after yarn for his fabulously rich employers, but he doesn't seem to get that the joke is on him. Not forgetting, of course, O'Brien is a millionaire in his own right with much of his wealth garnered from his share in the profits the stallions make after they have left Ballydoyle for the last time.

Ten days later O'Brien and Jennings had changed tack and announced Auguste Rodin was going to race on. The Coolmore team had found out that everyone suspected the horse was a bleeder and the demand for his services was rightly not what they thought.

In fact, it is highly probable some of the biggest players in the bloodstock industry worldwide told them it would be the height of irresponsibility and potentially a catastrophic mistake for the breed to stand the horse as a stallion. Be sure Coolmore wouldn't have sent their best mares, or indeed any of their mares, to Auguste Rodin.

That wouldn't necessarily be a criticism of him in normal circumstances, because they usually allow other breeders to find out if their latest stallion prospect is any good. If he is they will then row in behind him and if he isn't they won't have wasted their million dollar mares on a dud. Most stallions are failures and those who go through Coolmore Stud's revolving doors are no different.

Currently, only one of their stallions is in the Top Ten in Europe for total prizemoney won by their offspring and that's the deceased Galileo in ninth place. They badly needed Auguste Rodin in their stallion yard in County Tipperary, so the news he was going to stay in training was unbelievable for some.

"The lads have decided to keep Auguste Rodin in training. We're very much looking forward to have him racing again next year and it's hugely exciting. He's a unique horse, a one off, and the lads are enjoying their racing more than ever at the moment. It's unbelievable for us and everyone else, for everyone who follows racing," O'Brien told Jennings.

"He came back from Santa Anita in great shape and everyone is delighted with him. He came out of the race in super shape and he's bouncing. He'll have a rest now and we'll bring him back early next year. He looks like a horse who could be even more exciting next year so we're all looking forward to it."

As long as he doesn't bleed. He ran two absolute shockers this year caused by bleeding, but next year could easily be a bigger nightmare as horses tend to bleed more not less as they get older. It's like a small hole in a dam becoming a chasm.

He had a disastrous start to this season when favourite for the Qipco 2000 Guineas last May, finishing 12 of 14 runners and beaten 22 lengths. He clearly had something wrong with him but O'Brien blamed it on the horse not liking flying, which made it strange that he sent him on a 12 hour flight to California two weeks ago to run at the Breeders' Cup. That he then won is irrelevant – O'Brien forced him to do something which he said previously caused him distress.

He bounced back from the Guineas to impressively win the Betfred Derby at Epsom and then took a poor Irish Derby unimpressively, before bombing again in the King George at Ascot. Just like in the Guineas, he looked like there was something wrong as he was thrashed by 127 lengths in last place. He came good again in a decent Irish Champion on home turf before heading to Santa Anita, in a plane, for the BC World Championships.

He bled from the nose at Santa Anita, as our picture shows, which is why Coolmore has had to shelve stud plans for him. Exercise Induced Pulmonary Haemorrhage (EIPH) refers to the presence of blood in the airways of the lungs when a horse undertakes intense exercise. At rest, the equine heart usually beats between 25-30 times per minute, but during exercise this increases to between 220-230 beats.

This high pressure from the heart substantially increases the blood flow in the lungs which can lead to the rupture of the capillaries, the smallest blood vessels which connect veins and arteries. Blood will then leak into the lungs and in the worst cases exit through the horse's nostrils which can badly affect performance.



600 HORSES DIED

AND THE STORY

DIED WITH THEM

Huge cull of racehorses at Beijing track

Approximately 600 horses have been killed after the failure of an attempt to introduce racing to the People's Republic of China. The animals were put down by lethal injection during the past month, soon after the closure of Tongshun racecourse near Beijing. Speaking on condition of anonymity, a source at the track said: "They have culled 600 to date, 400 racehorses and 200 mares. It is an open secret here."

Nicholas Godfrey in The Guardian: November 2005.

Irishman Kevin Connolly was director of racing at Tongshun. It was alleged the horses were slaughtered as a protest against the government's refusal to legalise gambling on horse racing. While Connolly acknowledged there had been a cull, he was accused of attempting to downplay its scale.

He told Godfrey: "All the horses have not been culled. Should racing start again we will have more than enough horses to race." But racing didn't start again and Connolly knows the true story of what happened to over 2,000 unwanted horses at Tongshun.

