



THE BLACK HORSE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 10

JULY 2023

William Jones

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



FILE IMAGE

**BLOOD ON
RACING'S
HANDS**

**BEWARE LIES
OF RACING'S
ANDROIDS**

**MICKY MOUSE
IS ALIVE
AND WELL**

**IRELAND'S
YELLOW
STREAK**

BLOOD ON RACING'S HANDS

“He’s fine, he just bled out his nostrils which happens but he’s not okay to run,” jockey Hayley Turner explained to ITV’s Luke Harvey at the start of the Windsor Castle Stakes at Royal Ascot after her horse, Two Tribes, was withdrawn before the race on veterinary advice. He had bled from both nostrils on his way down to the start.

Harvey: “You’ve got to look after the horses first so that’s important.”

Turner: “Exactly.”

Harvey: “He might have banged it in the lorry you never know do you?”

Turner: “It will be something quite simple just safer not to.”

Harvey: “No, correct decision, well done and you’ve had a day out and you get paid.”

The on duty vet withdrew the horse, not Turner, who is nevertheless a vastly experienced and knowledgeable jockey; she knew what bleeding from both nostrils means, she will have seen it regularly on the racetrack. It’s not something simple at all.

The idea that this issue was caused by a bang to the nose in a horsebox on the way to the track several hours earlier was just more misinformation. Harvey also knew exactly what this incident really was.

How do I know, when I haven’t seen anything like what Turner and Harvey have seen in their racing lives? It’s because our research has shown that 160 horses have bled from the nose in similar situations on UK racecourses so far this year, although they have mostly experienced their lungs filling with blood during a strenuous race and not in a steady jog down to the start.

We tell the stories of four horses. One died after bleeding from the nose and another was immediately retired after bleeding. Both followed horrific incidents within a few days of each other a month ago.

A third horse died while being led around the parade ring before its race but the trainer refused to say what caused his sudden death.

Then we learned of a horse who has bled SEVEN times in races to date and the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) did nothing to protect his welfare.

THE HORSES

4 June 2023

Trois Vallees collapsed and died in a five furlong flat handicap at Nottingham. The Racing Post's results section stated: "Towards rear, weakening when faltered and fell over one furlong out, bled from the nose."

The Stewards Report confirmed the filly "bled from the nose before falling" and the BHA website confirmed she had died. This was in full view of spectators at the track. The horse should have undergone a postmortem to determine what specifically caused her death and blood should have been taken to be tested for drugs, but there is no indication anywhere that this has happened. Trainer Charlie Fellowes refused to respond when I contacted him.

Trois Vallees was a four year old filly initially trained by James Tate to win once in eight runs before being switched to Fellowes this year. She dropped dead on her third run in six weeks for Fellowes, who didn't have the guts to answer a few questions.

13 June 2023

Victory Flagship, a four year old gelding, was having his third run when he bled during a six furlong race at Southwell. He had shown a bit of promise when second and fourth in his first two runs in the preceding April and May.

He helplessly crashed through the rails at the side of the course in an incident which shocked spectators and television viewers. Commentary on the result stated: "Took keen hold, led, headed and lost action over 2f out, soon pulled up and crashed through rails, bled from the nose."

He was trained by Declan Carroll, who also bred the horse. Declan's wife, Di, replied to my email straight away when I asked how Victory Flagship was after his ordeal at

Southwell. She said, miraculously, the horse and jockey did not injure themselves when they went through the rails and although Victory Flagship bled for a few days afterwards he has made a full recovery.

His owners, the Highgreen Partnership, agreed with Declan Carroll to retire him and Di sent me a photograph of the lucky horse out at grass at his new home where they send their retiring horses. At only four years of age, they will give Victory Flagship every chance of being retrained to enjoy a full life now his racing days are over.

6 June 2023

Pepper Streak collapsed and died while walking around the parade ring before her intended race at Lingfield. Her death was confirmed on the BHA website the next day but no other details were given.

Data shows she had been transferred from Adrian Nicholls to be trained by Daniel O'Brien on 31 May 2023, six days before she was due to run at Lingfield.

She ran five times for Willie McCreery in Ireland as a two year old for two second place finishes and she was then sent to Adrian Nicholls in the UK on 9 February 2022 and her owner was listed as Roscourt. She ran 12 times for Nicholls, 10 of them as a three year old in 2022, winning once and placing three times.

Daniel O'Brien trains in Capel, Kent, and his statistics contain a startling revelation about his racing history.

O'Brien hasn't had a winner on the flat in 161 races over 9,638 days – that's more than 26 years. While a lack of winners can be down to the lack of quality in a string of horses, a winner or two now and then can at least display their general wellbeing. Or not.

I emailed Adrian Nicholls and told him I was trying to find out why Pepper Streak died. "Her last race for you was on 23 January 2023. Can you tell me when she left your yard for Mr O'Brien?" He didn't reply and O'Brien also refused to respond when I messaged him with four questions.

1. What date did you start to train Pepper Streak?
2. What was Pepper Streak's cause of death?
3. Who provided you with veterinary assistance when Pepper Streak collapsed in the parade ring at Lingfield.
4. Did you have a postmortem carried out on Pepper Streak?

What's the big secret that these two trainers refused to answer the simplest of questions unless, of course, they have something to hide?

In the unusual circumstances of the filly's death the stewards should have immediately arranged for blood to be taken for a drugs test and a postmortem carried out. Surely, this is about the welfare of the horse and the integrity of racing and the BHA needed to act.

