

Equestrian Travel Crime

The First Study of Horse Abuse, Killing and
Swindling



created by
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From the LRG Investigative Series

No animal has impacted the development of our species to such an extent as the horse. It transformed our ancestors from plodding pedestrians into a race of roamers. Thanks to its eternal charisma the horse is accounted the most powerful animal totem worldwide.

The Long Riders' Guild is intent on maintaining the highest ethical standards in the equestrian world. It encourages harmony between horse and human. Its mission is to care for the vulnerable and speak up for the voiceless. Admittance is never a foregone conclusion based upon the accumulation of mere miles.

A different cycle of events shapes each generation of horse-humans. That is why it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of cunning imposters who glide among us like secret serpents.

Driven by the demon of profound pride, intoxicated with their temporary mounted glamour, these smooth talking but ferocious violators infiltrate in the disguise of honourable Long Riders.

They cheat, betray and destroy. Instead of virtue the journey is transformed into a hateful march of death and suffering. Flaunting their arrogance, they are an affront to the decencies of the sacred horse-human friendship.

For years these mounted predators have put the world off their scent by presenting an illusion of respectability. The result was that they transformed the beauty of equestrian travel into a deformed nightmare. Starvation, agonizing pain and premeditated wickedness are the spawn of this sinister betrayal.

These falsehoods, these diabolical acts, these secret infamies have been unveiled for the first time. This is a required analysis of repugnance. The secret abyss that has hidden these events is thrown open like the door of a tomb. A depth of evil is disclosed. Infamy is documented. Odious hypocrisy is unmasked.

Flakes of fire borne up from the pit of Horse Hell are to be found on these pages. Exposed at last, these cruel charlatans can now be revealed and those like them stopped. These deeds deserve to be accursed. This magnum opus of equine terror should awake the horse world.

This is the second title in a series of equestrian investigative works undertaken by the Long Riders' Guild - the largest source of equestrian travel wisdom on Earth. www.thelongridersguild.com

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the equine victims of the humans described within.

God bless the former.

God forgive the latter.

"A man of kindness, to his beast is kind,
But brutal actions show a brutal mind:
Remember, He, who made thee, made the brute,
Who gave thee speech and reason, formed him mute;
He can't complain, but God's omniscient eye
Beholds thy cruelty - He hears his cry!
He was designed thy servant, not thy drudge,
But know - that his Creator is thy judge."

Author unknown.: From *The Ladies' Equestrian Guide*, 1857.

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Introduction

The Long Riders' Guild is the world's first international association of equestrian explorers, and is an invitation-only organisation. It was formed in 1994 to represent men and women of all nations who have ridden more than 1,000 continuous miles on a single equestrian journey.

It marks the first time in modern equestrian history that like-minded men and women are combining efforts to preserve a hitherto unmarked heritage and provide an international forum to discuss our mutual love of horses and travel.

The Long Riders' Guild (LRG) was formed to advance the ancient art of equestrian travel, to educate people on how to make an equestrian journey, to ensure that horses are never abused, to lay false claims to rest, to protect the public from mounted charlatans and to alert the media that care should be taken when interviewing so-called horse travellers.

For the past twenty-three years the Guild has mentored hundreds of people who have ridden across every continent except Antarctica. Yet before the onset of any discussion about an individual journey, each person seeking assistance is required to respond to this paragraph that is sent in reply to every query.

“If you would like to discuss becoming a member, or seek the services of the Guild and its members, we require that you first confirm that you have read this page and agree to the terms stated at the bottom. There you will see that the Guild is committed to protecting the welfare of the horse, maintaining the trust of the public and assisting our fellow Long Riders.”
http://www.thelongridersguild.com/what_is_the_long_riders.htm

Thus, the Guild is not an international police force. It is a brotherhood of ethical equestrian explorers.

We collectively realize that accidents occur to horse and rider without premeditation or warning. In such a case the Guild requires that the journey be halted so as to allow the horse the time it needs to heal. There are many examples of principled Long Riders who have stopped their journeys prematurely because they understood that the physical welfare of the horse takes precedence over their ego.

Sadly, just like any human effort, there are occasional outlaws who appear in the world of equestrian travel. When these villains appear, they abuse their horses, ride them too hard, do not feed them properly, and continue the journey even if the horse becomes wounded. Such actions are embodied in the Hungarian word *lőháldi*, which states that the horse is expendable.

Times have changed. With the dawning of the twenty-first century, and with the availability of the Internet, those who misused their horses, deceived the public or lied about their exploits can hide no longer.

Unlike the majority of the modern horse world, the Guild never turns a blind eye to horse abuse or unethical behaviour!

Whereas in the past horses were ridden with utter ruthlessness, often to their deliberate death, Members of the Guild collectively believe that no religious, political, medical, cultural, financial, sporting or personal goal grants a human the right to abuse a horse during a journey. Long Riders are committed to protecting the welfare of their animals.

This special concise study is the first of its kind. It was created in order to help the public understand that truly evil deeds have been inflicted upon helpless horses by wicked humans.

The study will provide evidence of equine travel abuse that occurred in the USA and overseas.

It will explain why and where humans have perpetrated these acts of cruelty on horses.

It will present historical evidence that proves that horsemen from a previous generation worked together to stop mounted outlaws and that a similar modern effort has been effectively employed to halt modern horse abusers masquerading as Long Riders.

It will reveal how one nation utilizes a special document specifically designed to ensure that the departing horse is healthy and documents its welfare during the course of the journey.

While some of the information has been previously published on the Long Riders' Guild's *Hall of Shame*, new episodes and evidence are presented here for the first time.

The reader is warned that the graphic and disturbing images are not published so as to shock or to cause the reader emotional distress. The photos represent overwhelming evidence of premeditated torture, starvation and equine death caused by villains who cloak their crimes by pretending to be genuine Long Riders.

This horrifying evidence and these heart-breaking photographs reveal why the public needs to protect horses from premeditated, agonizing, unrelenting torment.

Chapter 1 – Chivalry and Long Riders

Captain John Codman was a sea captain by trade and a Long Rider at heart. An advocate of “equestrianopathy,” at the vigorous age of 72 he saddled his beloved mare, Fanny, and set out in 1887 to explore his native New England. In his book *Winter Sketches from the Saddle* Codman wrote, “There is no greater pleasure than to find myself on a horse.”

The horse, Codman said, “was a kingdom to me.”

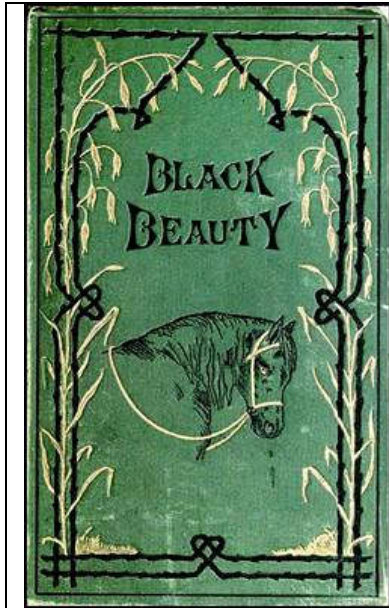


Yet there was more to Codman than just saddles and sails. He was an ardent anti-imperialist, detested political demagogues, denounced racists and is the original Long Rider champion of equine ethics. Codman’s love of horses was so well known that he was entrusted to review the first book intentionally written in the hope that it would ensure that horses were protected from abuse.

By telling the story of *Black Beauty* through the eyes of the horse, author Anna Sewell hoped “to induce kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses.”

Disabled after a fall at the age of 14, Sewell was unable to walk. Her interest in horses began when she learned how to drive the horse drawn carriage that took her father to and from the railroad station from which he commuted to work. Bedridden and seriously ill, Sewell poured the last days of her short life into creating an equine autobiography that told a story from the horse’s point of view.

In Victorian England Sewell had witnessed thousands of horses who had their tails cut off so as not to interfere with the coach reins. She saw horses that were forced to wear blinders at night which caused them to stumble and fall. The worst abuse was the painful bearing rein which prohibits a horse from lowering his head.



Black Beauty, the book's narrator, recounted these horrors. Humans were urged to treat horses with compassion and to end the everyday cruelty. Anna Sewell died five months after the book was published.

One late night in 1890 Captain Codman began to read the review copy sent to him.

"I sat down to read it last night," Codman remarked of Sewell's book, "and did not move from my chair until it was finished."

Codman's biographer, Brandon Schrand, explained what happened next.

From the window of his St. Denis Hotel Apartment in downtown New York City, Codman looked out upon the throng of carriage horses that stood outside of the Grace Church waiting for their "masters." Feeling a twinge of pain and pity for the creatures, Codman writes how he crossed over there and interviewed some of the horses. "In every one of them there was a pained expression of the eye and often a nervous twitching of the upper lip. Their faces betokened appalling agony. Alas, that it was unspeakable!"

Codman then writes, "The poor beasts seemed to discern pity in my face, and every feature of their own had a tongue that said, 'For God's sake,—yes, for God's sake, for we are his creatures,—go into that church and tell the preacher to cut short his 'lessons for the day,' and to send his congregation out here to take an object lesson from us!' I wish Dr. Huntington would take *Black Beauty* into his pulpit and let him preach to his people."

Following Codman's remarks in this rare edition of *Black Beauty*, George T. Angell, President and Founder of the American Band of Mercy, an early animal rights' organization, wrote, "These are eloquent words of Captain Codman. On behalf of all Boston horses we thank him for them. May they reach the hearts of those for whom they were written and help *Black Beauty* do for the horses of America what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did for the slaves"

Codman's plea for the humane treatment of the horse was as sincere as it was timely. A groundswell of support for animal rights rose in the late nineteenth century. It was led by the Long Rider who championed the cause of horses until his death in 1900.

Time has marched on since the days of Codman and Black Beauty. Yet other modern Long Riders have also demonstrated their determination to put the horse's physical safety and emotional comfort before their human egos.

After spending many years riding 20,000 kilometres from Patagonia, German Long Rider Günter Wamser concluded his journey prematurely in the centre of Alaska, rather than continue on to the top of state as he originally planned.

"The true heroes of the trip are my horses. That is why I decided to end the trip in the green heart of Alaska, as I'm not likely to find a horse paradise at some oil field on the shores of the Arctic Ocean."

New Zealand Long Rider Ian Robinson also put his horse's needs before his cherished travel plans. Despite having spent years preparing to ride solo along Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor and into the remote Pamir Mountains, when his horse was injured Ian didn't hesitate to turn back and return on foot.

British Long Riders Jamie Maddison and Matt Traver dismounted and walked across the deserts of Kazakhstan in 40 Centigrade (104 Fahrenheit) summer heat rather than push their tired horses too hard.



When her pack horse sustained a saddle sore during an ocean to ocean journey across the USA, Long Rider Sea G Rhydr spent several weeks living in isolation and great hardship in the Arizona desert so as to allow the animal to heal.

Each of these Long Riders could have travelled on, knowing they were pushing their horse beyond its limits. If they had made that decision the chances are that no one would have known. Instead each of them realized that their journey had brought them to an invisible place on the map of their souls.

Did they put their egotistical desires above the physical needs of the animal which had borne them so bravely across a hostile landscape? Or did they curtail their journey and place the horse's welfare before their own long-cherished dreams?

None of these Long Riders tasted the dregs of defeat.

When they came to that ethical crossroads, each of them made the proper decision. They had learned that a silent oath exists between a Long Rider and his horse. Rather than sacrifice their integrity for the sake of a fleeting moment of glory, they championed the horses who gave so much to carry them so far.

Like John Codman who blazed that moral trail, each of them won our respect.

The Guild's ethical beliefs may be summed up as being:

Ethical horsemanship

Principles, not profits

Preserve the public's trust

Protect our comrades from outside assault

Honour, Loyalty and Trust to each other

In a word, chivalry, whose root word is "cheval," horse.

I urge you to keep the deeds of these kind-hearted humans in mind as you proceed into the dark pages that lie ahead.

Chapter 2 – Documenting a Cycle of Cruelty

This is the year 2023 and I am 69 years old. Equestrian travel has been the focus of my life for more than 40 years.

My existence has been deeply enriched by the friendships that I shared with the modern Paladins of the Long Riders' Guild. These remarkable men, women and children represent courage, wisdom, loyalty, serenity and integrity. Above all they are famed for their ennobling friendship with the horse.

In stark contrast it is difficult for decent people in modern society to understand the deeds described within this book for herein is revealed the horrors that have gone undetected, been misunderstood, or defied belief.

Normal people do not employ a horse so as to engage in lying, theft and cold-blooded deceit against trusting strangers. Nor can the average person not be shocked when they see evidence which confirms the existence of those savage human brutes that employ starvation and unspeakable violence against innocent horses not just in a moment of blind anger but for thousands of pain filled miles.

These scoundrels are the antithesis of a Long Rider from the Guild.

Having written the *Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration* I have long been aware that mounted criminals occasionally appear within our community.

These individuals are a malignant evil that terrorize their equine victims. They are slayers who ride horses to death so as to gratify their swollen lust for social recognition. Their profaned lives are devoid of sympathy, as evidenced by the photographs depicting horses forced to travel with enormous oozing wounds on their starved bodies. Because these human defilers are intoxicated with the illusion of self-love, they have no sense of responsibility to the animal, to the public, to the press or for their actions. They are remorseless, relentless predators who are immune to requests from the public who time and time again express pity for an equine victim that is being publicly marched to its agonizing death.

In the past the Long Riders' Guild published brief biographies about some of these individuals, thinking that being placed in the Guild's *Hall of Shame* would reduce the occurrence of such evil episodes. Sadly I had not foreseen the creation of the pernicious social media, a type of technical malevolence which is encouraging social media addicts to obtain control of a mute equine victim and then use it as a prop during a stunt designed to aggrandise their out of control egos.