Chinese punters are big players on the black market and the potential profits to be made are massive as and when the government decides to legalise gambling, but it was in no hurry to join the global stampede in 2005 and that's still the case today, nearly twenty years after hundreds of Thoroughbreds paid the ultimate price for human greed.

Hong Kong tycoon Yun Pung (YP) Cheng reportedly spent \$100 million pursuing the holy grail of being first through the door when China inevitably lifted its blanket ban on gambling. Tongshun was opened in 2002 with limited interest locally and nothing of consequence in the wider world until the devastating news leaked out about the mass cull.

It is likely many more horses died because it is unknown, at least publicly, what happened to hundreds of broodmares and youngstock in addition to the racehorses which were part of Cheng's operation in China at the time. Cheng either ran out of money or just ran out anyway when it became clear gambling rules were not going to change and mass euthanasia was deemed the easiest, which means the cheapest, way out. Connolly told the South China Morning Post:

"We've killed 110 horses, which is a normal cull at the end of the season. They were mostly injured horses, retired horses, young foals with no commercial future, barren mares. They were killed by humane lethal injection. We did not kill 600 horses. The course hasn't closed. We've stopped racing for winter, but we'll continue to operate so that we'll be ready for if and when the Chinese government allows racing [and gambling] in China."

Connolly admitted there had been staff cutbacks, including 16 trainers who were told to pack up and leave as the racecourse needed lower operating costs, but he denied the horses were killed to save money.

"We still have 2,400 horses on the property. Half of them are of racing age and we still have a big operation here."

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO THE 2,000 HORSES LEFT BEHIND WHEN CHENG'S BIG PLAN FINALLY COLLAPSED?

Beijing Jockey Club can't provide an answer. It was set up to administer and regulate the sport in the region, but was closed down and just like the racecourse never reopened.

The Chinese government ignored the plight of the horses even though their slaughter represented a blight of unprecedented proportions on the country's reputation, but China's sickening attitude to human and animal rights are well known. It doesn't care about either.

And from there on the Tongshun story went cold.

A few weeks ago Kevin Connolly reappeared in the racing spotlight. He manages a syndicate which owns One Look, a two year old filly by Coolmore stallion Gleneagles which won the Goffs Million and prize money of E616,000 on her first ever start at the Curragh.

Expertly trained by Paddy Twomey in County Tipperary, the filly will now be aimed at next year's Classics and the sky is the limit, as they say.



Connolly [far right] created the syndicate last year for family and close friends. He started out riding and training horses in Ireland and, in an eventful career, ended up working in China. He has now gone full circle back to owning horses again and picked out the filly for E65,000 as a yearling at Goffs Sales.

Connolly's LinkedIn profile, which states he is based in Vietnam, gives further details of his life in racing.

"I have built substantial club management experience during my time as Director of Racing for the Beijing Tongshun Racing Club – renowned as being the best race course in Asia. I played a key role in pioneering the Club, and made a positive impact on the development of the horse racing and breeding industry in China."

We emailed him through LinkedIn on 28 September 2023 requesting an interview for a story in The Black Horse Newsletter. We told him we wanted to ask him about his time in China. There are a hundred and one questions which need answers. He did not reply.

There is a lot more to this story.

He first met YP Cheng in 1999 when he was training in Macau. Cheng had a growing racing team and stud farm in Australia and Connolly was appointed his racing manager, eventually moving to China to oversee the Tongshun operation.

Sydney veterinarian Sven Arne Temmingh was in charge of the welfare of Cheng's horses in Australia and took on specific responsibility for the 750 he intended to send to China.

In late 1999, Temmingh organised the delivery of over 50 litres of anabolic steroids, including *Stanozolol*, *Nandrolone* and *Testosterone*, from Australia to Cheng's operations in Beijing and Hong Kong. He personally delivered one package of 16 litres stowed in his luggage when he flew into Beijing on a visit to inspect the horses.

Australia's Department of Agriculture were soon on the case and Temmingh was charged with illegally supplying injectable steroids and creating false records to cover up what was going on.

In New South Wales Supreme Court, Temmingh explained that he injected each horse bound for China with a 10ml dose of *Stanozolol* every week. He said that conditions were harsh for the horses in China and his job was to improve their appearance and create a favourable impression.

In a fax dated 14 September 1999, Connolly instructed him to organise further deliveries of steroids and, in particular, *Stanozolol*.