They've done this in Australia and even banned a trainer when a drug test proved positive in a horse which dropped dead on top of a jockey, who also tragically died of his injuries a few days later.

To have collapsed and died in front of racegoers as Pepper Streak walked around the parade ring before a race just doesn't happen, but the BHA said and did nothing. Their default position for safeguarding the integrity of racing and equine welfare is to refuse to answer difficult questions, not least from *The Black Horse Newsletter*, so we won't be wasting time on finding out what the BHA thinks.

We presume they know 160 horses have bled from the nose these past six months but, perhaps, they think that's nothing to worry about.

As always, this newsletter will present the facts and readers can make up their own minds.

1 December 2022, 16 January 2023 and 15 March 2023

Ubahha

According to Stewards Reports, Ubahha, a 5 year old gelding by Dubawi bred by Sheikh Hamdan's Shadwell Stud and initially trained by John and Thady Gosden, bled from the nose on three occasions after he left their Newmarket yard to be trained by Antony Brittain in Yorkshire.

He bled three times under Brittain's care, the last on 17 April 2022, and when he then joined Michael Appleby he was pulled up during a race on 28 May 2022 having suffered another serious episode of bleeding. Appleby went on to do quite well

with the horse, winning at Yarmouth and placing second at Bath and third at Leicester, but Ubahha was soon on his travels again.

He bled on his first run for Michael Attwater on 1 December 2022, when last of 12 runners, and in further races at Southwell on 31 January 2023 and Kempton on 15 March 2023.

He mostly raced over five and sometimes six furlongs. Media reports indicate he was struggling to see out his races even at the minimum trip, which could well mean he was bleeding into his lungs even though it did not always exit through his nose. He was, effectively, pulling himself up.

To date, he has raced 32 times over three seasons for one win and £12,841 in prize money. Dubawi's stud fee is over £250,000, which shows that even horses sired by one of the world's best stallions can have their problems.

I emailed Attwater with three questions.

1. Why do you think Ubahha is prone to bleeding?
2. How have you been treating him for this issue?
3. What's your plan for the horse now?

Attwater chose not to reply.

The horse hasn't raced since the seventh time he bled on 15 March 2023, when he was last of 9 runners beaten 41 lengths, but on past form he will have been shunted on to another trainer and will reappear on the track after a break. After all, he's only five, there's lots more blood to be spilled.

The next question to Attwater would have been: Is he still alive?

And a question when looking at the bigger picture: Where are the vets who have allowed Ubahha to keep racing when bleeding so badly?

THE CONDITION

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 220-230 beats. This high pressure from the heart substantially increases 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 most severe cases exit through the horse's nostrils, which is known as epistaxis.

In the majority of cases EIPH is not apparent unless an endoscopic examination of the airways is performed following exercise and generally this level of bleeding is widespread in racehorses but not believed to affect performance.

Epistaxis in its worst form of bleeding through the nose is a serious welfare issue which will adversely affect how a horse runs, but that's not the only worry for racing.

It's a sickening sight for many attending the racecourse if a horse is visibly bleeding. The horse's head can become covered in blood as it exhales powerfully while running and the optics become far worse if the jockey and his or her silks are similarly splattered with blood.

It's a bad look for the sport and frightening for a horse who will feel a sensation akin to drowning as its lungs fill with blood, but experts agree it is extremely rare that epistaxis results in the death of a horse.

EIPH has been recognised in racing for 300 years and a horse called Bleeding Childers was one of the first documented bleeders in England. He was retired to stud because of frequent episodes of highly visible bleeding and had his name changed to Bartlett's Childers to improve his stud prospects. He became leading sire in Britain and Ireland in 1742.

The Galileo filly Rhododendron, trained by Aidan O'Brien, bled as a three year old during the Prix de Diane in France in 2017. O'Brien said:

“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.”

Rhododendron did come back, eventually completing her rehabilitation by winning the Group 1 Prix de l'Opera at Chantilly and adding a second Group 1 when winning the Lockinge Stakes the following year, but her form tailed off markedly and she was retired.

Mated with Japan's multiple champion stallion, Deep Impact, her first foal is Auguste Rodin, a dual Derby winner in 2023. Coolmore has never publicly discussed how they got Rhododendron back to the track after she bled but the usual treatment is with furosemides, which are diuretics that reduce blood pressure but are banned on race day in most jurisdictions around the world for their ability to improve performance and mask the presence of other prohibited drugs.

What is interesting about Auguste Rodin is that although he has won the Epsom and Irish Derbies on his best days he has also run two shocking races (English 2000 Guineas and King George) when it appears he pulled himself up and was tailed off miles behind. Could he have bled like his mother Rhododendron?

Aidan O'Brien said for some reason the horse's "power disappeared" in the King George. The recurring theme of the 160 horses who have bled in UK racing in the first half of this year is that they lost power and stopped running, which unsurprisingly happens when the lungs are filling with blood. Some could race respectably again a few weeks later and not bleed visibly.

As ever in racing somebody somewhere will always come up with another wonder drug that can sort a problem out, but it's usually illegal and will enhance performance.

In 2009, vet James Main of the Newbury veterinary practice of O'Gorman, Slater, Main and Partners was found to have treated Moonlit Path, owned by the late Queen Elizabeth, with *Tranexamic Acid*, a banned drug used in racing for treating EIPH.

The problem is that this drug can also improve a horse's performance – it was claimed Henderson had, effectively, doped Moonlit Path, who was soon retired from racing after her drug violation was discovered.

Henderson was fined £40,000 and banned from running his horses for three months and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons took away Main's licence to practice for 12 months.