A recent infection of such creatures has appeared and in each case horses have been victimised. That is why I will no longer abide in silence or withhold evidence. I am going to tell you about events and show you photographs that will deeply disturb you.

It is the memories of unspeakable sins that break my heart and the photographs from Horse Hell that torment me at night. As lore master of the Guild I have an obligation to transmit to those who come after information that I alone have preserved.

Silence has protected these wicked individuals for too long. They are a menace to the soul of the Long Rider community and an affront to every horse loving human.

This book is not merely a list of horrific deeds. It is a call to the public to protect horses from evil. It is time to open our eyes and see the wicked deeds done in the name of satisfying human egos. When we witness a person who has no sense of social responsibility and refuses to abide by the Guild's Code of Equestrian Travel Ethics, then the public has a right to seek to have the horse examined by a medical professional. If found to be starving, abused or injured, the owner should be arrested for animal cruelty and the horse should be impounded.

No balanced mind can commit the acts that you will read in this book. No sane person would ride a horse groaning with anguish, starve it so desperately that it is forced to survive by eating its own droppings, or ridicule the sincere distress of horse lovers who are tormented by what they are witnessing.

History proves time and time again that this type of mounted miscreant is immune to everything except the sound of the handcuffs being snapped on his wrists. That is why there is a need to punish those whose crimes cross nations and make a mockery of mercy. It is time to cleanse this pernicious iniquity from our community. We need to protect horses from calculated, relentless cruelty as a sign of our own humanity

Let us proceed with courage, examine the evidence and seek a way to prevent this vicious cycle of equine crime from continuing.

Chapter 3 – The Ones Who Got Away

The vast majority of humans who love, work, ride or simply admire horses find it hard to believe that anyone would deliberately torture these trusting animals. What is even harder for the normal person to comprehend is that there are rare individuals who use horses like disposable commodities, injuring and killing them without a trace of sympathy.

Two American examples demonstrate the extent of how deep this cruelty runs.

Carl Wayne Cooper

In June of 2012 an unemployed Texas air-conditioner repairman named Carl Wayne Cooper made a startling announcement. “I am planning to ride a horse around the world and intend to complete the trip in 1000 days.” He also revealed that he dreamed of setting a Guinness Book of World Records.

“Someone will have to go along to make sure it’s documented so it will be eligible for the Guinness World Records book.”

In addition to knowing nothing about equestrian travel, Cooper was equally unaware that the Guinness website states, “We do not endorse speed records for travelling over large distances on horseback because of concerns over the welfare of the animals involved.”

Cooper did not own a horse or saddle. He had no money and had not planned his route. He had no idea how he would travel overseas, even if he was lucky enough to reach his first goal of San Diego, California. Instead of resolving these basic problems he took two unusual steps. Cooper announced that he had mysteriously become a “cowboy preacher”. He also broadcast an appeal for help via the internet. “I am currently seeking sponsors to achieve this historic, monumental ride.”

Having had a saddle donated, Cooper adopted an unsuitable horse from the Humane Society of North Texas.

One of the most ill-fated equestrian journeys then began.

The three-year-old stallion (right) was underweight and barely broke to ride. This didn't keep Cooper from setting off in 100 degree July heat. Unable to carry the 200 pound rider, the small horse collapsed after only fifteen miles. "He lay down with me still in the saddle," Cooper told a reporter.



Determined to proceed, Cooper asked another local equine rescue organisation to supply him with a new mount. Having obtained a mare from the unsuspecting organisation, Cooper proceeded to ride the animal so hard that on the second day she too collapsed. The cowboy preacher told a reporter that the mare was "tired." He then published a plea on the internet. If his journey was to succeed, "I need a real piss cutter."

Cooper's third horse lasted 300 miles, until it developed such severe saddle sores that the animal was too ill to continue. Cooper blamed this accident on the donated saddle which had been given to him by a custom saddle-maker in Texas.

Then it got worse.

Having obtained his fourth mount, Cooper had managed to reach the neighbouring state of New Mexico. While travelling through the desolate desert country near Alamogordo, Cooper came upon a cattle guard. According to a spokesman from the White Sands Missile Range Fire Department, which had responded to Cooper's 911 call, the inept traveller had attempted to "walk or lead" the horse across the dangerous cattle guard. The horse broke its leg and had to be shot.

Cooper had now lost four horses in two months. But he still wasn't done.

He caught a ride to Albuquerque in the hope of getting another horse. But his antics were becoming widely known. The Albuquerque Journal, and Horse Talk, the international equestrian news service, had reported the death and injuries of the horses.

Despite the release of this alarming news, a local rancher loaned Cooper a fifth horse. A week later it was returned, after Cooper claimed, "it had kidney problems."

The rancher loaned Cooper the sixth horse used during the doomed journey. By now Cooper had dropped any reference to the Guinness Record, claiming instead that he was now making the journey so as "to do the Lord's work and help abused horses."

Before he set off, Cooper had predicted, "The media attention to this ride will be enormous." He was right, but for reasons he could never have foreseen.

An international public outcry had begun when it was discovered that Cooper was destroying horses in his cross-country trip.

The first person on record to sound the alarm was American Long Rider Colleen Hamer. She wrote to the Guild to express her concern and to confirm that Cooper was defiantly ignoring advice from veteran equestrian travellers.

"He has blocked me from his Facebook page because I expressed concern about numerous things that he was trying to do. He won't listen to anyone that has any experience," Colleen said.



Members of the Long Riders' Guild, animal welfare organizations, reporters in the United States and overseas, state police and equine welfare organisations all pooled their resources and tracked Cooper's movements.

Jayme Feary is an experienced American Long Rider who had encountered hardships and problems during his journey along the difficult Continental Divide Trail. Jayme sent this message to Cooper via the traveller's Facebook page.



“I do not wish to pile on. Many equestrian travelers, due to no fault of their own, are not prepared for such a long ride. I don't pretend to know your heart or your motivations, but your record with your first four horses indicates you were not ready for such a long ride. Many of us have postponed our rides, stopped them short, or abandoned them altogether when we came to the same realization. There is no dishonor in that. We at the Guild support any person who has a dream to ride, but we believe that on a horseback journey the horses must come first. I suspect you do not wish to intentionally harm your animals, but so far in a short distance you've churned through four horses. I encourage you to examine your heart and decide if a horseback journey is the best vehicle to help you achieve your personal goals. The equestrian travel community will support any person who rides with honest motives, a good heart, and a respect for the animals that carry him or her forward. But if a person demonstrates that he or she is putting his or her own ambitions ahead of his animals' welfare, or is taking advantage of the kindness of strangers, we will follow and haunt that person to the ends of the earth until the journey ends. I implore you: End your trip now.”

Despite a growing wave of condemnation, Cooper remained defiant, until it was discovered that he had falsified his wife's death. In an early effort to generate emotional and financial support, Cooper posted online that he had lost his wife to cancer. After the scandal broke, his wife suddenly announced that she was in fact very much alive. Additionally, even though Cooper had falsely told the press that he was a widower, the couple was still married.

When asked to explain the marital discrepancy, Cooper told the press, "I did that before I was ordained and I forgot about it. I didn't want people to know my business. If you say you're a widower, they tend to leave you alone."

Despite the string of injured or dead horses, Cooper refused to accept any responsibility. "I'm doing the Lord's work out here," he told the press. But his every step was now being monitored, as demonstrated by this message warning the citizens of Arizona about Cooper's deadly equine record.

"Attention Arizona! Equine Con Man possibly in your state. I'm a Back Country Horseman from Wyoming. I'm writing to warn you about the possible presence of a self-proclaimed circuit preacher, C.W. Cooper, a man who is riding horseback across the West and may be in your area. He is looking for someone to donate a horse so he can continue his ride and 'ministry.' This man is a known con man and fraud. In his first 500 miles, he has burned through four donated saddle horses, the first two from exhaustion, the second from saddle sores, and the third from being shot after Cooper rode it across a cattle guard. He was in Albuquerque yesterday but I've had reports about a man fitting his description inquiring at a Flagstaff feed store about finding a horse for his ministry. I encourage you to spread the word about this man's possible presence. If he is not yet in Arizona, he will be soon. I suggest that no one give him shelter or provide him with a horse or resources of any kind. I encourage you to spread the word among horse and animal welfare groups, and to alert law enforcement if anyone observes C.W. Cooper doing anything illegal."

When his supply of free horses was finally removed, Cooper returned to Texas in defeat. Cooper did set a record. He crippled or killed more horses (5) in the shortest possible distance than anyone on record.

A celebrated equestrian blogger known as Fugly summarized the C.W. Cooper incident.

"True Long Riders (refer to the Long Riders Guild) believe in preparation, preparation, preparation and more preparation and put their horses' welfare first. These others are just common beggars who don't want to (or can't) get a real job to support their animals and their slacker selves, exploiting their animals to gain money for themselves."

Fugly's assessment was sadly accurate.

Jerry Andrews

Another frightening example is provided by Jerry Andrews. In April 2019 he set off from Cheyenne, Oklahoma. His goal was to travel east along the American Discovery Trail.

Jerry Andrews riding the American Discovery Trail in Ohio 2019.



Like many other mounted charlatans, Andrews justified his journey by claiming that he was a mounted Christian missionary. In fact, shocking evidence quickly emerged that proved that Andrews was obtaining horses under false pretences and then abusing them to the point of death.







A trail of deception and cruelty stretched across Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. When the public became aware of Andrews' cruel charade they formed an on-line group called *Justice for Jerry's Horses*. Thanks to the public's vigilance police officers stopped Andrews in Ohio. It was instantly evident that the horses were extremely malnourished and suffered intense injuries. One horse that had been loaned to Andrews only 11 days before was already on the point of death. That horse was returned to the owners.

An appeal from the owner of a horse wounded by Jerry Andrews.

So lastnight we went and picked up our beloved Jolene, we leased her out to a gentleman that is riding from Oklahoma to Connecticut. He was supposed to be a "Godley" man spreading the word of the lord along his way. With Jolene needing miles and coming from a very Faithful man, grandpa McCoy, we thought this was a wonderful opportunity for her. We were WRONG. This coward/crook, took Jolene and ran her into the ground, bad enough we'll be very lucky if she makes it. He had her for 11 days total with only 8 days of riding. He was supposed to shoe here before leaving where she was dropped off, he didn't do that, then proceeded to ride and drag our Jolene 70+ miles, unshoed! Jolene means so much to our family and we cannot believe what has happened to her. I want to get the word out because I don't want anyone else to go through what we are right now, and don't want to see someone elses beloved horse to go through what Jolene is. I'm sure he'll be trying to barrow or lease someone else's horse to help his cause. Please don't do it! Please spread the word and help this get seen. The gentleman's profile is JE Gifts Horseback-Disciples. #PrayforJolene

Andrews disappeared, but like Cooper, his trail of torment had been stopped by ethical horse lovers who refused to believe that travel justifies cruelty.

Chapter 4 – Arrested in America

Things have changed dramatically in the world of horse travel. While it is a joy to see how horse travel has gone from the edge of extinction to wide popular appeal, there has been a dramatic increase in selfishness and narcissism. The invention of social media has encouraged an unquenchable thirst for external validation that festers beneath a culture of exhibitionism.

When people pose for “selfies”, pretend to be “influencers,” or misuse the wondrous internet to persecute strangers these ego based crimes only involve human beings. But when a braggart swings into the saddle then another living creature, the horse, is put at risk.

America has not only witnessed such immoral villains, it has arrested them.

Wilbur Frost

In 2011 Wilbur Frost was arrested in Adams County, Pennsylvania. He told police he was travelling from Pennsylvania to Oklahoma. Frost had in his possession a Standardbred who had previously won 56 races. Now at the age of 13, the equine victim had fallen onto hard times and was pulling a cart loaded with unregistered guns. The horse was malnourished. Large abrasions covered his body where his hair had been rubbed off from the badly fitting harness. His legs were covered by lash marks from Frost’s whip. Frost, who had a prior conviction for animal neglect charges involving draft horses, was charged with animal abuse and carrying concealed firearms without a license. He was sentenced to nine months in prison and fined \$27,265. The rescue group, Support Our Standardbreds, re-homed the abused animal.

Wilbur Frost mug shot.



Patrick Schumacher

In 2013 citizens in Boulder, Colorado called the police when they observed a mounted man weaving in and out of traffic. The rider was seen to beat the horse so hard that it reared on its hind legs. When police arrived Patrick Neal Schumacher was slumped in the saddle. The 45-year-old was given a field sobriety test, which he failed. Officers discovered Schumacher was carrying beer, a small dog and a pistol in his saddlebags. Schumacher was arrested for drunken horse riding and animal cruelty.

Patrick Schumacher arrested in Boulder Colorado.



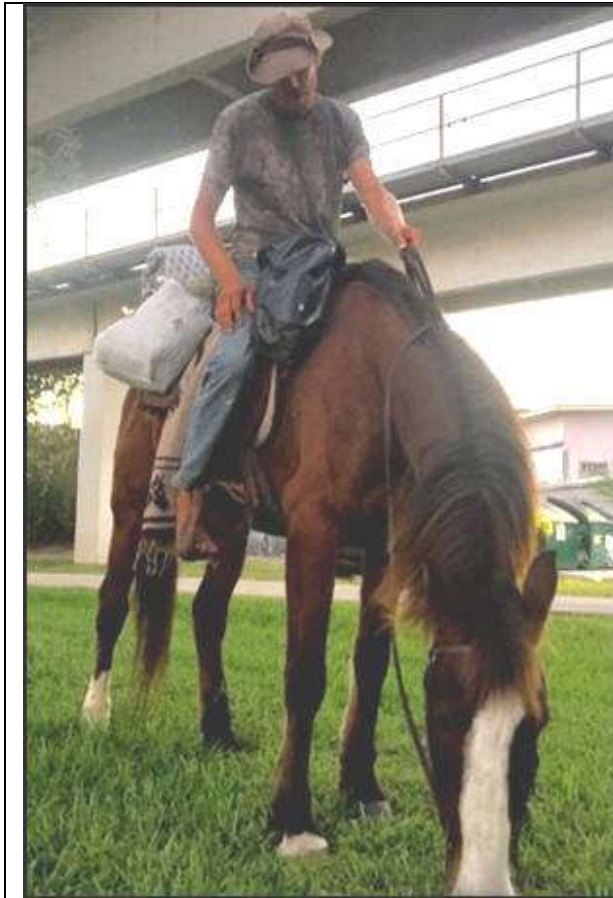
Christopher Michael Emerson

The year 2016 will long be remembered because of the actions of two unscrupulous Americans whose actions horrified the nation.