He said Connolly had told him to be very careful when giving the steroids to the horses. He was instructed to pay for them himself and he would be reimbursed in

cash. The total cost of the drugs Temmingh purchased for his employer was AUS\$35,404 and he gave sworn evidence that Cheng and Connolly subsequently reneged on the agreement to pay him for the drugs he acquired. The court heard expert evidence that the commercial value of the drugs involved in the scandal was over AUS\$200,000.

On 14 December 1999, Temmingh was sacked by Connolly, who told the court it was because he discovered he had been buying steroids on Cheng's company account. It appeared Cheng and Connolly did not want to be linked to the use of the drugs.

Temmingh said he was carrying out orders to improve the condition of the horses. Connolly denied telling the vet to *"obtain substantial quantities of steroids so the horses could be placed on an ongoing program [sic]*. Temmingh broke further veterinary rules when he didn't keep proper records of the treatments he administered.

Connolly denied he played any part in the drug scandal but the judge said that wasn't an issue he had to decide. The main charge related to the question of who supplied the illegal steroids and court documents show Judge Simpson accepted Temmingh's account was true.

The judge told the court: *"The defendant's evidence was that his purpose in sending or taking the steroids to China was for treatment of horses owned by Cheng, and that is in fact the use to which they were put. There is nothing to contradict this account and I propose to sentence accordingly."*

Temmingh was fined a total of \$5,000 plus costs. An inquiry held by the Veterinary Surgeons Investigating Committee subsequently withdrew his licence to practice for a minimum of five years with costs also awarded against him.

Around the time Cheng's desperate plan was falling apart, additional racecourses were springing up around China in anticipation of a racing revolution but they, too, become wastelands like Tongshun. However, nothing deterred others from joining the gold rush they believed was coming hard and fast.

China Horse Club, a secretive racing and breeding operation which claims to include a select membership of over 300 extremely rich Chinese investors wanting to find a way to get some of their wealth out of their country, is owned by Teo Ah Khing, a millionaire businessman and architect from Malaysia who designed the splendid Meydan Racecourse grandstand in Dubai.

The club hides behind a labyrinth of offshore companies and, as all the best money launderers know, an account with a shady Irish bank is a must have to facilitate all sorts of dodgy business dealings.

Chinese money helped the global bloodstock industry recover from the slump caused by the 2008 financial crisis, no more so than in Australia. China Horse Club was the biggest buyer at the 2015 Magic Millions yearling sale, paying AUS\$6.7m for 21 horses, because Khing detected Chinese authorities were changing their attitudes towards gambling. He said:

“The legalisation of gambling is when and not if. I can see it happening in five to ten years. When that happens there won’t be enough Thoroughbred horses to satisfy demand at auction.”

So everyone jumped on the bandwagon and the bloodstock industry’s bull market bellowed louder than ever.



Teo Ah Khing with a Frankel yearling filly subsequently named Goldrush bought at Goffs Orby Sale for E1.7m in 2015.

In August 2016, Khing hosted a racing festival in Inner Mongolia that he claimed attracted 25,000 spectators and a million online viewers. Queen Elizabeth’s racing manager, John Warren, attended to give it a bit of stardust, but when it took two days to run four races it was more like a country fair.

“A few days ago I flew 76 horses into Beijing on a charter flight,” Yuesheng Zhang, the billionaire owner of Chinese mining conglomerate Yulong Group, told the Financial Times in 2017. Zhang said he had invested A\$20 million in his Australian bloodstock operation which included a stud farm in Victoria.

In the next six years Zhang's spending went through the roof culminating in the purchase of 60 broodmares at the Magic Millions breeding stock sale just five months ago at a cost of A\$33.5 million. In five years Yulong has grown its broodmare band to over 600 and it intends to add another hundred elite mares.

As Zhang increased his investment in Australian racing it declined in Ireland, where he now keeps just a few horses in training with Jessica Harrington and has relocated many of his European broodmares to Australia. He believes all roads are leading to China.

Teo Ah Khing is now eight years into his prophecy that gambling will be legalised within ten years, but there's not the slightest hint at government level it's going to happen.

The risks are growing for the hundreds of horses that have been shipped in to China from Australia with no chance of an official racing and gambling programme likely to be introduced anytime soon. Chinese millionaires are taking part in a few private races against each other as the wait for change goes on, but how long will they hang around before there is another cull?