Five years later the same veterinary practice, without Main, had changed its name to Donnington Grove Veterinary Group but was still pulling the same old strokes. When officials from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) carried out an inspection of the Donnington surgery they found 22 boxes of *Yunnan Baiyao*, a Chinese medication used as a treatment for haemorrhage in humans which can be illegally used to combat bleeding in racehorses.

It is illegal for at least two reasons; firstly, it isn't authorised as a veterinary treatment in the UK and, secondly, it can illicitly improve racing performance.

The rumbled vets said it wasn't being given to racehorses, but who believes anything an equine vet says these days? The VMD confiscated all 22 boxes, so we know who was right and wrong there.

And when the BHA was asked for a comment, Robin Mounsey said: "THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THE PRODUCT IS MAKING ITS WAY INTO RACING." Denis Egan once said that about steroids in Irish racing and the place was soon found to be

swimming in the stuff. Mounsey is Head of Communications and no one ever believes BHA public relations nonsense either. It's always deny and lie, and is it time for lunch yet?

The truth is this and other treatments have become widely used in racing in recent years as it's easy for trainers to access supplies of unauthorised drugs via the internet. Many are more likely to be harming horses than making them run better, which suggests bleeding is an even bigger problem than for the 160 racehorses who have been officially named by race day stewards so far this year.

There is also one clear answer which will always fix this problem even though it's an unpalatable decision for an owner to have to make. If a horse bleeds badly it shouldn't be racing, and that's what Victory Flagship's trainer and owners decided was the right course of action. But it hasn't happened for Ubahha.

It is extraordinary the BHA didn't step in and prevent this horse from running long before he chalked up his seventh bleed. Even more so when you consider what James Given (pictured), a vet and trainer, said in a Racing Post article in 2018 which highlighted some of the most important welfare issues the sport was facing.



GIVEN IS NOW THE BHA'S DIRECTOR OF EQUINE REGULATION, SAFETY AND WELFARE.

“

With the positive and negative pressures of air being sucked in and blown out there are pressures on the airways that can lead to tearing, and once horses have bled a couple of times they are more prone to bleeding in the future because the scarred areas are flexible and the vessels are more likely to tear where the scarring meets the unaffected area.

Minor bleeds seem to cause little or no discomfort, but if it's a bad bleed that causes a horse to stop immediately, it must be a hugely frightening experience to suddenly find your lungs filling up with fluid in a manner a horse couldn't begin to understand. You do see horses who have bled becoming very fearful of extreme exercise because they've learned what's about to happen.

”

BEWARE LIES OF RACING'S ANDROIDS

Following a devastating global war, the Earth's radioactively polluted atmosphere led the United Nations to encourage mass emigration to outer space colonies to save the human race.

Moving away from Earth came with the incentive of free personal androids – robot servants identical to humans. The androids are manufactured on a colony on Mars, but some androids rebel and escape to Earth, where they hope to remain undetected.

On Earth, owning real live animals had become a fashionable status symbol, primarily because mass extinctions had made authentic animals rare. Poor people could only afford realistic looking robot imitations of proper animals.

Bounty hunter Rick Deckard owned an electric black faced sheep.

He was assigned to kill six androids which had recently escaped from Mars and travelled to Earth. These androids were made of organic matter so similar to human's that only a bone marrow analysis could independently prove the difference.

Deckard hoped this mission would earn him enough bounty money to buy a live animal to replace his lone electric sheep to comfort his depressed wife, Iran.

Deckard killed three of the androids and could now afford to buy his wife an authentic Nubian goat with his commission, but she was still depressed.

In the dystopian science fiction novel by American writer Philip K. Dick first published in 1968, Deckard was a hardened investigator dealing coldly with a brutal world full of corruption.

Dick was way ahead of his time. Fifty years later the world is overflowing with corruption. And androids. If it looks like an android, talks like an android, it probably is an android. Especially in horse racing.

Kevin Blake is the self-appointed chief of androids, a fake human created to peddle artificial intelligence for the biggest parasites in horse racing, the gambling industry. He is not alone.

It's a great cover for Blake and his work behind the scenes for leading Irish trainer Joseph O'Brien, who is not doing so well these days since he was accused of doping his horses.

Blake is also always ready and waiting to answer the call from Coolmore Stud's propaganda department, which is virulent in the way sexually transmitted diseases spread their poison.

First, we need to check a couple of definitions. *AMBASSADOR* – a representative or promoter of a specified activity. *PROSTITUTE* – we all know the most famous meaning, but more generally it's also a person who sells their integrity for an unworthy purpose. In racing, ambassador and prostitute are very closely aligned.

Blake is an ambassador for Betfair, one of the divisions of the Paddy Power gambling monster known as Flutter. Which means he is very well paid for spouting whatever line Betfair and Paddy Power require him to follow.

The same applies to Ruby Walsh, Mick Fitzgerald, Jason Weaver, Ed Chamberlin, Matt Chapman and AP McCoy amongst others. They are all ambassadors for Betfair, Skybet, Paddy Power or some other subsidiary of parent company Flutter, which means they are prostituting their name, position and integrity, if they have any, to encourage viewers to bet with Flutter companies. They just lie back and think about the commission flying in.

How can there not be a conflict of interest? ITV employs all these pundits who you would expect to be independent, honest and fair, and they also feature in extensive advertising campaigns for the same betting companies earning millions in revenue for the broadcaster.