As the equestrian blogger Fugly had predicted, mounted beggars were making their way through unsuspecting communities. The names were different but their aims were the same. They were looking for money, food, hay, shelter – and in one incredible incident a pair of boots.

Christopher Michael Emerson was the barefoot beggar who had spent four months riding 700 miles from his home in South Carolina to Florida. The man's poverty was so acute that he was feeding grass clippings to his starving horse.

People along Emerson's route had witnessed this sad spectacle heading south. One woman recalled, "He barely knew how to feed the horse and routinely beat the side of Trigger's body." When the Good Samaritan offered to pay for a veterinarian to inspect the obviously ill animal, Emerson refused and rode on.



A growing rash of complaints followed Emerson south to Miami. There he was photographed sitting in the saddle barefoot. Tied behind the cantle were two plastic bags filled with grass cuttings mowed from a lawn.

When police arrived they discovered that the saddle had virtually zero padding and was held together with duct tape and twine. The bit was in backwards, which had injured the animal's mouth. The horse had open sores on its back. Its hips, ribs, and spine could be seen protruding under his skin. Its back was so sore, even the lightest touch made him shudder and try to bite in defense. The horse was blind in one eye and was emaciated from the arduous journey.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was outraged by Emerson's actions. "The horse isn't in any condition to travel that far," said SPCA spokeswoman Laurie Waggoner. He has very little muscle. You can feel all of his ribs and see the individual vertebrae and his hip bones."

When officials determined the horse was dangerously malnourished, Emerson was arrested on an act of animal cruelty. The horse, Trigger, was impounded and placed in the care of a rescue stable.

Before Emerson went to trial, he agreed to a plea deal with the state attorney's office and signed over full legal custody of Trigger to an equine charity as part of the plea. The county asked a judge to issue an order preventing Emerson from owning horses.

Doc Mishler

Yet later in 2016 a case of cruelty was exposed that shocked the nation when it was revealed that the horse abuse had been going on for years and had literally crisscrossed the nation without detection.

Unlike highly-paid human athletes, the horse has no way to object when he finds himself alone in an ethical vacuum. His biological integrity is sacrificed on the altar of the human's greed for money and fame.

This is why the LRG maintains what is believed to be the strictest set of equestrian ethical guidelines known.

<http://www.thelongridersguild.com/ethics.htm>

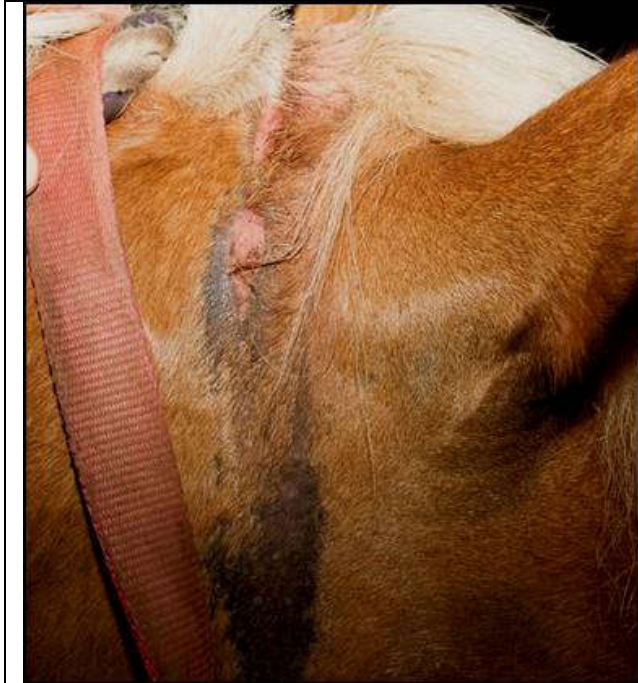
Such a rigid standard is one reason Tod “Doc” Mishler chose to remain out of touch with the Long Riders’ Guild for more than a decade; i.e. he was almost certainly worried that if the Guild had detected the numerous reports of equine abuse connected to his journey through the United States, the Guild would have invoked an immediate investigation and/or would have suggested his arrest.

Mishler’s unprecedented legal trouble began in July 2016 when a concerned American citizen informed the Guild that the Long Rider had been arrested in New York after he rode one horse while leading another across the Staten Island Bridge linking New Jersey and New York.

Mishler boldly crossed the busy bridge during morning rush hour traffic.



When officers from the New York Police Department responded, they initially issued Mishler a court summons for blocking traffic and trespassing. Then the officers discovered that both of Mishler’s horses were suffering from abuse.



His pack horse, Hope, had bloody open sores after only three days travel. She had been rubbed raw from the halter on her neck and head.

It was later discovered that Mishler needlessly subjected his pack horses (plural) to potential injury by repeatedly breaking one of the fundamental rules of safe equestrian travel. By tying his pack horse to his riding horse, he subjected the animal to severe friction caused by the unrelenting pressure of the halter. Such a wound is avoidable. There are no mitigating circumstances involving this decision. It is a rule which is as basic to safe equestrian travel as requiring a motorist to keep both hands on the steering wheel.

The pack horse was also lame in her right leg from an untreated infected injury.

Police officers also discovered that Mishler's riding horse Charity was underweight and had oozing pressure sores on her torso.



Mishler was arrested and charged with torturing and injuring his animals.

Mishler pleaded not guilty to all charges. Officials said that if Mishler was found guilty he would face civil forfeiture of his horses and could be fined \$10,000.

Yet the incident in New York turned out to be the tip of an iceberg of cruelty. Thanks to the help of an alarmed public, Mishler's arrest began to reveal links in a chain of equine criminality that zigzagged across an unsuspecting nation.

With the help of the internet, a group of concerned Americans created the *Stop Doc Mishler* Facebook investigation project. Citizens from all parts of the USA began providing evidence documenting how Mishler had starved, injured and abused a number of horses during a meandering journey that began in Montana in 2003 and came to a crashing conclusion in New York thirteen years later.

A Hidden History

This investigation revealed that the Montana chapter of Back Country Horsemen had ejected Mishler on the grounds of horse abuse, prior to starting his travels. Had it been known, such evidence would have disallowed Mishler from being admitted as a Member of the Long Riders' Guild but this vital fact was hidden from the public.

This means that Mishler was thrown out of the Montana BCH group, on charges of horse abuse, and then set off on a multi-year, multi-state journey, one which resulted in horses being starved, dehydrated, injured, and left behind, as and when the authorities investigated him.

When the Guild became aware of the fact that Mishler had perpetrated a massive nation wide equestrian travel fraud, it asked renowned American Long Rider Lisa Stewart to investigate.

Lisa made two journeys through the USA and was instrumental in creating the Ortho Flex Saddle. She is the author of "Saddling for the 21st Century" and "The Big Quiet: One Horsewoman's Ride Home."



It didn't take long for Lisa to discover ample evidence of premeditated horse abuse that had lasted for years and included an undetermined number of equine victims. Plus Mishler had engaged in acts which not only violated the Guild's Code of Ethics, they also broke various laws and put the public in danger.

The first fact was the confirmation that after his departure from Montana, Mishler repeatedly neglected the basic welfare of his horses, failed to feed them adequately, on occasion left them unattended in unsafe surroundings, repeatedly and needlessly rode them into extremely hazardous surroundings and placed his desire for publicity above the needs of the animals.

Traffic

Modern Long Riders avoid putting their horses at risk by needlessly riding them into cities infested with heavy traffic,

Yet Mishler intentionally rode into large cities so as to attract attention, which in turn resulted in curiosity from the press and generosity from the public, including free meals, accommodations, etc.

Mishler rode through San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Phoenix, Cleveland, Madison, Atlanta, Charleston and New York, to name just a few.

Doc Mishler chooses to ride alongside a busy Oregon highway during rush hour, 2012.



Mishler was filmed riding alongside a freeway in Atlanta, Georgia on March 19, 2015.



Not only did Mishler put his horses at risk, he repeatedly endangered the lives of the public. Therefore, what is fundamentally in question is not how far Mishler rode but where he deliberately chose to ride. No amount of high mileage should be allowed to outweigh this cross violation of public safety and this blatant disregard for basic equestrian travel safety.

Bridges

Lisa's investigation confirmed that Mishler is an exception for a number of negative reasons, one of which includes his wilful and repeated violation of the law in states across the nation.

The *Horse Travel Handbook* warns travellers, "As Long Riders have learned, things can get very bad, very quickly, on a bridge. Never let a bridge surprise you! So what's the first thing you check? You give a thought to discovering if it is legal to take your horse over."

Yet Mishler flouted this rule, broke the law, needlessly endangered his horses, and imperilled the lives of passing drivers, by riding across bridges in at least three states.

The wilful crossing of bridges in California and South Carolina proved that Mishler chose to take his horses across these highly dangerous motorways and that his entry into New York, via a bridge, was designed to generate publicity and profit.

As an aside, even though there were signs saying it was illegal to ride across the three-mile-long Golden Gate Bridge in 2013, Mishler chose to make that crossing early on New Year's Day, so as to take the authorities by surprise. He made it across without being arrested. But the Guild has been told that additional warning signs were erected after the Mishler incident.



Mishler crossing the Golden Gate Bridge in California on New Years Day 2013.

*Mishler crossing the Ravenel Bridge -
Charleston South Carolina - April 20 2016.*



Christians and Children

The *Stop Doc Mishler* campaign discovered that Mishler justified this journey by telling the public and the press that he was raising money to feed hungry children. He also pretended to be a doctor of philosophy.

But Maple Ridge Pastor Malcolm Johnson said Mishler had been dismissed from that religious community in 2011 because of an unspecified “misuse of trust.”

“Mishler is a con artist and is heading on the way to being a crackpot,” Johnson said.



Thanks to the money donated by trusting Americans, Mishler moved from one unsuspecting community to another, living a life of ease at other people's expense.

Instead of spending time in church, it was discovered that Mishler had a habit of frequenting saloons.

Mishler's horses were photographed tied up in the sun outside an Arizona pub. He was detained and questioned by Phoenix police but allowed to depart.



But another stop for a drink had more serious repercussions.



Mishler's horses tied up outside a liquor store in Madison, Wisconsin.

In August 2011 police in Madison, Wisconsin observed horses tied up outside a local liquor store. The owner was described as a “75-year-old itinerant evangelist.”

An inspection of Mishler’s horses revealed that the animals were underweight and suffering from dehydration, heat stress and open sores. Mishler was charged with animal neglect, a misdemeanor.

His mug shot was taken but he was not jailed or arrested. Instead Mishler was allowed to go free and his campaign of abuse lengthened.



The authorities in Madison did not realize that Mishler was perpetrating a multi-state case of equestrian travel abuse. They had no way of knowing that Mishler had been abusing horses in many states but moving on without delay so as to evade arrest or embarrassment.

Starved, Thirsty and Neglected

Thomas Lambie was a Christian minister and a courageous Long Rider who rode across Abyssinia in 1919. He warned, "No one who mistreats a horse is fit to own one. The Lord's work shouldn't be a horse's burden."

Mishler's religious belief entitled him to carry no food or water for his animals. He told the press that he relied on 'God to Provide' for the horses. As a result, an emergency rescue had to be carried out for one of Mishler's horses. The horse, which was covered in open wounds, had fallen into a ditch.



After being rescued by firemen, the horse was found to be starving and was so weak it had been reduced to eating pine needles.

After the animal was rescued a kind hearted American offered to buy the starving and exhausted horse so as to save it from further torment. Mishler agree to accept \$500 for the cadaverous animal. Imagine the shock of the buyer when he discovered that Mishler had used the money to immediately buy another equine victim as a replacement.

When American Long Rider Lucy Leaf discovered how the predator had profited from his crimes, she expressed her anger.

"This is another dimension of animal cruelty and predation. To think that an abuser would prey on the empathy of others by profiting from abuse is abhorrent. It's akin to mutilating children so they can be more effective beggars. There must be a word for this type of extortionist narcissistic psychopath? Deliberate abuse for money? Horse abuse trafficking? Pandering to people's empathy?"

Starvation, dehydration, oozing saddle sores, improper shoeing, open leg sores, halter burns caused by friction, the list of crimes committed against horses nation-wide was unprecedented but Mishler continued to evade attempts to stop his travels.

On Trial At Last

The “*Stop Doc Mishler*” campaign used Facebook to find Americans across the nation who had eyewitness evidence about the unethical rider.

One citizen sent this photo showing Mishler’s horse showing signs of severe malnutrition.



After reviewing the evidence, Lisa Stewart recommended that Doc Mishler be immediately removed from the Long Riders’ Guild. This was done without delay and the Guild issued a public statement confirming that it would not tolerate horse abuse. The action by the Guild meant that Mishler is the only person in history to have been ejected from the Long Riders’ Guild and Back Country Horsemen on charges of horse abuse.