Racing with betting was a flourishing part of China's sporting landscape at the beginning of the last century, with every major city possessing a racetrack. That all changed during the murderous Chairman Mao era which began in 1949 and now nearly eighty years later another dictator, President Xi Jinping, is pursuing a campaign against corruption and gambling is seen as a wicked vice from the West which is not wanted or needed in the People's Republic.

Nevertheless, the Hong Kong Jockey Club decided to build a state of the art racecourse [pictured below] a two hour drive into the mainland at a cost of over HK\$3 billion in the hope of getting President Xi to look a little more favourably on racing. The message came back that racing is fine, but you can't bet on it.

Conghua's track was completed and one exhibition meeting of five races with horses brought in from Hong Kong was held in March 2019, but a combination of civil unrest in Hong Kong (the locals don't want to be part of China) and Covid-19 has put further plans on hold. Another HK\$4 billion is being spent on an "iconic" grandstand which is expected to be finished in 2025.

Hong Kong Jockey Club chief executive, Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges, isn't optimistic in the short term: *"It is likely that we will start first with four race meetings a year and then we will see. We can build it up to eight and potentially beyond but it will be a gradual development and it has to fit into how we expand the horse population and how other developments in China go."*

“The question of betting is a different ball game, it’s not something we can speculate on. Nobody can predict if it will ever come.”



The first race at the new track at Conghua Racecourse in March 2019. No further race meetings have taken place.

Racing’s obsession that China will be the panacea to all its mounting problems is totally misplaced, not least because some long established racing organisations in the region are already on the slippery slope to oblivion.

Singapore Turf Club, founded in 1842, will stage its final race in October next year and the land on which it operates will be handed back to the government for redevelopment. A growing apathy towards the sport has seen crowds dwindle unsustainably over the last decade and high profile drugs cases involving organised crime with connections to racing will also soon be heard.

There are major welfare concerns about the estimated 700 horses that will be left without a home when the track closes next year. And there is more reputational damage due - the Monetary Authority of Singapore has just commenced an investigation into the country’s financial sector over money laundering linked to the gambling industry.

Local media has reported the investigation will include Credit Suisse and other domestic and international banks and financial institutions. Maybe President Xi has a point about gambling and the decadent West which he is not going to let go.

Last year, Macau Jockey Club reported a loss of US\$261.4 million and is now racing only once a week with a racehorse population of only 200 compared to over a thousand not so long ago. The Club was established in 1980 and while betting on

course is allowed remote gambling on racing out of state is not permitted. It's future looks decidedly shaky.

This is the key issue for racing throughout the world. Without revenue from unrestricted gambling racing is doomed. Or in China's case, it won't even get started. The obsession that China can bring huge riches to racing through gambling is summed up by a quote from American actor and comedian Steve Martin.

- I love money. I love everything about it. I bought some pretty good stuff. Got me a \$300 pair of socks. Got a fur sink. An electric dog polisher. A gasoline powered turtle neck sweater. And, of course, I bought some dumb stuff, too.

The bottom line is that racing authorities aren't particularly bothered whether the sport gets going again in China, their interest is gaining access to the country's population which numbered 1,425,671,352 on 1 July this year. Knowing how the Chinese love to punt, there's a ton of money available to prop up racing worldwide if only all gambling restrictions were lifted.

No one understands this more than Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges and Hong Kong Jockey Club, which posted total betting turnover on horse racing for the 2022-23 season of HK\$141.10 billion (£13.78bn/E16.03bn/US\$18.05bn). Even Hong Kong's formidable finances are under severe stress and they need more and bigger gamblers.

After lying low for a while, the company at the centre of the slaughtered horses scandal at Tongshun in 2005 is on the march again, buying two horses at the Tattersalls Horse In Training Sale in Newmarket a month ago for a total of 520,000 guineas.

YP Cheng's farm, Domeland, purchased Urban Look from his breeder Kingsclere Stud for 280,000 guineas. Andrew Balding trained him to win three of seven starts.

Domeland's managing director, King Cheng, also bid 240,000 guineas for Humanity, a dual winner by Roaring Lion owned by Qatar Racing, with the three year old's recent six length success at Kempton franking his ability and wellbeing.

Cheng said: *"We're looking for extremely sound horses that we can compete in the staying races in Australia. Obviously we're a private stable but we're looking to grow and compete with some of the bigger trainers."*

We think there's a lot of improvement to come from the horses we bought so we expect them to be progressive. We have about 50 horses in training and a couple of mares too, but they are mostly our own race mares who have retired."

