

May 3, 2014



An interview with:

**STEVE COBURN
ART SHERMAN
VICTOR ESPINOZA**

THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, winning this year's Kentucky Derby, the 140th Kentucky Derby, Art Sherman, the winning trainer. You are the oldest man ever to saddle a Kentucky Derby winner. A nice bookend from 1955.

ART SHERMAN: Long story.

THE MODERATOR: Victor Espinoza, his second Kentucky Derby victory.

And one half of the partnership that owns the Kentucky Derby winner, Steve Coburn.

I never thought I would say this, but half of the Dumb Ass Partners.

Victor, looked like you were in a perfect spot all the way around.

VICTOR ESPINOZA: I wanted to get out running out of the gate basically. I see myself a little bit in front. For a second I almost just make that decision just to let it go in the front.

I saw one horse inside of me, the other one outside of me. They were trying to take the lead.

At that point I make a decision just to ease back a little bit, sit right there in like third right by the wire. Then I see everybody was coming. Now I got trapped a little bit in there.

For a couple minutes -- well, seconds, basically (laughter). It seems like it's two minutes. I was really a little bit concerned. My heart started going like a hundred miles an hour. I didn't want him trapped. I wanted him to run his race.

I had to slowly move outside a little bit of those two horses in front. When I hit the first turn, my horse's head was just outside a little bit from

the front horses and that was it. I was like, What a relief, I can breathe, relax, let him stretch his legs.

I think that win the race there.

THE MODERATOR: By Kentucky Derby standards, the pace was not fast, kind of a moderate pace. Were you feeling that?

VICTOR ESPINOZA: Yes, for sure. The other horses in the lead, they want to go quicker than that. When everybody slowed down, it was like, you know what, a lot of things going through my mind in a couple 10ths of a second. I don't even know what I was thinking about at that point. I was more concerned about California Chrome, that he do his thing, breathe on the backside, shut down a little bit. I really liked that. At that point I was like, This is going great.

Everything work out. An amazing race. This horse has so much talent. I mean, by the three-eighths pole, he was going so strong. I could see the other horses struggle a little bit. Him, it was just like smooth. Turning for home, I let it go, that was it.

THE MODERATOR: Been a little while since that first Derby win. I know it's early, but any sweeter coming back to do it again?

VICTOR ESPINOZA: Yeah, I think this one is more exciting for me than last one. Last one I was young. I was kind of shocked, too. The last minute my owner that I was riding for, he bought that horse to ride it in the Derby. I never thought in a million years I was going to win that.

This one, after the Santa Anita Derby, a couple nights after that, I can't even sleep. I was like really, really excited and looking forward for this horse. If everything was going well, then I can have my second Derby. It's just amazing.

I remember I started dating my girlfriend. She told me, You need to win one more. I'm ready to retire now (laughter).

STEVE COBURN: You got two more races to go (laughter).

VICTOR ESPINOZA: I think it just motivates myself more, to push myself a little bit more.

You know what, it's like a dream now to win the second one.

THE MODERATOR: Art Sherman, I heard in an interview, when you were here in '55, you were 18, is that correct?

ART SHERMAN: Yes. I was in the backside watching the Derby, watching the race, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Pretty good-sized bookends?

ART SHERMAN: You bet. It's such a different ballgame now, you know what I mean, with all the years that you put in.

Of course, I can understand Victor, 23 years riding myself, I had that feeling for him, too, saying, All right, Victor, you're in a perfect spot, just cool it, wait, see what happens. Now nobody is in your way when you push on the button. Hope you got something left in the tank.

He ran his eyeballs out. He's really a super nice horse to train. I appreciate the owners for giving me a chance. There were a lot of other trainers out there and they picked me, so I'm really happy for that.

THE MODERATOR: He was running comfortably, perfect spot. When he spurted away...

ART SHERMAN: I said, Now let me take over for the last 70 yards (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Let's go to Steve Coburn, half of the partnership that bred this horse. Given the nature of your investment in this horse, given the fact you live in California.

STEVE COBURN: I live in Nevada. My partner lives in California.

THE MODERATOR: How incredible is this?

STEVE COBURN: Well, I don't know how many times I've said this 'cause I've been talking since the plane hit here last Tuesday.

You know, it's an incredible, incredible journey we've been on. To see this baby the day after he was born alive, then I saw him three weeks prior to that in a dream, and this baby turned out exactly like my dream.

To watch this colt come up, to come up and develop the mind that he has and run, just run because he loves to run, he loves the competition, he loves to run.