In addition, the Long Riders’ Guild provided evidence to the New York City Attorney’s office and to Detective Ray Wood, of the Richmond County District Attorneys Office Animal Cruelty Bureau.

Mishler was brought to trial in March, 2017.

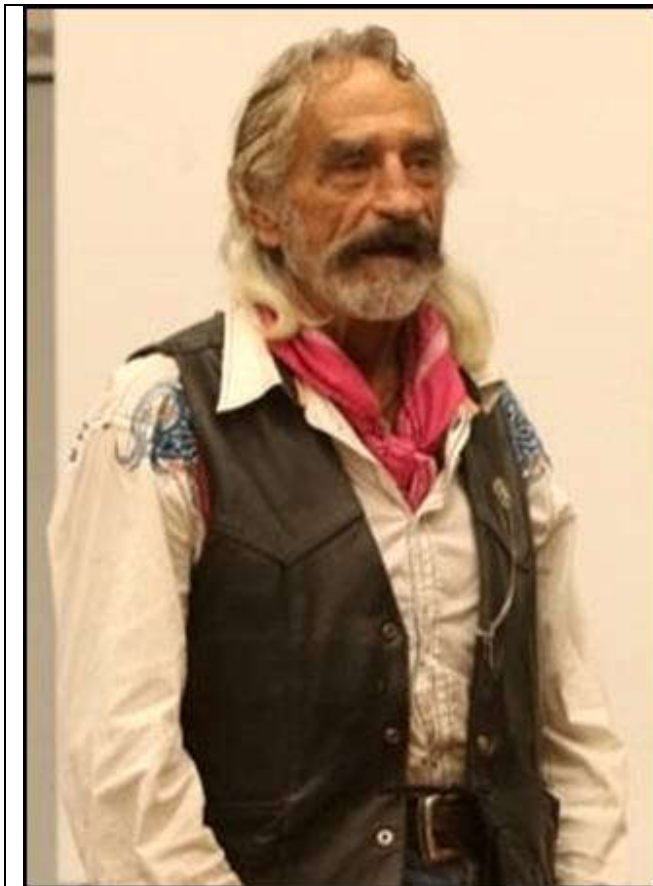
According to law enforcement agents, Mishler’s two horses had been evaluated by two independent veterinarians who specialize in equine care. After the evaluation, both doctors determined that the horses were victims of neglect.

At the trial the veterinarian who had treated Mishler's pack horse reported her findings to the jury. This was the horse that Mishler had bought using the money gained from selling the other injured animal.

"When the mare was brought to us we removed 103 ticks from her body (an exact number because it was considered evidence). Her fetlocks were bleeding and oozing maggots. Her halter was so embedded into her head that the skin was healing over it. She had a fever of 103 degrees. If you even touched her anywhere on her body even with a soft brush she would squeal in pain. She was so severely dehydrated that we had to ration her water intake. The minute you would fill a 5 gallon bucket she would drink it bone dry. When she wasn't eating or drinking she lay there for five days straight. She even ate her hay lying down."

In addition NYPD Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce said, "We looked at both horses. They had serious open sores and dehydration as well as malnutrition."

As a result of the evidence, Mishler was convicted. He was barred from owning horses in New York State for two years. He forfeited ownership of his horses to an equine charity.



In 2017 America's most prolific case of national equine travel abuse was finally halted when Mishler, aged 80, pled guilty in New York.

Chapter 5 – Americans Imprisoned for Horse Abuse

The American state of Montana enjoys a well-founded reputation as being the home of millions of horse lovers. The beautiful country, the glorious mountains and the state's links to the Old West make it a favourite spot for Long Riders. Unfortunately in the summer of 2008 Montana became the scene of an infamous episode in equestrian travel abuse.

Craig Heydon, 71, and his son, Curtis Heydon, 37, had come to Montana from their home in Georgia. Accompanying them were four horses which they had purchased in three different states en route. Though they lacked any knowledge of equestrian travel, the Heydons had decided to spend an extended summer packing in Montana's rugged Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

After two months in the mountains father and son split up and returned to civilization via different routes. Two local women were trail riding in the Bitterroot Valley, when they encountered Curtis Heydon coming down the trail. When he learned that the two women were heading up the trail, Curtis Heydon informed them that he had left his "lazy" pack horse behind. He then rode on.

Disturbed by Heydon's manner, the women continued on until they came upon the emaciated horse lying flat in the hot sun. They were both shocked at the sight and thought the animal was dead.



Heydon had tied the horse to a log and attached a note to the saddle which read, "Horse down for no apparent reason. Will be back in 24 hours." There was no date, name or phone number.

The horse was covered with an oozing sore on its withers which went down to the bone. The wound was covered in meat-eating bees and biting flies. When the animal saw the women it nickered. They removed the saddle and tried to get the animal on its feet. But its shoeless feet were too worn and painful to stand.



When they realized the horse was too weak to rise, one woman rushed to a nearby creek to obtain water. The dehydrated horse drank five bottles.

After having untied the horse, removed the saddle and covered the exhausted horse with the saddle blanket, the women rushed back for help.

The abandoned horse was then brought down from the mountains. A search by local law enforcement quickly found the Heydon's three other sadly mistreated and emaciated horses. They had been placed in a makeshift pen between mini-storage units. All four horses were confiscated and the Heydons were arrested on charges of animal cruelty.

The Heydons were arraigned in Ravalli County Court before Judge James Bailey on August 13, 2008, where they posted a \$10,000 bond each, and pled not guilty to four counts each of animal cruelty (a misdemeanor charge in Montana). Judge Bailey asked the men if they would like to donate money toward the veterinary bills and feed costs. They declined.

The case was closely monitored by the *Rocky Mountain Rider*, a Montana based equestrian publication that published regular reports. As details emerged during the trial, the public's sense of outrage grew. The Heydons admitted they were inexperienced horsemen and that the son had never been on a horse until the pack trip.

It was revealed in court that one of the previous horse owners had warned the Heydons that the four animals needed to be trained and conditioned before being taken into the mountains, advice which they flagrantly disregarded.

Obviously deprived of proper food and water and even shoes, the emaciated horses were forced to carry the men and their equipment while having large, open saddle sores that went bone-deep. Yet the Heydon's obstinately testified that they didn't overwork, starve or neglect the horses.

Both Craig Heydon and his son, Curtis, repeatedly stated that there was “nothing wrong” with the horses when they were confiscated. Their attorney argued that the horses were healthy and merely thin, such as “fashion models” would be.

Under cross-examination it was also discovered that the amateur travellers had not bothered to purchase pack saddles. To reduce costs the Heydons had bolted wooden dowels to riding saddles and then hung long bags over the backs of the horses. These bags, which were held in place by string, hung just a foot off the ground and held hundreds of pounds.

As a result of the extreme pressure placed on the horses' withers, the animals suffered deep wounds.



The public prosecutor called eighteen witnesses, including veterinarians, livestock inspectors, wilderness rangers, sheriff's deputies and the three people who rescued one of the Heydons' horses.

A veterinarian testified, “One horse had a large 6-inch sore over its withers where the skin had been completely rubbed off. It was about the size of a coffee plate saucer. The horse was literally skin and bones. It was probably somewhere between 150 and 200 pounds underweight and had a number of other sores on its body. It also had a voracious appetite.”

Deputy Sheriff Jon Moles choked up when looking at photos of the injured horses. “This was a total disregard of health and welfare of an animal. You can have equipment failure but you should take care of the horse if it is injured. The Heydons should have walked those horses out and taken them to a vet. I would say that these horses were overworked and tormented. I would say they were tortured.”

Another expert witness was a Montana man who had spent years packing horses in the Montana wilderness. He had met the Heydons in the mountains, offered his advice and urged them to care for their starving horses. The Georgia men ignored him.

The Heydons were declared guilty of 21 counts of animal cruelty.

Judge Jim Bailey denounced Craig Heydon and his son Curtis before imposing harsh sentences. The judge said the Heydons had displayed a gross lack of common sense and humanity by ignoring the horses' suffering, which included starvation, maggot-filled sores, ulcerated eyes, exhaustion and other ailments.

Looking sternly at the father and son, Judge Bailey declared, "Neither of you have taken any responsibility. It's unbelievable that you can blame the horses, law enforcement and the Bitterroot Humane Association for what's happened."

Judge Bailey sentenced the elder Heydon to 10 months in jail and fined him \$5,850. The younger Heydon was sentenced to 11 months in jail and fined \$6,435. He ordered them to relinquish the horses, pay for their care and costs, and pay jury costs. The judge said that the sentence was strong for a misdemeanor trial but that he wanted to send a message that animal cruelty would not be tolerated in Montana.

The Heydons' lawyer immediately appealed.

"This is a sham," Curtis Heydon muttered as a deputy escorted him and his father from the courthouse.

Craig Heydon stares at members of the jury who convicted him and his son of horse abuse.



A second trial was held soon afterwards. The jury once again found the defendants guilty of animal abuse.

At the conclusion of that trial the judge stated, "Their saddles and equipment were not correct. Their pack saddles were bizarre homemade devices and massively over-packed. There was no indication of hay being taken with them. They said that they took 350 pounds of feed, yet receipts and oral statements add up to only 100 pounds of feed, with 50 pounds lost on the trail. They showed pictures of feeding the horses from a

container the size of a margarine tub. They have indicated deliberate indifference to the health and welfare of these horses. They were used and abused. And, I still see no acceptance or acknowledgement of guilt.”

At the second trial Craig and Curtis Heydon were declared guilty of 21 counts of animal cruelty, fined \$24,000 each, and sent to prison, after a Montana court convicted them of starving and abusing their riding and pack horses. The judge also ordered them to forfeit ownership of the horses to the humane association and to pay all restitution for food, medicine, boarding and other care given the horses after they were seized by authorities.

Curtis Heydon moments before he was led away to prison.



When Montana State Senator Rick Laible learned about the Heyden case he proposed a new law designed to increase the penalties for animal abuse.

Chapter 6 – Mounted Deceptions

The primary purpose of this unique book is to alert the public to the existence of murderous horse killers and to educate the public on how horse abusers can be stopped. In each of these crimes the horse is a victim of human cruelty.

Yet a special exception must also be included so as to warn the public that another type of equestrian travel crime exists.

Fast forward into the 21st century and a new type of mounted exploiter has emerged to prey upon the public. Various types of rogues, deceivers, crooks, liars and cheats have used the horse so as to exploit the trust of the public and to beguile the press.

These travelling con artists often claim they are motivated by patriotism or religion. They are quick to accept donations for a charity that doesn't exist. They grasp the Bible in one hand and pick the pockets of the unwary with the other. They wave the flag and steal people blind. They exploit the kindness of their hosts in order to gain money, shelter, supplies and services.

This type of criminal operates with impunity because he has learned the truth of the ancient Long Rider proverb, "The horse is the key to the village."

That is not just a declaration. It is an admonition. In rare cases it is also a license to steal.

Planting the Seed of Hospitality

When people encounter a Long Rider it brightens their lives and plants an emotional seed that germinates through the decades. For example when American Long Rider Lucy Leaf entered Flora, Mississippi in 1976 14-year-old Leslie Childress was checking his family's mailbox when he saw Lucy approaching.

"He thought my horse might like a drink of water. I accepted his offer and his parents encouraged me to rest for a couple of days while my horse enjoyed their lush pasture," Lucy recalled.

Thirty-seven years later that boy had matured and was now the mayor of Flora, Mississippi. In 2013 when Leslie heard that another lady Long Rider was about to ride into his town, Mr. Childress was standing the middle of the road ready to invite Sea G Rhydr to rest at the family home just like so many years before.

In 1973 Lucy rode her horse, Igor, on a 7,000 mile journey that took them from Maine to Oregon and then returned from California to Virginia. Her historic report, "Ticks and Travel – A Deadly Peril", was the first equine travel study to document how ticks carrying Lyme Disease represent one of the most frightening threats faced by Long Riders today. Lucy made contributions to all three-volumes of "The Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration", and then spent a year carefully copy-editing every line of text in the 1800 page magnum opus. She was declared one of the Guild's rare Living Treasures in 2020.



Back in 1940 an astute English Long Rider named James Wentworth Day put his finger on why the event in Flora, Mississippi had taken place.

"No matter where you ride," he said, "I found the sound of a horse's hooves to act as an open sesame to a stranger's heart."

Unfortunately it often also opens the family's wallet and acts as a magnet for those seeking publicity.

Gaylord Stevens

One such case occurred in October, 2012 when the Guild received an email from a man who said his name was "Steven Hawke." He wrote to say that he was about to set off on an extended journey that would take him through all 48 states. He was seeking the support of the Guild.

When the man who signed himself as "Steven Hawke" wrote to the Guild regarding his desire to undertake this particular route, we quickly provided vital information which left no doubt that this journey had previously been done. Here is an extract from the email which I sent to the gentleman.

"Are you aware that this journey is so difficult that it has only been previously done by two of the most extraordinary Long Riders in history? The concept was pioneered by George Beck. He spent three years, from 1912 till 1915, riding 20,000 miles to all 48 state capitals. A few years later another American, Frank Heath, set off in 1925 to ride to all forty eight states. Once again, it took years of hard riding to complete the journey. Consequently, I wanted to stop my work to say that you have set yourself up against one of the most grueling equestrian journeys known to man."

Mr. Hawke never replied. Nor did he inform the Guild that he had departed but it was soon revealed that Hawke was attempting to stay well under the Guild's radar, preferring to move from town to town as quietly as possible.

In fact we learned that the journey was underway when someone in the United States sent photos to the Guild to ask if this man was a legitimate Long Rider and had his journey been sanctioned by the Guild.

The public expressed concern when a number of images showed young women from a restaurant called Hooters perched on horses. On his blog Hawke wrote, "Looking to work with Hooter's Heroes!"