ITV racing programmes are built around betting which encourage viewers to bet more with their favoured gambling partners; it's a happy little circle which is no doubt legal but also morally corrupt, but since when did racing ever worry about being morally corrupt?

In fact, there is a sign hanging outside the door with racing's name on it – no entry unless you are a crook and a cheat with absolutely no morals.

This story tells why.

A coroner decided last week that a gambling disorder contributed to the death of a Betfair customer. This was the first time a betting company has been formally involved in an inquest.

“Luke Ashton died as a result of his own actions. At the time of his death he was suffering from a gambling disorder that was longstanding and that contributed to the decision to take his own life,” the coroner said.

Betfair assessed Ashton as a low-risk gambler and they did not intervene or interact with Ashton, who had debts of £18,000 and was betting up to 100 times a day. The coroner said Betfair should have done much more to help him.

Betfair, along with Paddy Power and Sky Bet, operate under the banner of Flutter UK & Ireland, whose chief executive Ian Brown said: “We hold ourselves to the absolute highest standards in the industry and we will, of course, incorporate additional learnings from this tragic case into our systems and processes.”

They keep repeating the same lie every time they get caught breaking the rules - we will learn from our mistakes, but the reality is they just double down and earn even greater profits. They get fined tens of millions of pounds but don't care what financial penalties are levied because they are just a blip that makes no difference to the money they screw out of punters every minute of every day.

And what about Chamberlin, Blake, Walsh, McCoy, Fitzgerald, Weaver, Chapman and any other ambassadors working for the Betfair companies, did any of them resign in disgust because they have blood on their hands thanks to the way their employer mistreated Luke Ashton? Did any of them speak out to say this is not good enough? Have they learned anything?

Of course not. There's too much easy money to be made. A human life is no different to an equine life in racing, it's just collateral damage. Anyone got a tip for the 4.30 at Wolverhampton tomorrow?

Ashton mostly liked to bet on horseracing and sometimes greyhounds. He was described at the inquest into his death as a happy man with no diagnosed mental health problems. Will Prochaska, speaking on behalf of Gambling With Lives, which supports families bereaved by gambling related deaths, said that the coroner's conclusions have shown once again how the gambling industry puts profits before people's lives by continuing to offer bets when all signs showed a life was in danger.

“This cannot keep happening. The Gambling Commission must remove gambling operators' licences when they breach them, and the government must take its gambling reforms further and faster.” But it is going to keep happening because the ruling elite is only concerned with protecting their investments in the biggest crooks like Betfair, Paddy Power, William Hill, Ladbrokes and Coral et al. Money always talks loudest.

Luke Ashton was a married father of two children. He was 40 when he died and had endured problems with gambling for a while, his wife Annie told the inquest.

BETFAIR KEPT ASHTON BETTING UNTIL THEY HAD TAKEN HIS LAST BREATH.

Nothing puts AP McCoy off as he strives to have as much money as his hero, JP McManus, who made his first fortune out of gambling. He doesn't seem to care how he achieves it.

McCoy is heavily involved in promoting online slots, one of the most addictive and abusive types of gambling that can lose players thousands in minutes. He rakes in massive profits as one of the stars of the company's lucrative *Sporting Legends* series of slot games.



Casino.com is licensed and regulated in Gibraltar to offer online casino gaming services around the world. It's parent company, Mansion Group, is a high profile sponsor of British football. The website tells the tale.

We're the home of online casino with a sportsbook featuring all your favourite markets. Launched in 2007, we've grown into an award-winning, industry-leading casino, bursting with the latest and greatest games, unbeatable offers, giant jackpots, and competitive odds – and we keep getting bigger and better.

Whether you want to take an adventure through the jungle, or a simple spin on a classic fruit machine, we've got over 700 slots to suit any type of spinner. What's more, we love rewarding our players and it begins from the moment you join us.

Once you've claimed your Welcome Package, the rest of the offers will come rolling in, so be sure to opt in to marketing emails so you don't miss out. Loyalty is important to us.

The Racing Post was a couple of hundred million pounds in debt the last time we looked. They now sell themselves as a betting website because circulation has plummeted like many print editions globally and the corresponding decline in advertising revenue has ruined the grandest of business plans.

Commission earned from promoting the biggest gambling conglomerates is now the only way the Racing Post can stay afloat; decent racing journalism unless led by betting is all but extinct. Their website is awash with tipsters pushing their grubby wares.

The Racing Post had a great idea: let's ask the one and only Aiden O'Brien to tell us what we could do better. He is a genius, you know.

O'Brien doesn't drink or smoke and he thinks Thin Lizzy is one of his work riders, but nevertheless he agreed to give the world a lecture on the meaning of life – everyone needs to bet more, it's good for you, even though he doesn't bet himself.

We all listen intently to every word that falls from the lips of Aidan O'Brien, striving to decode the meaning when he talks about this or that Classic prospect, so it was a pleasure to find clear enlightenment on a very different topic when he spoke to David Jennings for an interview in the Racing Post last month.

"I don't think having a bet is a bad thing. I think having a bet is an interest," O'Brien ventured. "Really, what you want is for everyone to have a little bet, because that's an interest for them and it allows them to develop an opinion outside of their own jobs. Then, when you have an opinion, you have an interest. I think it should be encouraged.

"You have to feel the adrenaline. You form an opinion, then you believe that opinion is better than everyone else's. You get up in the morning and you look forward to finding out whether your opinion is going to be right or wrong."

O'Brien pretty much summed up how we view discerning readers of the Racing Post, as people who have an opinion on the potential outcome of horse races, greyhound races, sporting events and even the odd political race, and have sought additional clues, advice and data in our publication before testing that opinion in the form of placing a bet.