WHAT'S THE STORY

MORNING GLORY?

There is some graffiti scrawled in the men's room in Nenagh Courthouse in County Tipperary. It says: FK THE SYSTEM. Without the asterisks, of course.**

The system hasn't changed much anywhere in the world for a long time, other than it gets bigger and nastier: politicians against peasants, powerful bullying the weak, rich exploiting the poor.

Ireland is world class at exploitation. The system, like most places, nurtures the drug gangs and money launderers. The pursuit of vast wealth and power is the driving force, no more so than in sport – just look at the horse racing industry.

An international police operation led by Spain recently arrested Irish gangster Liam Byrne while he was enjoying some downtime at a restaurant in Majorca. Byrne is a key figure in the Kinahan drug gang and has been on the run for some time, ducking and diving from the law in Ireland and the UK.

Except he hasn't really been on the run, they knew exactly where he was – Dubai.

He and other Irish gangsters live openly in luxury in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) because Dubai refuses to extradite the world's biggest crooks to face trial for their crimes in Europe and America - Dubai is their safe haven where they are protected from prosecution.

The ruler of Dubai and Vice President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE is Sheikh Mohammed. He calls the shots, and he's become a major problem to law enforcement around the world.

Spend a few millions on property to help keep the real estate bubble growing will guarantee a salubrious lifestyle no matter how badly you have behaved elsewhere. You are safe unless you get careless, which is what happened to Liam Byrne.

He didn't think anyone would notice if he popped over to Majorca for a party, but Spanish police and their international colleagues were watching all the time.

He's now in prison fighting his forced return to the UK to face serious gun running charges related to drugs which, if proven, will put him away for maybe twenty years. If he had stayed in Dubai he would still be as free as a bird enjoying the craic with other members of the Kinahan gang, courtesy of Sheikh Mohammed.

Byrne claims he would suffer "inhumane and degrading treatment" if he was extradited to the UK because poor security in some British prisons would put his life in danger. His lawyer has said he should not be deported as the only evidence against him are hacked messages on the encrypted communications network



favoured by criminals for its secrecy – EncroChat.

A couple of weeks ago the 74 year old Sheikh attended Europe's premier yearling sale in Newmarket (pictured) and forked out over £12 million for the cream of the Thoroughbred crop to join his Godolphin racing empire. As always he was lauded by the racing elite as a hero.

It's a recurring theme – a year earlier he bought 25 yearlings costing over £25 million hoping to offset his destroyed reputation from an acrimonious divorce from one of his six wives, Princess Haya of Jordan, and his manipulation of oil prices which supported Russia in its war against Ukraine and severely impacted the cost of living crisis in Europe.

A week before the recent Tattersall's sale, his team was at the Goffs equivalent in County Kildare without the top man, where they paid a paltry £2 million to buy four of the best yearlings. Irish sales are no longer important enough for the Sheikh to attend, but he is revered no less even though he no longer has horses trained in the Republic. It was other foreign buyers, especially Americans, who kept the Goffs sale afloat in 2023.

Goffs are firmly relegated to third place behind Tattersalls and Arqana in France as the cream of Irish bred yearlings head overseas rather stay home for domestic sales. Not that it makes much difference to the big picture – the bull run in British and Irish yearling sales is falling apart and much tougher times lie ahead.

But while the money Sheikh Mohammed spends acquiring blue blood horses fills the pockets of the elite and glosses over the cracks in European racing as the sport struggles to survive, the Sheikh's most telling contribution is arguably the protection he freely gives criminals who have tormented every walk of life in Ireland and beyond for the last twenty years.

In September, a ship carrying cocaine valued at over \$150 million from South America was boarded off the Cork coast in a joint police and military operation which seized the illegal cargo before it could reach dealers in Ireland, the UK and Europe wide.

It is believed the Kinahan gang, who are at liberty to carry on their drugs business from Dubai which is estimated to have earned them more than a billion euros, was heavily involved in the shipment.

But it's alright, Sheikh Mohammed has bought loads of yearlings to help keep the racing and breeding industries going. His family also owns Dubai Duty Free (DDF), which sponsors the Irish Derby in which the Magnier family have earned millions in prize money including E1.2 million this year.

The system works away seamlessly at the top of the tree.

DDF is responsible for duty free operations at Dubai's two international airports. Founded in 1983, the company recorded first year sales of \$20 million and has since grown into one of the biggest travel retail operators in the world with annual turnover expected to exceed \$3 billion by 2025.