And even though Hawke claimed his journey was designed to promote "Family Values," other images published on his blog depicted young women in scanty dress posed on horses.



There is of course nothing illegal or unethical about asking attractive young ladies to swing into the saddle. Yet when I visited the blog associated with the ride I saw many things which immediately raised red flags.

For example Hawke was always depicted wearing a snow white, spotlessly clean shirt in every picture. There was no sign of a pack horse or even loaded saddle bags. The photos on the blog were all of places, statues, restaurants and scantily clad young girls.

There were no "travelling on the road" images which are commonly associated with a genuine Long Rider. All this led me to believe that he could be trailering the horses from town to town, gathering money and support under a deceptive banner.

Further investigation revealed a recent news story, wherein a former companion publicly denounced Hawke in January, 2013. This man also revealed that Steven Hawke's true name was Gaylord Stevens.



Gaylord Stevens, aka Steven Hawke, had been arrested three times in Florida for various crimes, most recently for battery. This mug shot was taken after he was arrested for battery in Pensacola Florida in 2010.

Moreover, in 1989 the New York Times exposed a man named Gaylord Stevens as a phony Viet Nam war veteran who was running a questionable museum in San Antonio, Texas.

In one news story after he began his equestrian journey Stevens claimed to be raising money for a history museum that was under construction. But I could find no trace of such a project. And as the phony Viet Nam museum proves, Stevens had used the museum angle to defraud the public before.

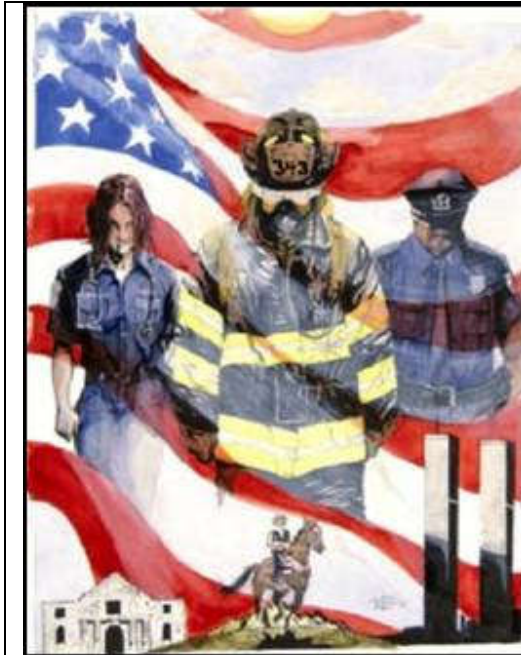
When members of the public confirmed Stevens presence in Oklahoma the Guild asked Sulphur City Attorney Phil Hurst to authorise local law enforcement to find and question the traveller about his activities – but he had disappeared.

But Hawke wasn't the one who pioneered the con game of trailering horses from town to town, and after pretending to have ridden there, entering the unsuspecting population like a predator in disguise.

Selling Patriotism

Soon after the infamous plane crashes of 9-11, a Texan made a loud announcement that he intended to ride from the Alamo to the site of the destroyed Twin Towers in New York.

Wearing a big cowboy hat and a jacket adorned with an American flag, this deceiver played on the public's sense of collective grief, their outraged patriotism, their religious beliefs, and their sense of civic duty.



He intentionally targeted fire stations, linking fire fighters with their deceased brothers in New York.

As he made his way north, he went from town to town finding free accommodations, free food, free hay, and plenty of "donations."



It wasn't until after the traveller reached New York that a quiet companion who had accompanied the man rang me to reveal the truth. This second man, who stayed in the background, drove a truck and trailer whose presence was never explained.

In an unexpected telephone call the companion rang to say that his conscience was bothering him. Without any prompting he revealed that the "ride" from Texas to New York had been an elaborate fraud. They would trailer the horse to the edge of a town, quickly off load the animal in a quiet spot, and then the "patriot" would ride in as if he had been on the road all day.

According to his accomplice the traveller had duped the public, lied to the press, took advantage of trusting merchants, and even stole items from fire stations where he stayed.

This case was not put into the Guild's Hall of Shame because the horse was not injured and there were no other witnesses to support the claim that the man had faked the trip. But it was alarming evidence that horses were being used in a crooked con game.

But it paled in comparison to the astonishing case that had shocked America.

Richard "Pepper" Fipps

A Simple Truth

This is a story of horses and the man who misused them. It is a twisted tale, one which stretches from the palm-studded shores of Florida to the soaring Rocky Mountains of Montana. Sadly, a string of emotional and financial victims litter this trail of equestrian treachery. That is why I need to reveal to you the activities of the man who, after successfully hiding in the shadows for many years, masqueraded as a Long Rider in order to prey on the goodwill, the charity, the trust, the generosity, the religious conviction, and the love of others.

We must begin our story by reminding you of a simple truth.

"The love of the horse has always been a bond between all men, a kind of international lingua franca that bypasses the barrier of language and brings them closer together," wrote the beloved North American equestrian philosopher, Edward Larocque Tinker.

The tribal elders of The Long Riders' Guild simply say, "We all speak horse."

The horse is a semi-sacred animal to human beings all over the planet. He represents bravery, fleetness and mystery. Consequently, when a Long Rider and his horse enter a village, people respond as if by ancient instinct to the sudden appearance of this unlooked-for Centaur. It is the horse, more than the man, who holds the key to the hearts of these trusting people. And though he may have entered the village a stranger,

because of the horse's help, the Long Rider's journey parts the mists of misunderstanding and leaves behind a memory of brotherhood.

Unlike modern equestrian activities, the ancient art of equestrian travel is not, therefore, a competitive event. It is more often a source of personal inspiration akin to a mounted spiritual journey. Throughout history, a special breed of human has summoned up the courage needed to climb onto that altar of travel, the saddle. Then with their eyes on the horizon, they ride off in search of a host of private goals.

Though the date on the calendar changes, the Long Riders in the saddle today remain remarkably true to our collective aspirations and beliefs. Three Long Riders epitomize what I am referring to. While their outward journeys differ, each of these extraordinary equestrian explorers symbolizes the values of The Long Riders' Guild.

Equestrian Heroes

George Patterson rode over the Himalayas in the winter of 1949 to alert the world that Tibet had been invaded by the Communist Chinese. Robin and Louella Hanbury-Tenison made the first modern ride along the length of the Great Wall of China in 1986. In 1994 Madame Catherine Waridel rode 8,000 miles from the Crimea to Mongolia to research the ways of the Central Asian nomads.

These are the type of men and women who represent the philosophy of the Long Riders' Guild. Their rides are quiet triumphs that strengthen the bonds of friendship from one ocean to the other. Every mile they ride renews our collective humanity and celebrates our ancient emotional bond with the horse.

It is because of this dedication to the search for inner quality, and outer courage, that the Long Riders' Guild maintains the strictest control in terms of the people invited to join this, the world's first international association of equestrian explorers.

Equestrian Criminals

Sadly, like all human endeavors, equestrian travel is not without its law-breakers. These people vary as greatly as their crimes.

There are the petty liars, like the American man who claimed to have been shadowed for days by a hungry mountain lion. There are the grand charlatans, like the English man who claimed to be in war-torn Afghanistan but was actually photographed sitting on a horse in snowy Wales.

There are the thieves, like the woman in Australia who "borrowed" the horses of her unsuspecting elderly host, only to be caught many months later when she was seen giving a television interview with the missing horses standing behind her. Worst of all are the horse killers, like the American man who slew his Siberian horse through neglect and then ate its heart in a grisly celebration of his ignorance.

These are the equestrian criminals who abdicate their responsibility, degrade the value of honesty and pave the way for other liars in the wings.

They are poles apart, these two streams of equestrian travellers. One is wholesome and devoted to the care of the horse and others, while the other is seeking to fulfill personal ambitions and selfish desires.

The Long Riders' Guild maintains a private international list of those people whose equestrian deeds disallow them from being named as Long Riders. Moreover, we publish a special section called the Hall of Shame, wherein we list horse killers, equestrian frauds, etc.

We had never listed a living equestrian outlaw - until this episode was revealed in 2005.

News of a massive fraud

While no intentional public deception is trivial, in that year we had the unhappy duty of announcing a truly bad case, a shocking lesion in the equestrian community, a tale of distorted truths and assumed identity involving the worst case of Long Rider fraud in modern history.

The dictionary defines a hoax as an act which purports to describe something that actually occurred or existed in the world. For example, Sir John Mandeville claimed to be an English knight who journeyed to India in 1322. Yet Mandeville has been described by researchers as "the greatest liar of all time."

In 1980 Rosie Ruiz, a 23-year-old New Yorker, was the first woman to cross the finish line in the Boston Marathon. The problem was that no one could remember having seen her during the race. It was discovered she had ridden the subway part way and then jumped into the race during its final half mile. Officials stripped her of her Boston victory.

What dictionaries fail to mention is that fraudsters like Mandeville and Ruiz create victims, as our tale demonstrates all too well.

For the man in question in our story recognized the ancient emotional appeal of the horse, donned the mythical symbolism of the cowboy clothes, flung on the cloak of charity, attached these concepts to the spiritual power of Christianity, and then set out to perpetrate a cold-blooded financial deception on a trusting American public.

His name is Richard Fipps and in thirty years of equestrian exploration, I had never seen a more deliberate modern attempt to deceive and misuse the trust of the public.

Varying Definitions

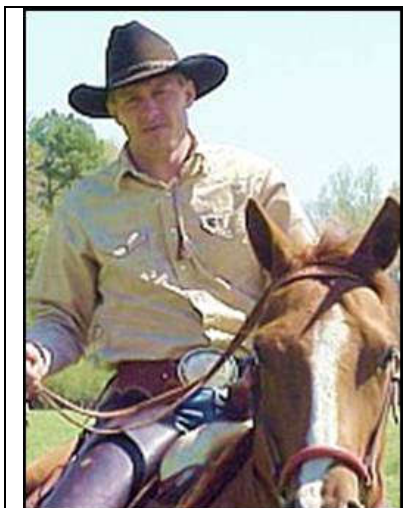
Our story ends in Nevada but began in the sleepy town of Centre, Alabama. Depending on whom you talked to that day, Richard Fipps was either a man of the Old West or a mounted crook.

According to various accounts provided to the press, Fipps claimed to be descended from a ranching family, to have owned a 2,700 acre plantation, to have ridden bulls, tamed horses, run a western wear store and had his name enshrined in the “Cowboy Hall of Fame.”

Then there is the other, until now, hidden side of the man in question. This man has been connected to the crimes of burglary, grand theft auto, domestic abuse and horse theft.

When the Long Riders’ Guild spoke to Fipps, back on April 16th, 2002, we had no reason not to believe the first definition of who he said he was. A self-described cowboy, Fipps spoke to us by telephone and described how he was about to set off on a 1,900 mile ride from Centre, Alabama to Vernal, Utah. And the purpose of his journey?

“I’ll be collecting food and money to feed America’s hungry children,” he told us.



Richard Fipps appeared to be a honest cowboy when he announced he was riding from Centre, Alabama to Vernal, Utah in the spring of 2002.

With such a worthy goal at the heart of his journey, the Long Riders’ Guild placed Fipps’ *Riding for the Children* equestrian journey on our *Current Expeditions* page.

We also offered our assistance in terms of putting him in touch with other Long Riders along the way. Oddly enough, Fipps expressed no interest in contacting other equestrian travellers. His needs, he said, were being taken care of by the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions. Noting his reluctance to share anything more than the news of his departure, The Long Riders’ Guild bid him adieu and became involved with other equestrian affairs.

Fipps set off, dropped out of sight, and the victims began to fall.

The first casualty was the very charity who had helped put him on the road.

A Good Cause

Fipps was telling the truth. There really was a noble charity sponsoring his ride.

Originally the ride was supported by the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, a respected charitable organization headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, which has more than 275 ministries throughout the United States. The AGRM, which annually provides more than 33 million meals to needy people, agreed to link up with Fipps so that he could bring awareness to their need to collect non-perishable canned goods for the food banks and rescue missions located along his route.

To help bring about this worthy plan, the AGRM paid for the registration and maintenance of a website for Fipps, as well as providing him with a free cell-phone.

“At first, we figured it would help raise awareness and encourage people to give,” said Phil Rydman, Director of Communications for the AGRM.

“In the beginning, he (Fipps) was a big hit – he can tell a great story (not always factual as we have come to find out) and he is a flamboyant character. I remember he rode his horse right into the lobby of one of the newspapers in a small town that he was passing through,” Rydman recalled.

Yet soon after the ride began, officers of the charity began receiving complaints about people associated with the ride drinking heavily in camp and then riding drunk the next day.

Another thing that left Rydman uneasy was his discovery that Fipps wasn't just sitting in the saddle but was also holding the steering wheel of a pickup truck. In one interview the suspect cowboy told the media that he had spent 91 days living on the open range between Alabama and Utah. This claim didn't match Rydman's concerns that Fipps was driving back and forth to his home in Alabama.

“He said he had to periodically drive back home to pick up additional supplies. So I don't believe he spent the entire time on the trail. With what we know now, that should have been more of a concern at the time than it now appears to be,” Rydman told the Guild.

With mounting calls of disreputable behavior, and growing suspicions that the ride was a logistical fraud, the alarmed charity alerted their missions that *Riding for the Children* was no longer a project which the AGRM wished to be associated with.

It was too late.

Small town newspapers carrying flamboyant claims were discovered by the Long Riders' Guild. One such an article, released shortly after Fipps completed his suspect

journey to Utah, was published by the Cullman Times in Alabama. In this story Fipps bragged that he had collected “more than \$1 million, all of which went to orphanages and missions.”