Welcome to the whacky world of Aidan O'Brien.

MICKEY MOUSE IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN COUNTY TIPPERARY. MICKEY IS KNOWN BY A DIFFERENT NAME IN IRELAND - JACKIE MOUSE



Jackie Cahill is a Tipperary TD (Member of Parliament) and a key man in the Coolmore Stud mafia. For a while now he has been chair of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine and has done his level best to show that the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB) isn't inept and corrupt, but some mountains are impossible to climb.

He's thick skinned and keeps working away. Last week he pulled his biggest stroke yet in his life's calling to protect the reputation of Irish racing and Coolmore Stud.

THE HISTORY. *The Turf Club has controlled Irish racing since 1790. It set up the IHRB as a company limited by guarantee to regulate the sport from 1 January 2018. The IHRB is controlled by the Turf Club, which itself is controlled by John Magnier of Coolmore Stud and their associates. Six of the IHRB's eight directors are long standing members of the privately owned and secretive club. Yet its regulatory operations are financed almost exclusively from public funds, which amount to E11.4 million this year. It is an arrangement that only panders to vested interests and is not fit for purpose in 2023 which is why it is always mired in scandal. How can the richest owners and trainers control the way they are regulated?*

Cahill suspended a sitting of the Oireachtas committee on 13 July which was due to hear the latest explosive revelations about the lack of proper governance in the country's racing industry by announcing the sudden emergence of a serious legal threat which precluded him carrying out his duty as an elected representative of the people.

Darragh O'Loughlin, Chief Executive of IHRB, had just finished his opening statement when Cahill intervened with surprising news.

Cahill: "The secretariat is advising me that I have to suspend the meeting for a few minutes." It was suspended at 5.50pm and resumed at 6.33pm, just enough time for a couple of jars. When Cahill spoke again it was a huge relief to find out Russia hadn't invaded the Republic after all and nor had the President of Ireland died suddenly.

Cahill: "I will read a statement. At 5.16pm, legal advice was provided to the committee and was brought to my attention when the meeting had commenced. Arising from this advice, the committee is to seek further clarification on this advice before proceeding with this evening's meeting with the Irish Horse Racing Regulatory Board. With this, the committee has decided to suspend the meeting and will revisit the issues at a later date."

The reason for the suspension appeared to be that Cahill needed to get legal advice about the legal advice he had received out of the blue not long after he had called the meeting to order. This happened just as it was about to get interesting with TDs lining up to savage what is left of IHRB's tawdry reputation.

The nature of this legal advice was not disclosed publicly, which is par for the course here. Democracy rules, but not in Irish racing, where secrecy is the watchword.

Parliament and the judiciary have now jogged off on their "long vacation" for the summer and nothing much happens for the next two months. That will be enough time for the ubiquitous cover up to be put in place and for Jackie to declare around October that nothing bad happened at all, we're all grand and good to go.

"Let's have a sing song, how about my favourite Fields of Athenry first. I'll get it going and you join in, we'll soon forget all about this silly integrity and transparency rubbish. *"By a lonely prison wall, I heard a young girl calling....."*

A similar meeting was held two weeks earlier to examine major concerns about a corrupt payment made to Denis Egan when he took early retirement from his role as chief executive of the IHRB in 2021.

Which is why it went so well, because it was jointly chaired by Sinn Fein’s Brian Stanley and Catherine Murphy of the Social Democrats. Both wanted to find out the truth, unlike Cahill, and did an exceptional job.



Brian Stanley TD



Catherine Murphy TD

Darragh O’Loughlin had made the kind of statement about Irish racing that doesn’t surprise anyone anymore.

“I became aware of a hitherto unknown issue that occurred in early 2022, which caused grave concern. The Committee will appreciate that I am not in a position to give any further details on the matter at this time, pending the outcome of the independent review.”

O’Loughlin was forced to explain to this influential Public Accounts Committee (PAC) why his colleague, Donal O’Shea, wasn’t attending as planned.

O’Loughlin: “Our chief financial officer is currently on a period of voluntary leave, without prejudice to his position.”

Stanley: “Since when?”

O’Loughlin: “Since yesterday.”

The chief executive revealed he had learned of the grave issue when discussing the IHRB’s accounts with his team. It would be correct, he said, to describe it as a “bombshell” revelation.

O’Loughlin had immediately commissioned an independent review into what had happened, but he couldn’t say more at this stage for fear of prejudicing O’Shea’s position and the investigation about to start. It was a financial matter and the chief financial officer had abruptly gone on leave was about all he said.

The questions understandably poured in, including whether O'Shea jumped or was pushed. Did they just shunt him out of the way for a while because he would be in serious trouble if the Oireachtas found out he lied under tough questioning to protect himself or someone else? The IHRB, and the Turf Club before it, has always had a troubled relationship with the truth.

Fortunately, Seamus McCarthy, the Comptroller and Auditor General who investigates how public funds provided to government organisations are spent, was there to deal with the elephant in the room – Denis Egan. Trouble is, with the way it's going, there are now two elephants in the room. Or it could be three.

McCarthy told Stanley that the IHRB had breached two binding conditions relating to their 2021 financial statements.