To see all this happen for my partner Perry Martin, our wives, our families, to see this dream come true that we have put so much blood, sweat and tears, our savings, our retirement into this

horse, and see this horse win the Kentucky Derby, I have no words. I really have no words right now.

We've got another California bred that won the Kentucky Derby. Like I said the other day in that press conference right here at this table, I said, Not only would it be great for Dumb Ass Partners, DAP Racing, but it would be very special to see that brass ring on the merry-go-round come together and turn to gold and Art Sherman reach out and get it. He reached out and got it today. He's come full circle.

God bless you what you've done for this horse. You never thought that note that Perry gave you would work.

ART SHERMAN: I'll tell you one thing, you got somebody upstairs watching you very well.

STEVE COBURN: I do. I've got somebody up there very special watching us.

THE MODERATOR: One would assume you'll be moving on to the Preakness. What now?

STEVE COBURN: Well, you know, I said this horse would win the Kentucky Derby. I said, When this horse wins the Kentucky Derby, I said, I believe this horse will win the Triple Crown. If I shed a tear, just bear with me. This colt was born on my sister Brenda's birthday. She died of cancer at age 36. It will be 36 years this year since there's been a Triple Crown winner. I told people this colt will go down in history. When he wins the Triple Crown, he will be the first California bred to ever win a Triple Crown. That's where we're going.

This colt is going to fly first class, but my wife and I will probably fly coach again.

VICTOR ESPINOZA: What about me?

STEVE COBURN: You go with the horse (laughter).

That's how I feel about it right there.

THE MODERATOR: Let's open it up for questions.

Q. Art, you said the other day you were a guy who flew under the radar. Do you feel differently now? Do you think you've changed your life?

ART SHERMAN: I don't think I changed my life. It puts something up with all my friends that aren't with me anymore. I think they're watching over me right now saying, Hey, we all wish you the best of luck. We didn't last this long to be with you.

I'm so thankful that I'm here. I don't think I change much anymore. I have a lot of friends on

the racetrack, been around a long time. I'm just the same old Art Sherman, you know - except I won the Kentucky Derby (laughter).

Q. Mr. Coburn, you said a few weeks back he's California bred, but he doesn't know that. Are you going to tell him or is it going to be a secret?

STEVE COBURN: I don't think he really cares. Everybody else has been trying to tell him, the media, the sportswriters. They never gave this horse any credence. He's a California bred. They don't do this, that. Guess what, he don't know he's a California bred, and I don't care if he knows it or not.

But he is who he is and he's a great horse. He's a very good horse. He's got a sharp mind and he listens to this guy. I know he speaks two languages, Mexican and English.

VICTOR ESPINOZA: That is true. Not very well English (laughter).

STEVE COBURN: He's still learning (laughter).

VICTOR ESPINOZA: Me, too (laughter).

Q. Art, all week long there were a lot of rival trainers that didn't believe in your horse. Some were talking after the race they had to eat crow. What did you think about people that didn't believe in your horse going into this race?

ART SHERMAN: Sometimes you don't get a lot of respect. We're in Kentucky. You know most of the Derby winners are bred here. Very few outside of Kentucky. When you get a California-bred horse, I think it was 40 years since the last one.

I think they say, Well, you didn't beat nobody. You know what I mean? There were a lot of good horses in the Santa Anita Derby. You had Hoppportunity. I felt bad for Mike. You get so close for this race and something can happen.

I know how lucky I am. I just feel like, Hey, let's go, I'm ready for the next race.

Q. Mr. Coburn, everybody knows about the \$6 million offer at this point. You mentioned a little earlier some financial hardships, taking a big risk. Can you give us an idea of how big of a risk you took with this whole enterprise?

STEVE COBURN: I hope I heard you right.

Yes, we were offered \$6 million for 51% of this horse's controlling interest. Would mean they were running under their colors, gone to a new trainer, we would have been out in the background. Probably moved him out of California, which is Los Alamitos, California, which he loves.

It wasn't tough for us to say no. We knew within our souls what kind of horse we had because we've seen him grow up. We've seen him achieve these things. We've seen him get hit across the nose and still lose the race by only two lengths. We've seen him jump the gate and still lose the race by only two lengths. He had all that heart.

We knew we had something special, like I said, from day one. But he showed us really how special he was when he started moving up at these different races. When everybody said after he won the San Felipe Stakes, that was a fluke, it wasn't a fluke. I think people started waking up and smelling the roses, no pun intended (laughter).

We're very happy with the outcome. Like I said, I'm speaking for both my partner and myself, that this has been a long, hard road. But we've been blessed. We've been blessed with this colt and the trainer that we have that took the time, took the patience, put this colt on the path we had written out for him.