The AGRM strongly denied the validity of this claim, saying that their organization only received \$225 in donations from two individuals associated with the Fipps’ ride. Likewise Fipps’ claims to the same Alabama newspaper that he was inducted into the “Cowboy Hall of Fame” and was a guest on the David Letterman television show proved to be false.

With the ride nearing Oklahoma, the AGRM decided to pass control of the website on to another unsuspecting party. Then with Fipps disappearing into the distance the charity thought they had heard the last of him. Little did the AGRM realize they had just allowed Fipps to journey on into Oklahoma and thereby grandly elaborate his tale of horseback deception.

Riding the Radio Waves

When the AGRM discontinued their involvement with the *Riding for the Children* website, Fipps needed help quick. He found it in spades when he teamed up with Jo Hargrave.

Though Hargrave originally supported Fipps, she later described him as “a habitual liar, a rounder and a schemer.”

The blonde Oklahoma horse woman, who had been in the radio business for twenty-six years, is one of America’s most celebrated cowboy radio personalities. During the course of her career spinning records, Hargrave has met enough country western and cowboy stars to fill the Hollywood Bowl. But even though she’s seen her share of celebrities, the rancher turned disc jockey prides herself on keeping her feet on the ground.

It came as a shock therefore to discuss her one-time friendship with Richard Fipps and realize how he misused her and her radio show. Because in the true sense of the Old West Hargrave believed that you can trust a man in a cowboy hat who gives you his word, especially when he gives it to a woman.

The professional business woman with a soft heart began by interviewing Fipps for her “Keepin’ It Cowboy” radio show during the summer of 2002.

She recalled speaking to Fipps by cell phone as he made his way towards Oklahoma. Hearing the sound of horse hoofs clip-clopping down the road over the telephone opened an ache in the disc jockey’s heart. A lifelong horse woman, Hargrave admitted that it was the alluring thought of riding the open road that really enticed her. But not being able to ride across America herself, and believing that she was about to assist a legitimate cowboy who wished to feed poverty-stricken children, Hargrave urged her

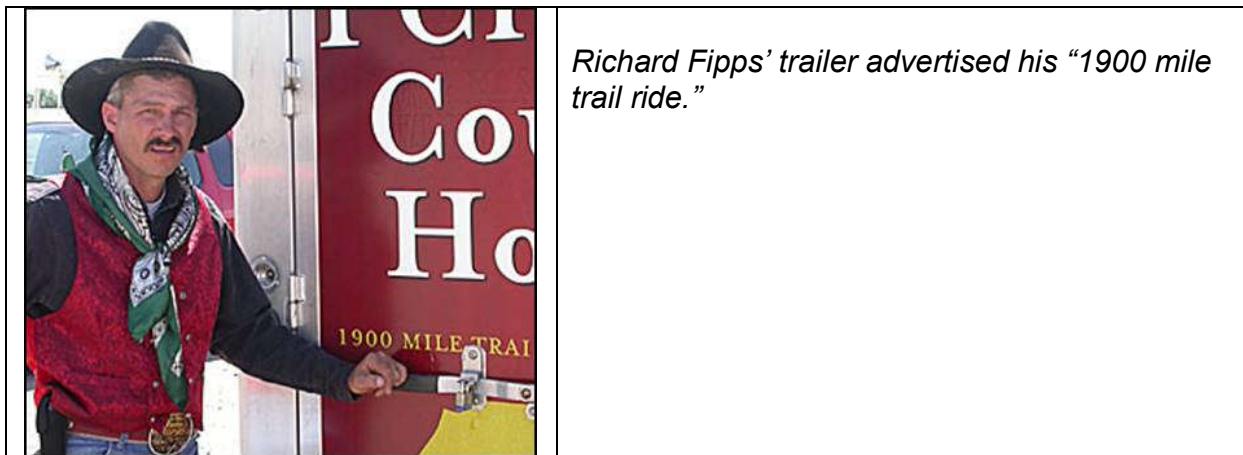
listeners to open their homes, their hearts, their pantries and their pocketbooks to a man she still believed in.

And who could blame her?

In an interview done at the same time with London's *Horse & Hound* magazine, Fipps had bragged to a British reporter about owning a vast ranch in Alabama. He capped off that interview by telling his English readers, "I'll be sleeping under the stars for the whole trip."

It was a comforting cowboy folktale, one which neither the British reporter nor Hargrave thought to question. How were they to know that no such ranch has ever been found, and at the time of the ride, Fipps was the owner of the "Southern Star Tow Truck Company," located in Centre, Alabama, a tow truck company that had been linked to the crime of grand theft auto.

If the English reporter had no reason to suspect the counterfeit cowboy, Hargrave did the day Fipps showed up at her Oklahoma studio. He was hauling his horses and sleeping in an air-conditioned trailer.



Despite her original misgivings it was the withdrawal of the logistical assistance previously provided by the Gospel Mission charity that smooth-talking Fipps used to pull on Hargrave's heart strings.

"I felt so sorry for him when the Gospel Mission pulled their support," Hargrave recalled.

Thus a well-meaning on-air chat ended with Hargrave becoming increasingly involved in a fraudulent horse ride. The radio interviewer eventually ended up hosting Fipps' website, fielding telephone calls, arranging accommodations for his onward journey and ultimately paying a string of bills he left behind.

"He promised to reimburse me but never did."

What hurt worse than the loss of any money was the realization that she and her listeners had been emotionally manipulated by Fipps.

“I know he donated can goods to some food banks along the way. But I was embarrassed by some of his actions. I mean when I met him he said things like, ‘that sounds like a good angle.’ I was so shocked. It didn’t sound like the same person I had been talking to on the phone. Suddenly I was beginning to feel embarrassed that this man was calling himself a cowboy,” Hargrave told the Guild.

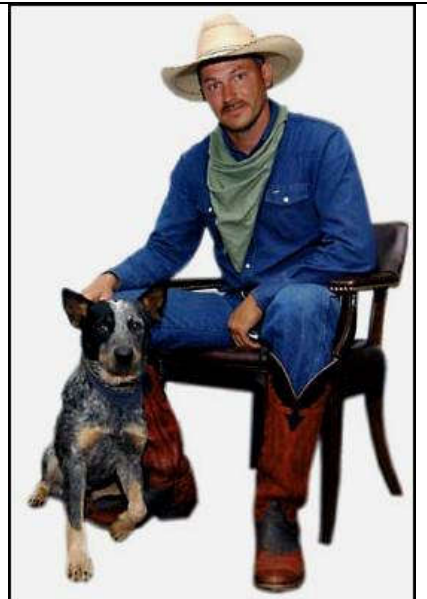
The subject of our story didn’t seem to share Hargrave’s concern.

“Someday,” Fipps had told a reporter, “I’ll be able to tell my grandkids that I rode across the country and I did it for a reason.”

Jo Hargrave wishes she had known the real reason before she agreed to help Fipps.

“I can’t deny that I’ve shed some tears over this situation. We all thought this man was the greatest thing there ever was. What none of us realized was that we weren’t helping those worthy causes. We were donating to a charity called Richard Fipps.”

Richard Fipps was photographed in Alabama soon after he claimed to be making his first ride across the United States. Though he claimed to own a large plantation in that state, it was later revealed that this claim was another falsehood. What was discovered was that his criminal record stretched across the nation.



A Misplaced Warning

Jo Hargrave may have been trusting but she was no fool.

After Fipps left Oklahoma she followed his ride with increasing mistrust. At one point, strongly suspecting that Fipps was not actually riding, she sent a request to a California-based Long Rider, asking him to alert the Guild of her suspicions. That request was never passed on.

Thus, because Fipps had stayed well off our radar, his fraudulent activities eluded us. In late 2002, when word reached the Guild that Fipps had reached Utah, and therefore had ridden more than a thousand miles, he was listed as a Member.

What we didn't know was that if Fipps' first journey had underlying troubles, his second ride was about to strangle truth in its cot.

New Ride - New Victims

It would be a mistake not to realize how clever Fipps was. As events soon revealed, Fipps had learned valuable tricks during his first fraudulent journey. Like other equestrian travel outlaws before him, Fipps had quickly realized that the strong emotional appeal created by a beautiful horse could win over normally suspicious strangers.

To strengthen his deception Fipps donned the mythical symbolism of cowboy clothes and hid his true nature under the cloak of charity.

Now calling himself Pepper Fipps, the counterfeit cowboy visited children's hospital in Nevada for photo opportunities.



Additionally Fipps enlisted cutting-edge technology into his effort. To strengthen his chances of success Fipps had conned an internet expert into creating an attractive website entitled *Cowboys Helping Kids*. This website was of vital importance because it provided Fipps with what appeared to be a symbol of credibility. It also helped Fipps move into a bigger league of deception. Believing they were dealing with a "Christian Cowboy," merchants in several states donated t-shirts, signs, clothing, an RV, truck accessories, a combination horse trailer and equestrian equipment to the cowboy crook.

Having taken these steps Fipps laid plans to betray the American public and the press in the most flamboyant equestrian travel deception ever seen.

Manipulating the Media

Fipps had come away from his first journey armed with an important realization. Nothing impresses the average person into believing you're a genuine Long Rider like a battered

newspaper article which says you are. Thus an equestrian travel criminal stands a better chance of fooling the public if he has first deceived the media.

But to obtain a news story which carries with it the air of authenticity you've got to fool a normally sceptical journalist. It's a funny thing about reporters. Tell them your grand-daddy played baseball with Babe Ruth, and they'll demand to see photographs, old uniforms, a battered bat, and maybe even dental records. But lower your eyes modestly, hold your tatty cowboy hat in your hands, scuff your beat-up boots back and forth slowly through the dust, then tell the reporter in a humble voice that you're a cowboy riding for Christ, out to help suffering women and starving kids, and you'll hook 'em every time.

Richard Fipps (centre) appears on the Fox News network in Nevada.



If you don't believe me, ask Helen Afrasiabi. She's the Las Vegas Sun reporter whom Fipps fooled in December of 2004.

Mind you, Helen wasn't the first reporter to fall for Fipps' fairytales. He had already conned the Vernal Express in Utah and the Cullman Times in Alabama into believing he hung the moon. All three papers were victims of an elaborate fraud, one which Fipps carefully constructed to entwine eager reporters into writing a feel-good feature story that would eventually aid his cause.

Yet, while the earlier stories were written after the fact, one of the reasons Fipps' second ride nearly succeeded was because of Helen's well-meaning, albeit naïve, reporting. Fipps fits the profile of a classic equestrian liar, in that he invented a long list of fantastic equestrian stories, none of which the reporter thought to verify. Afrasiabi, for example, believed Fipps when he said his ride from Alabama to Utah set a world record that was recognized by the Horsemen's Association of the United States. That claim was as phony as the \$1 million he said he raised for charity.

The man, who claimed to be an Old West hero, out to raise money for needy children and battered women, played the Sun reporter for a fool.

As the summer of 2005 began Richard Fipps set about perpetrating a cold-blooded financial deception on a trusting American public.

Having learned how to successfully hide in the shadows and to masquerade as a Long Rider, Fipps supposedly set to ride from Mexicali, Mexico to Alberta, Canada. This time he claimed to be raising money for battered women's shelters. His true objective was to prey on the goodwill, the charity, the trust, the generosity, the religious conviction, and the love of others.

Alarming discoveries

It was an unsigned email entitled ***Fraud Cowboy*** that tipped us off.

The message came rattling in at dawn on July 16th, 2005 and it didn't pull any punches.

"Follow the link to Nevada Public Radio to hear Richard Fipps' admission of guilt at www.knpr.org. Then contact Las Vegas channel 13 for more information. They have also done an expose on Fipps. The television channel has a wealth of important information on his last charity ride. He states he raised over 1 million dollars during his ride, yet records show less than five hundred dollars were received by the mission. As Fipps is a convicted felon, it should come as no real surprise that this has occurred."

That's the kind of message that grabs our attention here at Long Riders HQ. We put aside our morning coffee and called Ky Plaskon, the National Public Radio reporter, who had just stumbled into the biggest horse-heist in modern history.

Ky Plaskon is a radio man who doesn't know the difference between a bay and a bosal. But he's a good reporter with a nose for news. So when he got a tip that a Las Vegas-based equestrian traveller was involved in a charity ride scam, Ky did what any news hound would do. He went hunting.

What Ky quickly discovered was a guy called Richard Fipps, who claimed to be a cowboy celebrity. According to his spiffy new website, Fipps, who said he had made a record ride from Alabama to Utah, was now riding from Mexico to Canada to raise a mountain of cash for orphans and battered women.

It all sounded good, maybe too good.

Especially when Ky discovered that the charity cowboy might not actually be riding the range. According to a neighbor Fipps was soaking up the rays in a Las Vegas back yard.

"I realized that I had been seeing this guy here (in Las Vegas) and yet his website says he is in Bozeman, Montana in the middle of this big charity ride. It just didn't add up," the neighbor, Shane Landry, told the NPR reporter.

Realizing the public was being conned, Landry complained to National Public Radio that the cowboy who claimed to be sleeping under the stars was actually camped out in an air conditioned house on the north-west side of Las Vegas.

Ky's hunch was about to be confirmed.

The radio reporter discovered that Fipps was not riding across Montana as his on-line diary stated but was indeed residing with his girlfriend in Las Vegas. It didn't take long for the radio reporter to grab a video camera, drive across town, and ring Fipps from inside Landry's home across the street. With the camera rolling, the NPR reporter rang Fipps. By a stroke of luck Fipps was standing in the front yard of his girl friend's home when his cell phone rang.

"Where are you now?" the reporter asked.

"Oh, sitting about 200 yards away from my camp here in Montana," Fipps replied.

"Can you describe what you see to me?"

"Oh, rolling hills, the Rockies and a lot of blue sky."

