

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning.

When uncertainty and troubling times swirled about him, Winston Churchill quoted a profound poem, “The Clattering Train”

Who is in charge of the clattering train,
The carriages creak and couplets strain.
And the pace is fast and points are near,
But sleep has deadened the driver’s ear.
And the whistle shrieks through the night in vain,
For death is in charge of the clattering train.

We are all gathered together here in Arizona to speak out and do what we can to help our sport, Thoroughbred racing. I refer to our industry as a sport because in essence that is exactly what it is, just as football, baseball, and basketball are sports. We must never forget that the essence of racing is the competition of the horses and the romance, enthusiasm, and wagering that permeates that competition. A track that I love, Keeneland, has a slogan, “Racing as it was meant to be”. Ladies and Gentlemen, envision the first race long ago when several farmers or businessmen got together and bragged on the horses and to settle the issue, everyone lined up on Main Street for the big race on a Saturday afternoon and cheered for and bet on the horse of their choice. There was something deep within the people that was stirred by those horses roaring down Main Street, straining every nerve. Well, this was racing as it was meant to be, and if we neglect and forget the essence of our sport, we lose sight of what it is that enables us to survive as an industry and to compete with other forms of entertainment.

There was a time when we were the only game in town and if you didn’t go fishing, you’d go to the races. Today, there are many games in town. We have riverboat gambling, jai alai, dog racing, baseball, casino gambling, Indian gaming, football, soccer, tennis, golf, basketball and lotteries. How are we going to compete with these if we are not in control of our own destiny and if we are perceived by the masses of fans and potential fans as being dishonest and riddled by drugs and thugs? The answer is, we cannot compete. Something has to be done and done quickly or racing as it was meant to be and life as we have known it is over. We are riding a runaway train.

There are many important entities in our industry, but all of them put together are not as important to us as our fans, the bettors. Without them, we have nothing. With them we have everything. It is imperative that we present to them an image of absolute integrity. The question is how do we do this? In order to have a fair game, we have to have a level playing field. And we must be able to enforce the rules of the game with penalties. Also, the rules of the game must be the same everywhere, be it in Kentucky, California,

New York or Texas. Since ours is a gambling game, it is absolutely necessary that everything about our game be completely above-board and strictly enforced. Perception counts as much as reality. Some may say, oh, a few drugs in minor doses is O.K. Well, by example, shall we make Little Johnny president of the Boy Scouts of America if he only snorts cocaine once or twice a year? No, we can't because Johnny's image is already tainted. By the same token, any kind of drug use on horses will convey the same perception and it will stop the people from wanting to watch the game as well as play the game. There is nothing glamorous or romantic about drugging horses, and when you lose the romance of racing, you lose the essence of racing, racing as it was meant to be.

So far, the integrity of racing has been dealt a lot of smaller blows but a life-threatening death blow has yet to occur. What do you think would have happened if Go For Wand had been running on Butazolidin or Lasix? I shudder to contemplate it, but someday the same thing will happen again and the horse will be on drugs. When the press and animal rights activists finish with us, there won't be much left. This nightmare hangs above us every day in every race we run.

We might still say, even in the face of stories about drugging helpless horses, who have no say in the matter, that it is inhumane to race horses without drugs if they "need" them. Would you give your child drugs to make him perform better? Is it humane to send him out to perform when he is in pain? And what about the on-going deterioration of public opinion? Oh, but drugs are necessary so that races can be filled and so that the little man can stay in the business! Well, here is the answer to that question in black and white:

In 1960 horses made over 11 starts a year

In 1970 they made 10.2 starts per year

In 1980 horses made 9.2 starts per year

In 1990 horses made 7.9 starts per year

This is a drop of 28% in only thirty years. By the year 2000, horses will make 6.3 starts a year if this continues – a remarkable drop of 43% from 1960 when drugs were not allowed.

So what have drugs done for racing? Have they helped the little man or any man for that matter? I'll tell you one thing that medication has done, is doing, and will continue to do. It is polluting the gene pool because horses are running on chemically induced ability instead of their natural ability. In another twenty years our children probably won't be able to breed a sound horse in America and buyers will be going to

Newmarket or Sydney to purchase their yearlings. Remember, we are the only nation on the planet to allow permissive medication.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the way to help the little man or any owner is for breeders to breed them good, rugged, healthy, sound horses, and to do that we have to assess the true merit of horses without their performance having been enhanced by drugs. When we breeders sell someone something, we had better try our best to make sure that they have a chance to make money or they'll be gone forever.

In my opinion, we have a crisis in integrity and a crisis in an ailing industry. We are dying of a disease, corruption, and the high fever is caused by greed. Again, our game must be totally above-board before anyone can be truly interested in watching it or playing in it. To quote another statistic of the 91 horses running in the Breeders Cup this year, 76 of them were running on drugs. If it's allowed to be used, it will be abused. Perception counts more than reality.

So what do we do? How do we get together to solve our problems, Ladies and Gentlemen, because Thoroughbred racing and wagering now is involved in interstate commerce through simulcasting? Congress not only has a right but a duty to regulate it. This will happen! We must act now in a concentrated, cooperative effort to get a benign bill passed which will regulate horse racing in the way we want it regulated. Let's face it; it is already regulated, so let's get it regulated right, with no half measures. We must regulate ourselves before the Federal Government sees fit to do it for us.

Today, I propose that we join together in a united front and go to our congressmen and senators with an idea, and that idea is:

The Racing Act of 1992

The points in this bill would be as follows:

- I. All foals born in 1992 will run drug-free in 1994 as well as older horses. No medication will be administered to a horse within 48 hours of a race, and trace levels will be determined by the commissioner.
- II. Anyone caught drugging a horse or fixing a race will be subject to specified penalties for specified offenses, and there will be rigid enforcement of racing's rules and regulations with certain knowledge of swift and sure punishment to be administered by the commissioner.
- III. No convicted felon may hold a racing license.

- IV. Uniform licensing will be implemented.
- V. A racing commissioner or czar will be appointed by The Jockey Club, The TRA, The RCI, The TOBA, The HBPA, The Breeder's Cup, The American Horse Council, The National Turf Writers, and The Jockey's Guild. Each organization will have one vote and may nominate a candidate if they so choose.

Drug testing will be done according to the RCI's quality assurance program with the Commissioner assigning certain areas to certain labs as to efficiency and cost control. This bill will include regulation of other segments of the entire horse industry, such as Quarter horses and Standardbreds, with those segments electing their own respective commissioners, if they wish.

In closing, I am reminded of a parable. There was once a large fine house wherein lived a number of mice. There were plenty of scraps of fine cheeses, breads and cakes, and the mice flourished. Then the owner decided to get a cat and this cat wreaked havoc on the mice and their comfortable lifestyle. All of the mice convened in an effort to find a solution to this life-threatening problem, and they decided to put a bell on the cat. This was considered to be a wonderful idea and was hailed throughout mousedom. Then one of the mice said, "But who will be the one to put the bell on the cat?"

Ladies and Gentlemen, we need to give someone the authority to put the bell on the cat. We need a Commissioner of Racing. At the moment, we are all passengers on the clattering train. Let's get ourselves an engineer. We need desperately to create the perception of credibility, honesty and absolute integrity, and we need to rid ourselves once and for all of drugs and thugs. Once we do this, our future can be as bright and unlimited as that of any sport in this world, and our light will shine for all to see. Let's do it because it's right.

Thank you for listening, thank you for your consideration, good luck, good racing, and good day.

Arthur Hancock – Arizona speech - 1991