1. The Board of Directors, chaired by Martin O'Donnell, disregarded an instruction from the Minister of Agriculture to publish in its accounts the remuneration paid to the former chief executive and other senior staff in line with all government organisations in Ireland who receive substantial public funds. One of the directors who effectively told a Minister of State where to go was Frank Clarke, a former Chief Justice of Ireland. He was appointed to the Board on 1 January 2022, nearly a year before the relevant accounts were signed off, and is a close friend of Magnier.
2. When he left the IHRB Egan received a E384,870 termination payment, which exceeded by E141,880 (58%) the amount he was legally entitled to receive under the terms of an early retirement scheme he put in place. Egan had come up with the scheme because he wanted to get out with a fat pay off under the pretence of modernising the IHRB. The same Board of Directors, including Clarke, oversaw the illegal payment made to Egan on his retirement. All of the directors at that time were members of the Turf Club, as is Denis Egan.

This additional payment was required to be sanctioned by the Board of Directors but there is no official record of this happening. They may have decided it over a few free drinks at the races somewhere. It looks and smells like it was paid out of public funds as part of a deliberate scam on taxpayers.

To be clear, Egan was paid E384,870 when he departed on 30 September 2021 as part of a scheme which did not explain to the racing industry or the public why the chief executive was being rewarded so handsomely for doing a runner.

With Seamus McCarthy asking questions the IHRB suddenly announced months later the Turf Club was donating the extra E141,880 to Egan as *“recognition of the retiring CEO’s decades of service to horse racing across the island of Ireland and indeed internationally.”*

But *The Black Horse Newsletter* understands this is just another lie – O’Loughlin said he didn’t know who paid it as there was no covering documentation. The payment just appeared in the dodgy regulator’s bank account and could have just been resting there for a while as Father Ted famously explained when he was caught laundering misappropriated cash.

We do know that the Turf Club didn’t make the donation of E141,880. It was paid out as part of the full package of E384,870 through the IHRB’s payroll. From there on we are in the land of make believe which, bizarrely, is now said to include John Magnier.

It appears that money was being regularly transferred between individual accounts to cover shortfalls and in the middle of it are entries referring to “three charitable organisations and one non-charitable racing organisation partly funded from revenue from horse racing prize money, licensing and related income”, according to the financial statements.

“The IHRB provide the personnel free of charge to administer these charities and would collect and remit charity income as provided for in the rules of racing.”

Charities are a great cover for a slush fund. And what about the illegal Egan payment, has that been washed through a few of these accounts to hide what was really going on?

There is a very temporary feel to all this, that when the dust settled this is exactly what was going to happen, mug taxpayers would still pick up the tab but wouldn’t be aware of it further down the line.

The full picture will likely never be known as all the cleverest people in the land have been pulled in to deliver the truth, a neat little euphemism for cover up.

But then John Magnier appeared and the whole story became much more sinister. Those with knowledge of what has been happening have said Magnier told HRI to repay missing charity funds from his racing account, which amongst other transactions contains prize money his horses have won on the racetrack.

Here's a few questions that may or may not be answered in time.

1. Instead of getting involved in something that was nothing to do with Magnier or the IHRB, why didn't he just quietly call Egan and tell him to return the money he was not entitled to? Egan paying back this illegal payment would have sorted everything out in one stroke.
2. HRI and IHRB are supposed to be independent organisations running Irish racing but here we have a billionaire racehorse and stud farm owner telling them what to do. It just shows out in the open who is really calling the shots in Ireland. Is this acceptable when millions of euros of public funds are provided to IHRB to independently regulate the sport every year?
3. Why were IHRB charity accounts holding such large amounts of unused cash? There needs to be a root and branch review of these accounts and a report published.
4. Why did O'Loughlin misinform the PAC about where the E141,880 come from? He lied and he could be serious trouble. Did he act under orders? Is he more interested in trying to protect his organisation's reputation instead of finding out the truth?
5. What's the true story about Chief Financial Officer Donal O'Shea going on leave; was he flying solo when the accounts were manipulated or was he acting under instructions and perhaps even under duress?
6. Did the Board of Directors sign off Egan's early retirement package and if they did they must disclose the minutes of the relevant meeting? If they didn't officially approve the package they must immediately resign *en bloc*.
7. If this is how the IHRB operates how can they ever be trusted with even a fiver of public funds let alone the nearly E12 million they've been given this year?
8. It is now believed a legal threat was made to Cahill's committee, which is why it was suddenly suspended without any explanation. It is suggested legal action was threatened if Magnier was identified as the person who told the HRI to repay money to the charity accounts from his own racing account? Doesn't that sum up the mess Irish racing is in – threats, lies and subterfuge? Was it at all acceptable for Cahill to shut the discussion down in the home of Irish democracy in this way?

Soak it all up and take a view on it. If we haven't quite got it all right we will be delighted to receive a letter from Magnier's solicitors which we will publish in the next edition of *The Black Horse Newsletter*. The public has every right to expect this scandal to be investigated openly and honestly with no secret deals or cover ups and media has a duty to ask the hardest questions to ensure that happens. It is a matter of major public interest and importance.



Protecting the Integrity & Reputation of Irish Horseracing

Regarding O'Loughlin, it is important to note that he came across as evasive and uncooperative in the Public Accounts Committee hearing a month ago. It's important for a number of reasons not least that future government funding of the racing and bloodstock sector may depend on whether politicians believe they are being given the run around. O'Loughlin either didn't know his brief or he was trying to hide the truth.

At one stage he was under pressure to answer highly relevant questions from TDs about his organisation's anti-doping programme, including why all 12 adverse findings in drug tests carried out in 2021 are still waiting to be processed three years later when others from 2022 and even 2023 have already been completed. What are they hiding?