When Ky rang off, he checked Fipps website. Sure enough, the charity cowboy claimed to be in Montana that very day. "I know there are people who claim to be a cowboy because of the hat they wear but that's disgusting," the irate radio reporter told The Guild.

Chasing the Truth

And there was more bad news for Fipps. The TV reporters were on his trail too. Las Vegas based Channel 13 had assigned the story to their chief investigative reporter, Glen Meek.

"The ride was supposed to raise awareness and money but ended up raising a lot of questions," Meek told his audience in the first of two special television broadcasts.

Meek discovered that Fipps claimed to have raised more than a million dollars during his last ride, yet records showed less than five hundred dollars had been received by any charity. The television reporter also discovered that Fipps was a convicted felon.

Richard Fipps mug shot.



According to court documents, Fipps had been arrested in Florida for burglary. During the course of the trial, Fipps carried a Bible with him. On cross-examination, the prosecutor asked the defendant whether he had carried the Bible with him when he committed the offence. The judge wrote, "The evidence of the defendant's guilt was overwhelming." Fipps, the so-called "Christian Cowboy," was sentenced to several years in Florida state prison. It was after his release that Fipps made the first so-called journey to Utah.

The Las Vegas reporter also revealed that Fipps, the man who claimed to be riding from Mexico to Canada to raise money for battered women's shelters, had been recently been arrested for domestic violence against a local woman.

So what was it? Was Fipps in a Nevada court or in the saddle riding from Mexico to Canada?

That's when The Long Riders' Guild started asking questions of our own.

A Trail of Crime

As the world's first international association of equestrian explorers the Guild takes such reports very seriously. The Long Riders' Guild has Members in 48 countries, all of whom have ridden a minimum of 1,000 miles in a single equestrian journey. Moreover, our primary website contains more than 2,000 pages of equestrian travel information and we publish more than 100 equestrian travel books in five languages.

Consequently, when a person claiming to be a "Long Rider" defrauds the public, as well as a long list of trusting merchants and charitable organizations, the Guild does everything in our power to alert the international equestrian community, as well as immediately ejecting the culprit from our midst.

Because Fipps had been listed as a Member after he supposedly made his 1,900 mile ride from Centre, Alabama to Vernal, Utah, we started asking questions about both that ride, as well as the second ride he had supposedly just completed from Mexico to Canada.

What we immediately discovered was that the idea for the border to border ride was apparently lifted from well-known cowboy poet, TJ Casey. According to Casey, Fipps attended a meeting in Midland, Texas where the poet revealed plans to organize a cattle drive between Canada and Mexico. When he went to raise support, the mounted poet was surprised to learn that Fipps had appropriated his idea, turning it instead into a Christian-charity-cowboy ride.

“It’s the most underhanded thing anyone ever did to me. I can’t believe he (Fipps) can do what he does to people and then turn around and do it some more,” Casey told the Guild.

The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, Jo Hargrave the radio host and TJ Casey the cowboy poet weren’t the only victims.

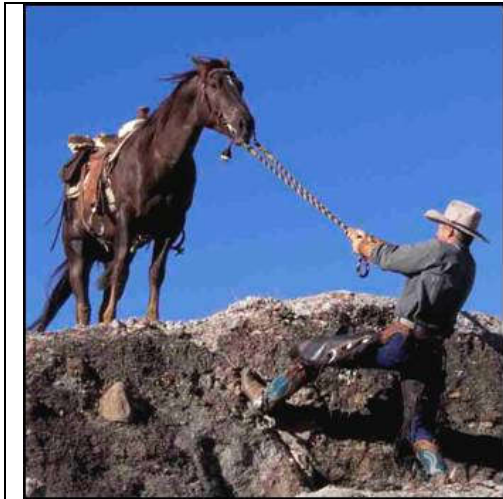
A Mouse brings down the House

The internet is like the rain. It lends fragrance to the rose but also strengthens the poison of the deadly nightshade.

Patrick McCarrick at the Las Vegas based Absolute Internet Marketing knew all about that power. In an effort to help the needy in his adopted hometown, the soft-spoken Irishman donated the services of his company to a different charity every year.

Thus, it seemed like a natural fit when the charity-minded website wizard met the man who claimed he was about to raise money for hungry kids and battered women. Of course the article in the Las Vegas Sun helped convince the webmaster that Fipps was legit.

McCarrick’s company created a beautiful website entitled *Cowboys Helping Kids*. It contained a biography of our “hero,” a map showing the route Fipps planned to take from Mexicali to Alberta, a guest book, a list of sponsors, photos taken of Fipps riding outside Las Vegas and most importantly, an on-line diary.



In this posed photograph from the website, Richard Fipps can be seen supposedly trying to pull his horse off the edge of a cliff.

It also cost McCarrick more than \$5,000.

But if it was the cowboy myth that helped elevate Fipps into power, it was thanks to McCarrick's website, and the click of Fipps' suspicious neighbor's computer mouse, that laid bare the internet based deception.

According to Fipps' diary, his second ride began on April, 26th, 2005.

"Today the ride started...We crossed the border from Mexico into the USA this a.m. There is nothing but beautiful scenery down here..." Fipps reported to his webmaster.

But nothing in the supposedly 72-day-long journey was true. Fipps was able to maintain his fraud by duping the webmaster into posting phony travel reports on the website. These reports were telephoned in every morning.

"We would come in at 8 a.m. and find messages that had been called in at five thirty that morning" McCarrick told the Long Riders' Guild.

The on-line diary thus purported to document Fipps' 2,140 mile journey. When his neighbors and the local media became suspicious, Fipps sent in a week's worth of updates in a single day. After Ky Plaskon, the radio reporter discovered him in Las Vegas, Fipps suddenly informed his webmaster that the Canadian authorities had said his horses would not be allowed to enter that country.

With the heat on, Fipps was trying to end the imaginary ride. All the while the webmaster was becoming suspicious.

Though he couldn't actually prove that Fipps had ridden every step of the way, McCarrick turned his internet sleuthing abilities to the material he had on hand. When he began inspecting the website he had created, the webmaster discovered that two of the Montana guest book entries actually originated at Fipps' Las Vegas address.

“Cowboy I have enjoyed meeting you. You are a blessing. Anytime you are in Montana you are welcome around my fire. Keep going and God be with you,” Carl Richardson supposedly wrote on July 8.

Likewise a second message, reportedly from Mike Jones on June 27th, stated, “I seen you this morning with all the horses while on my way to work. You’re a true cowboy.”

“I was genuinely shocked when I learned we had been duped.” McCarrick told the Guild.

But the damage was done.

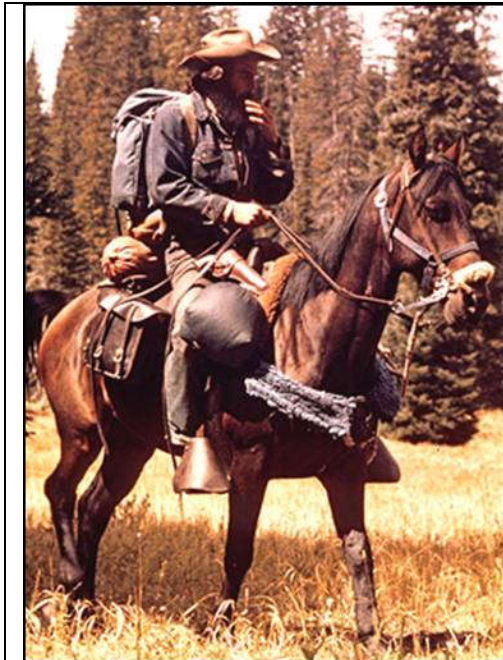
That’s when the Long Riders’ Guild called Allen Russell.

You don’t mess with the real deal

Let me tell you about my friend, Allen Russell. He lives in Montana, where he raises and trains horses. He’s a nature photographer, a quiet man who doesn’t say much. But when Allen talks, you better listen.

That’s what some thugs discovered when they tried to kill him and his horse, Kono. In 1975 the Montana based Long Rider was making his long, lonely way from Canada to Mexico, when a carload of drunks roared by. The beer bottle they threw nearly took Kono’s eye out. Then the car spun around, and took deliberate aim at the bleeding horse and his Long Rider.

With no escape route, Russell stepped down from the saddle, pulled his .44 magnum pistol out from its holster and calmly unloaded six shots into the middle of the radiator of the on-coming automobile. It ground to a steaming halt at the same time as the father of the drunken teenagers inside came flying up from the opposite direction. Father and Long Rider sorted out what should be done. Then Russell completed his solo border to border ride, journeying along the same basic route Richard Fipps had been telling the world he had just completed.



Long Rider Allen Russell who confirmed Fipps' equestrian deception.

The Long Riders' Guild asked Allen to inspect the on-line diary of Richard Fipps. What the real equestrian explorer discovered was a patchwork of deceit and distortions.

The ride was supposed to take the charity raising cowboy on a 2,140 mile journey, with the route beginning in Mexico and finishing in Canada. Fipps website reported that he would be "heading up through the California / Arizona border along the Colorado River, the trail heads up through the eastern portion of Nevada, and on through Idaho and Montana before finishing in Calgary."

But saying you're going to ride this long, dry route, and actually doing it, are vastly different things.

"It's tough country," Russell recalled in a telephone conversation with the Guild, "with fences and gates all along the way. Yet I noticed right off that Fipps refers to riding the open range. Believe me, the open range disappeared fifty years ago."

Another thing that struck the genuine Long Rider as being odd were the lack of media reports regarding Fipps progress across this news-hungry portion of the United States.

"When I made my ride, I was doing it for private reasons. So I tried to avoid any publicity. But I couldn't surface for more than twenty minutes in a small town before some local reporter would be looking for a story. Even though I never asked to be interviewed, there were at least twenty articles written about me during the course of my trip."

With a wealth of such small, but crucial facts, it didn't take long for Allen Russell to conclude that the on-line diary was an equestrian fraud.

"The whole diary is comical. It's full of mistakes and lies," he said, "and what I found unusual was how little he talked about his horses. All Long Riders develop a deep relationship with their horses and are greatly concerned with everything about them, both because they are their means of transportation and their friends."

Lacking any reality, Russell believed Fipps created an internet-driven Old West fantasy designed to hoodwink his urban donors and readers. Tales of soaring bald eagles, glorious sunsets in the Rocky Mountains, galloping herds of mustangs, and cowboys roasting marshmallows around the campfire make for pleasant reading, but have little to do with the harsh realities of equestrian reality, Russell said.

"My favorite story was how Fipps cooked up jack rabbit dumplings in his Dutch oven after a long day in the saddle. Jack rabbit? Give me a break! Listen, when I made my ride I was so tired that I lived on oatmeal and rice 90% of the time. The bottom line is that Fipps doesn't speak the language of a real Long Rider," Russell said emphatically.

Armed with his conclusions, Long Rider Allen Russell telephoned Richard Fipps at his home in Las Vegas. When the equestrian explorer informed Fipps of the fact that he had actually made the ride from Canada to Mexico, and that he was calling on behalf of the Long Riders' Guild, Fipps refused to discuss the journey, put Allen on hold for ten minutes, and thereafter refused to answer his phone.

Stationary Horses

If The Guild had any doubts left, they were dispelled the next day by Shirley Shown at the Big Horn Ranch outside of Las Vegas. Earlier that year the elderly rancher had hired Fipps to train two young horses.

Curiously, though Fipps claimed to have ridden from Mexico to Montana, his website was innocent of photographs taken along the way. The photo does not show the counterfeit Long Rider riding north from Mexico. The photo was taken at Shirley Shown's Bighorn Ranch near Fipps' home in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the same time when the journey was supposedly well underway.



"I remember, he showed up with a great big truck and a sassy horse trailer that said *2002 Cowboy of the Year*," she told the Guild. "Right away, all my boarders warned me that this guy was a phony. But I'm an older lady so I gave him the benefit of the doubt."

Yet Shown didn't have any qualms about saying Fipps lied to the public about his latest ride. Soon after meeting him, Shown agreed to let Fipps board his horses on her ranch. Having heard about his planned ride to Canada, the trusting rancher asked her new boarder how his plans were progressing.

"He told me the ride had fallen apart," she recalled.

Shown was stunned, therefore, to see Glen Meek's report, on Channel 13, wherein Fipps claimed to have traversed a large portion of North America.

"According to his diary, Richard claimed he was on the road on April 28th. But I can tell you his horses were right here at my ranch."

In fact Shown confirmed that Fipps' horses had only left her property on rare occasions, never for more than three days in a row, and that they were trailered when Fipps took them away.

She recalled, "You never heard such a sweet talker. He ended up taking me for more than \$900. I just can't imagine that a person could do this sort of thing time and time again."

It was the old, old story of man's faithlessness to his fellow-creatures and betrayal of his trust. Only now a former journalistic ally and the Long Riders' Guild were closing in on Fipps.

The Sun Rises

As Fipps was soon to discover, God help you if the journalists and their editors realize they've been deceived.

City Editor Matt Huffman didn't like to be fooled. So he wasn't pleased when I called him to say that his reporter, Helen Afrasiabi, had been sold a bill of phony goods by a counterfeit cowboy called Richard Fipps. Afrasiabi was no longer working for the Las Vegas Sun newspaper, he told me. I didn't ask why.

The straight-talking editor immediately assigned the story to a new reporter named Jennifer Lawson. I don't know what Huffman told her but I bet it included the words "No prisoners." Lawson dug in and got Fipps on the phone. He spent his time complaining that television reporter Glen Meeks had spread lies about him.

"I offered to let him set the record straight," Lawson told the Guild. He declined to talk and told her not to call again. Prepared with more discoveries, and Fipps' refusal to talk,

the Sun ran a follow-up story, only this time the headline was a little more realistic than the first one had been.