Yeah, we're really blessed. I can't say any more than that.

Q. People didn't believe in your horse. At any point throughout this week here in Louisville, were you concerned, did you start to lose any confidence or were you just confident in the horse going into the race?

ART SHERMAN: I was very confident. I've been around a long time. I've seen some fabulous horses throughout my life.

You know when you have a good horse. We all know bad races, luck can happen to you. I've been on that end of it, too. I knew my horse could run, and I knew he'd be the horse to beat once we got him here.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about your dream, about what was in that dream, how it came to actuality.

STEVE COBURN: Well, about three weeks prior to the colt's birth, I had a dream. I woke up and I told my wife I had a dream.

She said, About what?

I said, The baby. I said, I believe it's going to be a big chestnut colt with (indiscernible).

We drove over, saw him the day after he was born. She walked up to that birthing stall, said, Come here, there is your dream. That dream became the dream that we have today. We held onto that dream.

I've said it a hundred times or a thousand times, you got a dream, if you're willing to ride the dream out, they will come true for you. We're living proof of it. My partner and I, I got to go back to work Wednesday morning, 4:30, put my boots on, after I pull my britches up.

VICTOR ESPINOZA: At least you get a couple days off. I have to go to work tomorrow (laughter).

Q. What made you choose Victor to ride this horse?

ART SHERMAN: I've known Victor a long time. He rode a lot of winners for me in northern California where I trained for a lot of years. I knew he had a lot of talent. We needed to make a change at one time. I said, I got the perfect jockey for this race, too. So here we are. I hope we have a great time with this horse. He fits him like a glove. He knows him. He knows where to position the horse.

It means a lot. It's a rapport between rider and horse, it really is.

Q. Victor, you talked earlier about your previous experience riding in this race and how you know where trouble spots are. Going into the next step, you have a lot of experience there, too. Talk about in your mind what the next step is and what you're thinking about, what you anticipate?

VICTOR ESPINOZA: A lot of things goes through my mind before the race. Break out of the gate. It's not easy. Every single time, every step the horse makes around the racetrack is a decision I have to make.

Sometimes hope for the best I can make the right decision for him and put him in the right spot. It's not real easy, but it's a little bit more easy for me than the first time I rode. The first time I rode, it was just too much for me, to be honest.

But now it's a little bit more easy that I can make my decisions quick. The first time I rode the Kentucky Derby, I was a little bit afraid to make my own decisions during the race to put a horse in a position because I was afraid it was a wrong

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decision. Now it's more easier. I have to react quick.

Besides that, I just want to mention one thing. I always been for all the cancer people, I support that. One day I went to City of Hope in L.A. All the kids, they have cancer. I can't go in there. Really, like I cry. Since that time, I donated 10% of my earnings for all the kids that have cancer. It make me cry to see all the kids that can't even have a life like we have (tearing up).

STEVE COBURN: It's okay. It's okay. Believe me, it's okay.

VICTOR ESPINOZA: But, yeah, so it changed my life to see those kids like seven, eight, 10 years old, 20 years old, they don't know what life is about. I hope today what earnings I have, I make a change to one of those kids that don't know anything about life.

I never cry. I only cry for this thing. It's just heartbreaking for everybody. I hope I make a change for this Kentucky Derby win to have more earnings for the kids that have cancer, the City of Hope.

Q. A few days ago you told us that you're old school, you don't like to talk beforehand, prove your actions. What do you think when your co-owner said he thinks this horse is going to win the Triple Crown?

ART SHERMAN: I'm not saying anything now (laughter). He's got a dream.

I want to tell you something. I think California Chrome is the rockstar and I'm his manager and I'm going all the way (smiling).

Q. Victor, your thoughts on that question, the Triple Crown possibility?

VICTOR ESPINOZA: You know what, I go day to day. I was telling Art, Now I have a lot of pressure for the next step.

But we all have dreams. I've been very close the last time. I was just one step away. Hopefully with a little bit of luck, I just go out there and race the race.

Q. Victor, tell me the similarities and the differences between this and War Emblem when you wired it in 2002?

VICTOR ESPINOZA: First of all, different color horses actually (laughter).

They're all tremendous talent. War Emblem, he was an amazing horse. I just had to

let him go in the front.

For this guy, I have a lot of options. He can go either way. He can go front, behind. Doesn't matter. So make my job a little bit easier. Also not that much stress like with War Emblem. I remember War Emblem going to the Preakness, it was stressful because there was a lot of speed in the race. I can't do anything. I just had to let it go.