Then there is the stunning 1,500 acre Kildangan Stud in Kildare, which is part of the Sheikh's global bloodstock operation of over 60 stallions earning huge revenues through stud fees on four continents as Irish racing embraces Arab oil money no questions asked.

All the time, the leaders of the drugs gangs which continue to devastate communities in towns like Nenagh and Kildare in every European country live the grand life with impunity in Dubai.

FK THE SYSTEM.**

As you would expect, Godolphin talk a good line in propaganda.

"From supporting our local communities to sponsoring educational and vocational programmes, Godolphin seeks to create awareness, passion and care for the thoroughbred and nurture both our industry and the people that surround us.

So whether you are a trainer, a jockey, a groom, a racetrack supporter, a member of our local community or simply someone keen to make a life with horses, Godolphin is there for you.....”

Flip the coin and Sheikh Mohammed is also there for the murderous criminals holed up in the UAE.

For the record, this is the statement released when the US authorities offered a reward of \$5 million for the arrest and/or conviction of each of the Kinahans.



The Kinahan Transnational Criminal Organization (KTCO) was established in Dublin, Ireland, by Christopher Vincent Kinahan in the 1990's. Through time, Christopher Vincent incorporated his two sons, Daniel Joseph and Christopher, Jr., into his criminal organization. After becoming Ireland's most powerful organized crime group, the KTCO quickly transcended international boundaries. The KTCO originally distributed South American cocaine and heroin in Ireland, and later to the United Kingdom and throughout mainland Europe. In addition to narcotics trafficking, the Kinahans have engaged in money laundering, firearms trafficking, and murder.

The KTCO gained notoriety in 2016 when a feud with the rival Hutch drug trafficking gang – also from the inner city of Dublin – led to a shooting attack at a Dublin hotel. The brazen daytime attack targeted Daniel Kinahan during a weigh-in for an MTK Global (formerly MGM) boxing match and shocked the Irish public. Although Daniel escaped unharmed, the subsequent and ongoing feud has resulted in 18 homicides, encompassing nearly all members or relatives and associates of the Hutch gang. The subsequent police response to the gang violence in Ireland led to gang member arrests and caused the KTCO leadership to shift their transnational organized crime operations to the United Kingdom, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Law enforcement intelligence reports that Daniel Kinahan currently directs his most senior TCO members based in Dubai to carry out significant drug smuggling ventures and oversee money laundering operations which have been comingled through various legitimate commercial businesses.

POLITICIANS

PROTECTED

WILLIE

MULLINS

The story so far. An anonymous whistleblower sent The Black Horse Newsletter a tranche of 150 Department of Agriculture documents connected to two of Ireland's biggest doping scandals. Issue 10 of the Newsletter contained revelations in the John Hughes case not made public before, including the names of some of the trainers and their associates who were being supplied with illegal equine drugs Hughes acquired from Australia.

Hughes was dealing in drugs while he worked as a vet for the Department of Agriculture and documents reveal the government agency knew for over ten years they were being illegally imported, including with the involvement of Dr Seth Fishman, the disgraced Florida veterinarian currently serving an 11 year prison term for manufacturing and distributing banned performance enhancing drugs.

On 9 February 2015, the Special investigations Unit of the Department of Agriculture carried out an unannounced inspection of Willie Mullins' training yard in County Carlow. Mullin's vet, Tim Brennan, also happened to be there at the same time and when government vet Louis Reardon finished checking Mullin's pile of medications he told Brennan he also wanted to inspect the drugs the vet kept in his jeep.

Medications belonging to both Mullins and Brennan were seized and sent for analysis. Both the trainer and his vet were found to be in possession of unauthorised animal drugs.

In a case outline, Reardon referred to three of the unauthorised drugs found in Brennan's possession.

“

P-Block is of significance in that it is purported to contain a pain-relieving agent whose presence is very difficult to detect. In certain circumstances, this could confer a performance enhancing action and this is potentially of significance regarding the integrity of racing.

Hemo 15 and Catosal are what are known as Hematinics - they contain ingredients which promote the manufacture of red blood cells. Among the ingredients of Hemo 15 is a substance called Cobalt. This is a trace element necessary for the production of red blood cells.

Cobalt is a controversial substance within horse racing circles in that it can be used to cause the production of Erythropoietin (EPO) which leads to the manufacture of more red blood cells. In this way, Cobalt can have a performance enhancing effect.”