He said: *"I ask the Chair's indulgence to leave it at that because as he can appreciate it is a small industry."* Earlier O'Loughlin had bragged that it was a huge industry that contributed E2.5 billion to the Irish economy every year.

Now, when he was again pressed for answers, he said: *"It is a small industry and we do not want to say anything that could cause difficulties for people who are not implicated in this."*

What does that mean? Who knows? So is it a small or big industry? You would like to believe O'Loughlin knows. He revealed in his statement to the PAC that Irish racing had a total of 3,614 registered stable staff in 2021 of whom only 1,726 were full time.

His performance was reminiscent of the infamous hearing a few years ago involving the Football Association of Ireland and its then chief executive John Delaney, who repeatedly refused to answer questions, and everyone knows that didn't end well.

The biggest problem right now is that Suzanne Eade and HRI have been given control of the investigation into the IHRB. The Department of Agriculture has folded meekly to Eade's demand that forensic accountants Mazars lead the investigation.

That's alright to a degree as they possess a bit of a reputation, but the stab in the back for integrity and transparency in racing is that Mazars are HRI's internal auditors and they will be reporting directly to Eade, who is a cool operator well capable of twisting a few arms, legs and heads to get what she wants. She knows how to succeed in Irish racing – lie, deny and bully.

IRISH RACING'S YELLOW STREAK – Part 1

The Department of Agriculture (DAFM) has governance over Horse Racing Ireland which has governance over the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board. This ridiculous situation is a recipe for disaster which is exactly what is happening day in and day out. It should have taken full direct control of the investigation into governance at the IHRB in the latest scandal, but as usual they revealed their yellow streak and love of the easy life.

The Department's default position is to protect the corrupt racing elite at the expense of its own credibility and integrity and more breaking news shows it's digging racing's grave. If DAFM did its job the sport wouldn't be in the mess it is today.

A whistleblower has sent *The Back Horse Newsletter* a tranche of 150 pages of DAFM documents relating to two infamous doping scandals – the John Hughes and Tim Brennan cases - which reveal that the Department's hierarchy did its best to downplay and cover up the seriousness of the investigations its own veterinary staff put together to try and nail the cheats.

Arguably the most important of numerous revelations is that illegal equine drugs have been pouring into Ireland for the last twenty years and particularly during the time gouger Denis Egan was not only chief executive of the Turf Club but also head of anti-doping. Nothing changed when the IHRB was set up in 2018; it's probably worse.

Disgraced vet John Hughes was responsible for importing many of the illegal drugs. While a hoard of chemical compounds including the steroid Nitrotain were seized when investigators raided Hughes' home in 2012, documents now reveal Hughes had been importing illegal equine drugs from Australia from at least 2002 while he was employed as a government vet.

Hughes was dealing in the kind of illicit drugs he was supposed to be searching for in his work for DAFM. The big question is how did he get away with doing that for so long? Were there other government vets in on the scam or did they just turn a blind eye?

The documents show that in 2015 the amount of illegal equine drugs coming this way was of such concern that Louis Reardon, a senior veterinary inspector attached to the Special Investigations Unit since 2001, contacted officials in Florida to lodge a complaint against one of US racing's most notorious veterinarians, Dr Seth Fishman,

who is currently serving an 11 year jail term as a ringleader in the biggest doping scandal in American sporting history.

Fishman has been convicted of manufacturing and distributing performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) worth tens of millions of dollars which were administered to racehorses in the US, Middle East and Europe.

This week leading US trainer Jason Servis was jailed for four years for doping his horses with Fishman's drugs. The richest race Servis won before he was arrested by the FBI who had been wiretapping his conversations with the corrupt vets who administered the drugs was the inaugural 2020 Saudi Cup worth \$10 million to the winning horse, Maximum Security, 50% owned by Coolmore Stud.

Servis admitted giving the horse PEDs including designer blood dopers and a special version of Clenbuterol in the build-up to the race. Clenbuterol artificially builds muscle in racehorses which enables them to run faster for longer and is difficult to detect at test because it exits a horse's system soon after administration. Blood doping, made infamous by human athletes, centres around covertly increasing the volume of oxygen a horse is able to transport to muscles and improve performance.

Servis was the last of 30 trainers, vets and accomplices to face the courts and Coolmore Stud have lost their \$5 million share of prize money from the Saudi Cup.



MAXIMUM SECURITY, who was doped by trainer Jason Servis to win \$10 million in the Saudi Cup, is now a stallion at Coolmore America.

Fishman was registered as a veterinarian in Florida and Riordan's complaint on behalf of DAFM to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation for the State of Florida stated:

“This Department is the Competent Authority regulating the distribution of veterinary medicines within the State. Investigations disclosed an Australian Company (NatureVet), a subsidiary of CEVA, had supplied substances not authorised for use in Ireland as per the attached spreadsheet. Some of these substances are classified as prescription only and others are restricted to use/possession by veterinarians only.

All of the persons associated with the Dr Fishman entries are not veterinarians and did not have prescriptions for the products. No licenses were applied for or issued permitting the import of these illegal substances. The attached spreadsheet was provided by CEVA. It identifies Dr Fishman as party to these illegal supplies.”

It was signed by Reardon and dated 23 April 2015. Seven years later his worries about Fishman proved frighteningly correct when the 51 year old American vet was jailed for 11 years and ordered to forfeit \$13.5 million from the vast profits he made supplying hundreds of trainers with illegal PEDs for over 20 years including in Ireland. It was frightening because of the number of horses Fishman and his associates killed through their illegal activities.