This guy, you know, like I said, he has tremendous talent. He can go in front, behind. It make my job more easy.

Q. Steve, you've been watching the race replay here. What's going through your head watching it?

STEVE COBURN: Our dream child doing exactly what we thought he could do when he was a baby.

I'm watching this horse. I'm watching how relaxed he is up there. Then when he's asked to do his job, he does his job.

I'm also looking at the time. I don't really care what the track record is. All I know is my horse won the Kentucky Derby today. Excuse me, our horse, me and Perry Martin. I apologize, Perry. DAP Racing won the Kentucky Derby today.

Q. I think I heard you say in a conference call that today was your birthday, Mr. Coburn.

STEVE COBURN: I turned 61 today.

Q. What kind of present was this to have on your birthday?

STEVE COBURN: Well, it was probably the best one so far, yeah.

Q. Mr. Sherman, you were spotted visiting Swaps' grave earlier this week. What were you thinking when you were over there?

ART SHERMAN: I went and said a little prayer. I thought he was a super horse, Swaps. Six world records at one time. I said, Hey, let me have half your talent, put it into Chrome, I'll be the happiest guy in the world.

THE MODERATOR: Swaps is buried at the Kentucky Derby.

Q. You didn't give Victor instructions according to your television interview. You claim the horse was the rockstar. What was your impact on California Chrome?

ART SHERMAN: California Chrome is an easy horse to train. I give a lot of credit to my son Alan. He's my backbone. He watches the horse all the time. Trainers now, at this stage of my life, I got both my sons who are straight trainers. I got Steve in Northern California, and then Alan. It's a family affair. They got my back. They do a lot of the hard work for me now. They look to see that everything is done perfect. They're both great horsemen and I give them a lot of credit. I feel really proud of them.

Q. What was your impact?

ART SHERMAN: My impact? I just let him be a horse. They told me, You're only going half a mile for him. You're going to do this.

I know the horse. I've been on many a horse. You don't train every horse the same way. You have to let a horse tell you what he needs to do. It's just maintaining.

The Triple Crown is probably the roughest races you'll ever have to face. You have two weeks till the Preakness, then you have to go a mile-and-a-half at Belmont. I've seen a lot of champions go by the wayside. I have to keep my fingers crossed and hope I can have a fresh horse for them type of races.

Q. Art, assuming the horse comes out okay, are you going to go back to California and then to Maryland?

ART SHERMAN: Absolutely not. You can't do that. I'll give him a rest over here. Tom Proctor has been an excellent guy, been a good friend of mine. I got a spot right here in Kentucky, Churchill Downs, leave him here for a week, take my time. What is it, a four- or five-hour van ride? We'll see what happens.

Q. Art, you talked about doing things differently than other trainers. You have a small mom-and-pop operation. What do you think this says that it doesn't have to be done in a super barn kind of approach?

ART SHERMAN: The quarterhorse people, you know, they're having a tough time now to survive in this game. They welcomed us open arms, have the quarterhorses run at night, the thoroughbreds in the daytime. I can't tell you how I feel when I see all these guys and they text me. Yesterday I must have had 40 texts from Orange County. That's where we're stabled. The owner of

that track, of course I train horses for him. Doc goes out of your way to make you feel like you're welcome. I give him a lot of credit for keeping the industry alive in California, I really do.

Q. Mr. Coburn, how big is this win for California breeding of thoroughbreds?

STEVE COBURN: Honestly, I think this is huge for California breeding, I really do. There's a lot of good mares in California and a lot of good sires that people overlook. Even though the price tag on breeding isn't like it is in Kentucky or anywhere else, there are some good horses out there. All you got to do is go back more than four generations. You go back further and look at the bloodlines, see who they were back then, watch where they're coming to right now. If all the moons and stars in the universe line up, you can get a horse like we have.

I don't know how many of y'all know this, but this horse has got Swaps in his bloodline both top and bottom. This horse that he was an exercise rider for is in this colt's bloodlines.

ART SHERMAN: Last time I won the Santa Anita Derby, I couldn't sleep. I had to check his knees. I got there at 2:00 in the morning. My groomer thought somebody was messing with the horse. What are you doing here?

They tell me, The horse pulled up good. I have my son and everything.

I tell you, you get a horse like this, you might lose a little sleep at night.

I'll be there no later than 5:00.

STEVE COBURN: Before we cut off here, I would like to thank my wife Carolyn for telling me, No, you cannot buy an airplane, because that's why we got into this horse racing business. Honey, thank you very much (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Winners of the 140th Kentucky Derby, Art Sherman, Victor Espinoza, and Steve Coburn. Thank you.

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