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From the moment news broke that Mullins and Brennan had been raided, racing authorities repeatedly briefed media that Mullins wasn't under suspicion. The investigation only concerned Brennan, they said.

In particular, the Turf Club's chief executive at the time, Denis Egan, emphasised to anyone who wanted a quote that Mullins wasn't involved. And that's the way the story played out, but documentation now reveals it wasn't the truth.

While the investigation reported that Mullins unequivocally possessed unauthorised drugs, the Department chose not to charge him with any offence and has never said why.

Nearly three years after the raid, Brennan pleaded guilty to three charges of possessing unauthorised animal medications and one of failing to keep proper records.



Brennan is pictured attending Kilkenny District Court on 15 November 2017. Behind him is John Halley, Coolmore Stud’s principal veterinarian, who told the court the offences were technical and of little importance. Equine vets hate rules and regulations, they believe they are above the law and prefer to do exactly as they please.

Stephen Lannigan-O’Keefe SC, for Brennan, said: *“It was made clear that, as for Mr Mullins, there was nothing there to see. For Mr Brennan, there is also nothing there to see.”*

Lapping it up like an obedient poodle, Judge O’Shea gave the convicted vet no punishment save ordering him to pay E1,150 witness costs. Remarkably,

considering Brennan had pleaded guilty, the judge declined to award the Department of Agriculture the costs it sought.

He even refused Brennan's offer to pay E1,000 to an animal charity as part of a plea for leniency. The judge decided there was no need.

But the documentation now in the possession of the Black Horse Newsletter shows the full story wasn't told.

Reardon's inspection of the medications kept by Mullins revealed that Brennan was supplying the trainer with prescription only medications against the rules. When Brennan was interviewed under caution he swore at Reardon and drove away before the government vet could finish questioning him.

He was aggressive, evasive and unhelpful and subsequently failed to respond to numerous requests to attend further interviews and twice ignored letters sent by registered post.

None of this evidence was put before the court. In fact, it was the opposite - counsel for Brennan claimed his client *"had cooperated fully with the authorities, made frank admissions and had entered a plea so as to save the State what had expected to be a three day trial."*

The Department of Agriculture said nothing to put the record straight and when Brennan was sentenced Judge O'Shea noted his guilty plea and took into account *"his extensive cooperation and the fact there was absolutely no suggestion of aggravating factors being involved."*

The Department readily agreed to a further ten charges against Brennan being struck out and refused to identify the drugs involved, as did Brennan. It was a stitch-up and in the circumstances it's entirely reasonable to believe these drugs were banned performance enhancers.

Reardon had no choice but to do what he was told, which was to keep his mouth shut; government vets responsible for ensuring racing was clean and honest were being leaned on to go along quietly with orders from those with much more power higher up the chain of command.

Judge O'Shea's claim that there was *"absolutely no aggravating factors involved"* was not only a brazen lie but represented a mockery of what justice is supposed to represent. Brennan pursued a vitriolic campaign against the Department of Agriculture and Reardon which was taken up by TD (Member of Parliament) John McGuinness, the Irish Field newspaper, and in an official complaint against Reardon to his superiors. McGuinness is TD for the constituency in which Brennan and Mullins live.

- **8 April 2017:** A front page story in the Irish Field newspaper which criticised the Department of Agriculture brought an unusually strong response. *“The Department is particularly disappointed to note that in this article an unnamed practicing veterinarian is quoted, making non-specific, unchallenged and unsubstantiated serious allegations against the Department of seeking to prejudice a court case. The Department would have expected to at least have been given an opportunity to react to such allegations prior to publication. For the record, the Department refutes the allegation.”*
- **30 May 2017:** McGuinness told the Oireachtas under parliamentary privilege: *“The leaks from the Department to the media about these cases must be stopped. They are putting jobs in the country at risk as well as the reputation of an individual or individuals who have never been convicted and have yet to go through the process. The Department is using the might of its legal arm and taxpayers’ money to chase down these people, break them before they go into court and have their reputations and businesses ruined.”*
- McGuinness made numerous wholly unsubstantiated claims regarding the way Brennan and Mullins were investigated and alleged information was leaked to the media to blacken their names. The Minister of Agriculture, Michael Creed, responded: *“I assure the House that the various inspection regimes operated by officials of my Department are implemented in accordance with EU and national legislation governing these requirements.”*
- The McGuinness and Irish Field interventions before the investigation had been completed was intended to put pressure on the Department of Agriculture to drop any charges, and it worked for Mullins. The totally unproven accusations against Reardon were included in a letter Brennan sent to politicians and the media, a copy of which was included in the documents supplied to the Black Horse Newsletter. The letter said:

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During his questioning Mr Reardon would frequently ask why we were using performance enhancing products in a racing yard. This was very intimidatory behaviour and these were false accusations to a professional vet and trainer.