And even though Fishman will be out of circulation for a few years it's the nature of these things that some other gang of crooks will move in because the money to be made at the top of the sport is huge. It's more important than ever regulators fight corruption rather than join in with it as happens in Ireland.

NatureVet has its origins in a successful equine veterinary practice which operated in Australia in the 1970s. In order to provide high quality specialised veterinary products for its clients, an innovative chemist was enlisted to form a separate manufacturing facility. Business boomed.

In 2010 the company was sold to Ceva Sante Animale, France's leading animal health company and fifth in the world with operations in 45 countries. The DAFM documents show that NatureVet knew it was supplying unauthorised drugs to Hughes and others which weren't licensed for use in Ireland.

Furthermore, Ceva provided evidence that revealed Fishman supplied drugs directly to individuals in Ireland who were not vets and who also didn't have authority to import or administer them.

It all started to go wrong for John Hughes and his accomplices and the trainers he was supplying with illegal drugs when a DAFM veterinary inspector at Dublin Airport intercepted two packages from Australia addressed to Hughes at his home in Carlow.

The packages contained drugs that were not authorised for use in Ireland. They were repackaged and sent on their way. On 2 February 2012, DAFM inspectors were ready to raid Hughes' property shortly after the packages were delivered. The sender was NatureVet and included in the consignment was Nitrotain, a banned anabolic steroid.

Hughes was also buying large quantities of animal remedies from the Chanelle Group, a major manufacturer of human and veterinary pharmaceuticals based in Galway.

Veterinary surgeon Michael Burke founded the company with just two employees in 1985 and today Chanelle Pharma exports to over 90 countries, has in excess of 500 staff and annual sales of over E100m.

His daughter, Chanelle, is married to AP McCoy and was an integral part of the company's rise specialising on the human medicines side of the business until she resigned as a director in 2019 to start her own company in the health sector.

DAFM inspectors seized dozens of documents when they raided Hughes' home on 2 February 2012 including sales invoices and consignment and delivery notes relating to the drugs Hughes acquired from NatureVet and Chanelle Group. He wasn't treating horses himself but was supplying drugs to third parties.

They took possession of a diary containing details of Hughes' transactions with trainers and other vets and a lodgement book of payments received. In most cases entries were only identified by initials, but some revealed the full names of his clients.

The DAFM documents reveal that Hughes' diary showed he was selling Nitrotain "for between E200 and E350 except to Luke Comer who was charged E600." There are several references to purchases by Comer, a licensed trainer. I contacted Luke Comer Jnr and asked him to comment but he declined.

Another trainer who DAFM said had purchased Nitrotain from Hughes was named several times as John (Shark) Hanlon. When I asked him for a comment he said: "You want to get your facts right first before you accuse anyone of being involved with John Hughes."

Hughes routinely supplied many trainers with bulk deliveries of prescription only medications and Colin Bowe provided a statement explaining how that worked.

Hughes supplied the drugs but never treated horses. Bowe, who is not a vet, would inject his horses intravenously himself.

The investigation subsequently uncovered a business association between Hughes and a company called Copa Ireland Ltd. Hughes supplied both Ralph and Carl Pallas, sons of the owner of Copa Ireland Ltd, with unauthorised drugs. Documents also showed he was supplying Ralph Pallas with Nitrotain since March 2011.

A DAFM statement said: **“Ralph Pallas was a sales representative for Coppa Ireland, a company which sold nutritional supplement for horses. Ralph’s brother Carl was the Commercial Manager of Waterford Greyhound Track. John Hughes supplied animal remedies to Ralph Pallas and to Carl Pallas. Ralph and Carl Pallas in turn supplied them to horse trainers, stud farms and greyhound trainers.”**

DAFM had a copy of a letter from Copa Ireland to David O’Callaghan, a director of Mull Enterprises Ltd, owner of Yeomanstown Stud in County Kildare, which set out proposed prices for various products with an instruction that payment could not be made through Copa Ireland. DAFM said Ralph Pallas and John Hughes both supplied Yeomanstown Stud. Ralph Pallas and Copa Ireland declined to comment.

A DAFM vet stated: **“Mr Hughes declined to cooperate with the investigation unless he was granted immunity from prosecution, in exchange for which he said he would disclose the identity of one person whom he claimed was a major supplier of animal remedies for the black market and was based in Northern Ireland. He repeated this on many occasions and I have consistently informed him that I could offer no inducements. Mr Hughes has not cooperated with the investigation in any meaningful manner.”**

Hughes admitted four charges of possessing unauthorised drugs and one of possessing Nitrotain at Carlow District Court on 3 October 2013. Three other charges were struck out.

With DAFM’s eager consent, Hughes agreed to pay E10,000 to the Kilkenny Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals plus legal costs of E3,000. He walked away with no criminal record for years of corruption and DAFM avoided any kind of investigation into how the disgraced vet was able to get away with illegally importing a significant amount of unauthorised equine drugs from Australia and the US for over ten years including when he worked as a government vet.

Hughes is consigned to the wastelands of history but Ireland needs to consider its relationship with the Department of Agriculture and horse racing in 2023, because all this is happening again with the current scandals involving HRI and the IHRB. Corruption is being covered up and the taxpayers are being shafted. When will enough be enough?

THE BLACK HORSE NEWSLETTER

WEBSITE:

www.goldrushpublications.com

EMAIL:

info@goldrushpublications.com

goldrushpublications@gmail.com

theblackhorsenewsletter@outlook.com

will.r.jones@hotmail.com