Once the case drew nearer, it is clear that Mr Reardon contacted the Sunday Times Crime Correspondent, Mr Paul Mooney, with a “story” of Willie Mullins’ vet up on

Drug Charges. The article goes on to state that I was in possession of unauthorised medicines and that some of these drugs were nefarious/performance enhancing. These articles in many mainstream newspapers were all claiming sinister actions by myself. Blackening my name, and that of Mr Mullins, even before the trial was held.

I had a two hour meeting with him (Mullins) to explain the case, and he spoke to many other vets who assured him that it was the “witch-hunt” tactics of Mr Reardon who fed misinformation to the press to seek publicity for himself, and for the case.

Mr Reardon has had a succession of cases brought against him for his behaviour. An Taoiseach Mr Kenny had to intervene in one case to stop a civil case against Mr Reardon.

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Brennan never provided any evidence to support his unfounded and untrue allegations. No charges were brought against Mullins even though the documents show he possessed medications which were not authorised for use in Ireland.

Brennan received no sanction despite pleading guilty at Kilkenny District Court on 15 November 2017 to possessing unauthorised medications and failing to keep proper records. The Veterinary Council of Ireland finally decided in December 2020 to suspend Brennan’s veterinary licence for a pathetically inadequate two months for what it described as “*extremely serious misconduct.*”

But what the documents now show is that Brennan had been investigated previously for similar offences, including that he illegally imported drugs from the US.

In 2011 Brennan’s practice was inspected by Department vet Caroline Garvan after she became aware of prescriptions issued by Brennan in Healy’s Pharmacy, Thomastown, that were not compliant with the law. Garvan detailed 13 “*issues of concern*” and instructed Brennan to remedy the situation within 21 days, but no charges were brought against him.

While Brennan and Mullins got away with it, Reardon paid a heavy price for pursuing illegality in racing. By the summer of 2017, he’d had enough of politicians interfering in his job protecting the integrity of racing and the welfare of horses.

He had played leading roles in prosecuting two of the biggest criminals, vet John Hughes and trainer Philip Fenton, but it appeared to those working in the Special

Investigations Unit that the racing establishment thought they were too successful; the high profile court cases splashed over the media were embarrassing the sport.

Instead of cleaning up racing top management at the Department of Agriculture, including Minister Creed, decided to move Reardon out of the frontline and dismantle the investigations unit.

One day after making a Protected Disclosure complaint, Reardon was told to voluntarily agree to a transfer to the Wildlife Division or he would be forcibly moved. He refused and alleged he was harassed and bullied by a senior manager until he was eventually transferred three years later.

An internal investigation found no evidence that there was political interference at the Department, a decision protecting the hierarchy which would surprise no one in Ireland, and the Workplace Relations Commission decided two months ago that Reardon was not penalised when he was moved out of the investigations unit.

However, Adjudication Officer Thomas O’Driscoll said that Reardon came across as “an honest and sincere witness at the hearing and that there is no doubt that he is a committed and diligent worker, who upheld the highest standards when calling people to account in the very responsible position that he held in the Investigations Division. I am satisfied also that he was treated shabbily by the Respondent (Department of Agriculture) in the manner in which he was re-assigned.”

But O’Driscoll said the evidence provided by the Department satisfied the threshold required to establish under law that the reassignment of Reardon to another role in 2020 was not retribution for his Protected Disclosure in 2017.

It was fully accepted that Reardon was told in 2017 that he either moved out of the Investigations Unit voluntarily or the Department would move him, but they didn’t carry out their threat for three years. According to O’Driscoll that time lag got the toxic Department of Agriculture off the hook.

The Special Investigations Unit now contains just three vets covering the whole of Ireland and racing is no longer part of its remit. In its place since 2018 is the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board, which is owned by the John Magnier controlled Turf Club. The change has been a disaster.

Reardon won the battle but lost the war and Irish racing slipped ever further into the cesspit of corruption.

THE BLACK HORSE NEWSLETTER

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