“*Cowboy Charity ride called Hoax*,” the Sun reported. Yes, word was getting around.

“It was important for us (the Las Vegas Sun) to correct the record and to expose this guy as a fraud.” Lawson summarized.

Alerting the Authorities

Of course all this activity hadn’t escaped the attention of various law enforcement organizations.

Because Fipps had supposedly been linked to two previous counts of horse theft, stock detectives in several states began investigating his movements.

Sgt. Chris Jones, of the Las Vegas police department, confirmed that their fraud department had initially investigated Fipps. But because of the wide geographic area involved, the case had been referred on to the Nevada Attorney General’s office for further investigation.

Citing their need not to discuss their cases, neither the Attorney General, nor the FBI, who were also alerted, would confirm to the press that Fipps was under investigation. And while it seemed to be good news that earthly authorities were looking into the actions of Fipps, there was a higher power still to be discussed.

Cowboys for Christ

There is another aspect to this case. Fipps profaned God. By that I mean that in an act of premeditated treachery he misused the spiritual power of Christianity in order to deceive innocent victims.

As this article demonstrates this architect of deceit had systematically wounded and victimized a series of well meaning people. One of the ways he did this was by his heavy handed misuse of the Christian community.

He told one reporter that his covenant with God provided constant guidance. His website boasted that “Evidence of Fipps’ devotion is proudly displayed on his rodeo jacket, which bears the phrase, “This cowboy is sponsored by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost,” where others’ are commonly adorned with sponsors’ logos.”

“It’s the American cowboy way,” Fipps said.

Listed as one of the “Sponsors” of the Mexico to Canada ride was the *Cowboys for Christ* organization.

Yet Ted Pressley, the Founder of the biblical outfit, told the Long Riders' Guild that Fipps was not associated with them, nor had they authorized him to list them as sponsors on his website.

Richard Fipps appearing to pray.



Another well-known charity that felt Fipps' sting was the *Happy Trails Children's Foundation*.

Legendary western entertainers Roy Rogers and Dale Evans spent a lifetime devoted to children and their support of children at risk is well documented. *The Happy Trails Children's Foundation* carries on the work with abused children that were so important to Roy and Dale. The foundation built the Cooper Home in Apple Valley, California to provide a safe haven for children at risk, who have been severely abused and/or neglected.

Prominently listed on the Sponsors page of the fraudulent *Cowboys Helping Kids* website was the charity started by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.

In a telephone conversation with the Guild, Joel Dortch, the Executive Director of the charity, expressed disbelief when he discovered that Happy Trails was listed as a Sponsor.

"We don't know him (Fipps) and we certainly never gave him a penny. He's obviously trying to associate his actions to our good name."

In a follow-up email directed to the Long Riders' Guild, Dortch shared his views of the situation.

"It is very interesting to me that we are shown as a 'Sponsor?' This appears to be a direct indication that he is using our good name to further his fraudulent agenda. Because of our close association with the legendary western entertainers Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, we must constantly be on guard against misuse of our name and reputation. Lesson learned!"

It was an example in religious deception that stretched across America.

When informed of Fipps' misuse of Christianity, famous Scottish missionary, turned Long Rider, George Patterson shared his opinion of the man.

"In my youth I had a friend who warned me, 'Watch out for the man who prays on his knees on Sunday, and preys on his neighbors the rest of the week.'"

The Long Riders' Guild had never encountered a more deliberate modern attempt to deceive the public and mislead the press on such a national scale. The collective harm caused by Fipps left a string of emotional and financial victims along a trail of equestrian treachery which stretched from Florida to Montana.

Because of his actions Fipps was the first living fraud listed in the Guild's Hall of Shame, guaranteeing that future generations of Long Riders will recall the lasting legacy of this equestrian knave.

Chapter 7 – Nightmare at the North Pole

This report has so far provided evidence connected to the United States but as the next chapters shall demonstrate, malicious sadism is no respecter of geographic borders.

Many people could ride around the world but never find the wisdom needed to become a Long Rider. Lacking a moral compass, some could be staring disaster in the face and choose to ignore a horse's suffering. One notorious example of placing ego before ethics occurred in the summer of 1990 when three Frenchmen made the ill-fated decision to take horses into Canada's barren Arctic Circle.

Pierre Vernay, Frederic Vernay and Jean-Yves Lapaix

Having read about Captain Robert Scott's use of horses in Antarctica, Pierre Vernay, his brother, Frederic, and Jean-Yves Lapaix decided to stage their own equestrian expedition across an icy environment. Because international law now forbids the importation of any animals onto Antarctica, the Europeans decided they would attempt to use horses to travel across part of Canada's desolate Arctic Circle. The problem was that even though the men had previous cold weather travel experience, they knew nothing about equines. That didn't stop them from basing their efforts on a primary lie.

After having arrived in Canada with their equipment, they informed the sceptical authorities, "We are horse specialists." All the while they privately admitted, "We will never be able to take care of the horses ourselves."

To offset their ignorance, they tried to enlist local help. Dubious Canadian horsemen refused to become involved. Unperturbed, the Frenchmen bought two horses under false pretences from unsuspecting people in Montreal. The recruits were unsuitable. Valentine was a three-year-old gelding. Prunelle was a six-year-old brood mare who hadn't been worked in four years. With their equine victims recruited, the Frenchmen headed to the airport.

The original plan was to try and reach the magnetic North Pole. But the pilot took one look at the horses and refused to risk his aircraft by flying the team so far north. A last-minute compromise was reached when the airman reluctantly agreed to take men and horses to Cornwallis Island. Though it had been aptly described as "killingly sad," what mattered to the Frenchmen was that their destination lay within the Arctic Circle. They shoved the horse aboard the plane and ignored the warnings of previous travellers, one of whom had written, "Cornwallis Island is one of the most desolate places anywhere on the planet."

After the plane departed, they began efforts to circumnavigate the island. It didn't take long for trouble to find them. To begin with, the horses became completely disorientated by the permanent daylight and the polar environment. But there was no time to delay. The animals were quickly hitched to heavy sleds and urged to begin pulling. Problems arose because neither animal had been trained to perform this task. They became

tangled in the harness and suffered wounds when their legs slammed into the sleds. The answer was to drive them on anyway.



Prunelle harnessed to the enormous sled.

Being uninformed about the horse's basic nutritional requirements, the French team had grossly underestimated how much food each horse would require. The Frenchmen hadn't brought a wisp of hay nor was there a blade of grass. They planned to rely on an inadequate daily grain ration. It didn't take long before the horses became so hungry they "reduced their lead ropes to crumbs." No problem. The Frenchmen replaced the ropes with chains.

As the hungry horses were driven across the ice and snow week after week, the effect of their starvation became visible. "Valentine's ribs can be seen and he eats his droppings as soon as they emerge," one Frenchman wrote. The mare was even worse. Her ribs were showing, her hair was falling out and she had lost all her strength.

"Prunelle is drained of energy and stops in her tracks. She will not respond to solicitations by voice or even lashes of the whip. Every time she lies down, she gives a deep sigh and we fear the worst."

What occurred next can be compared to an equine version of the "Bataan Death March," when starving British soldiers were walked to death by their Japanese captors.

"The grain reserve is running out and in two days they will have nothing to eat. I decide to ration them by diminishing their ration a further 30%," the expedition leader wrote. When the sun rose, the starving and exhausted horses were stretched out full length on the cold ground. "There are no droppings on the ground, which shows the horses had eaten them during the night. We have more and more the impression that we are putting their lives at risk."

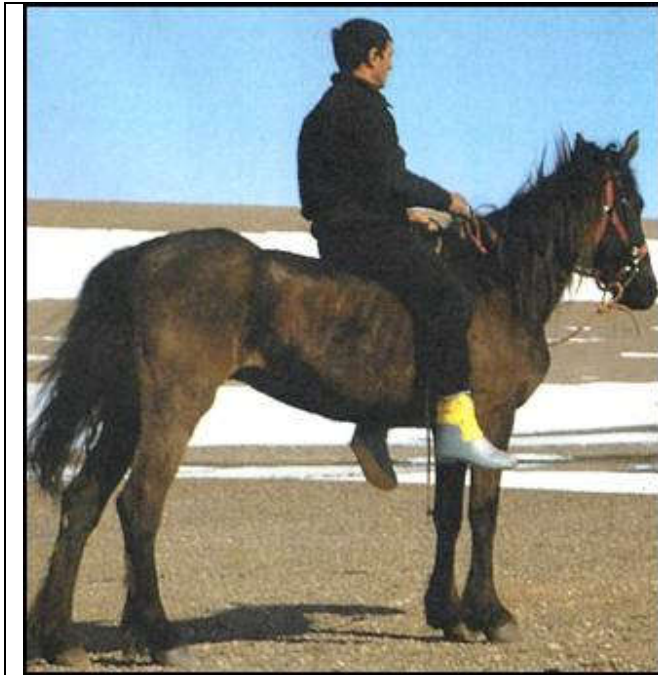
No matter. The determined Frenchmen marched on; until the mare collapsed. With her sides sunken in and her head thrown back, Prunelle reminded the French leader of a dead donkey carcass he had seen in Djibouti. They unloaded her and administered a dubious home-made remedy containing belladonna, a plant so toxic that even eating one leaf can be fatal. "The effect was catastrophic," he noted. Yet the mare miraculously survived. In her weakened condition, she was allowed to tag along without any burdens.

No matter. The determined Frenchmen marched on; until the mare collapsed. This meant that Valentine was loaded with 80 kilos (176 pounds) of gear on his back. It didn't take long before the gelding lay trapped in the ice.

Starving Valentine was too weak to stand up in the Arctic ice.



Eventually, after travelling for eighty days, the group reached the island's only hamlet.



Upon reaching the village of Resolute, the leader mounted one of the starving horses and enjoyed “the ultimate pleasure” by riding into town. Canadians quickly expressed their disgust but the French traveller scoffed at his critics.

Before the plane arrived to fly them back to Montreal, word of the horses' condition had spread south. Officials of the SPCA were waiting to lodge a complaint when the horses landed but no legal charges were filed. The French travellers didn't waste any time unloading the emaciated horses on new owners. They quickly departed for home but not before deriding their accusers as “sinister.” After returning to France, the leader penned a vainglorious book.

Within those shameful pages Vernay thought to leave the truth about the journey buried under the Arctic ice. He didn't realize the public would know the horses had paid the price for his team's colossal ignorance and collective arrogance. Being fools, these men never realized that despite their claims to bravery their trip was an atrocity in motion.

Thirsting for glory, these unprincipled rogues had travelled with horses for eighty days and never found an iota of integrity.

Chapter 8 – Maggots and Madness

Sometimes your eyes read the words but your rational brain refuses to believe that the statement before you can be correct because to acknowledge its accuracy is to admit that evil exists in this world.

The distance from Mongolia to Peru is 15,827 kilometers (9,834 miles). Yet episodes of Biblical cruelty occurred on opposite sides of the planet. The breed of horse may have differed but their human tormentors had one thing in common – an addiction to adoration.

Neale Irons

In order to accomplish his goal of riding across Mongolia from east to west in no more than 90 days, Neale Irons made a catastrophic journey in the summer of 2010.

Irons originally set off with two inexperienced American tourists who had received “five minutes training” in the saddle. On the first day of their journey, Irons became separated from his companions, which resulted in him being lost on the steppes for three days. Soon afterwards, he determined to proceed alone, using two native horses to carry his saddle and gear.

Because he hoped to travel 2500 kilometres in record time, the 176 pound rider rode the small Mongolian horses extremely hard. Upon arriving outside the capital of Ulan Bator, an eyewitness stated that the two horses were so thirsty they could not eat. Upon observing the condition of the thirsty animals, this Mongolian immediately drove twenty-five kilometres to get water from a well and bring it back to the distressed animals.

In addition to being dehydrated, both horses were extremely thin and one of them was suffering from saddle sores which have been described as unbelievable. A witness described Iron’s saddle blanket as “a putrid piece of carpet.” Another eyewitness said the horse’s injuries were, “the size of dinner plates and going to the bone.” In addition to these open wounds, the injured horse was also being eaten alive by insects. According to an official statement, “I could see the bones and there were hundreds of worms (insects).”

Despite its injuries, local Mongolian horsemen were prepared to purchase the injured animal and nurse it back to health. Fearing that he would lose money, Irons decided instead to sell the injured horse to a local salami factory.

“I sold one horse for meat in Ulan Bator,” Irons wrote to the Guild on January 8, 2011.

The second horse was traded for a new riding mount. Mongolians report that when Irons left the capital he burdened the single riding horse with all of the equipment previously carried by two animals.



He then continued his rapid journey towards the still distant border. Upon arriving at his next destination, three days later that horse was also exhausted and suffering from wounds caused by the hobbles. "He had made a big rush to get there. The horse had injuries on three of its legs caused by the hobbles. Horse and rider were both exhausted," a Mongolian reported.

Once again Irons set off, however this time his journey was eventually concluded by the country's inhospitable landscape. "Trek ended 8km from most westerly point on Mongolian border when shrubs became too thick to get through," Irons wrote to the Guild.

Irons' horse was stopped by impassable brush before the border.



Under Great Britain's Riding Establishment Act, it is an offence for any person to use a horse in the course of riding to cause the animal to suffer from a defect of such a nature

as to be apparent on inspection. While the Long Riders' Guild does not have the ability to enforce legislation, we will not tolerate the presence of a person who incorporates a horse into a deceptive, unethical or criminal act. Nor will the Guild condone or sponsor any expedition that subjects its mounts to needless suffering.

The Guild can however warn the public of the unacceptable behaviour of people who abuse, injure or kill their horses, because of intentional neglect or cruelty, during an equestrian journey. In such cases the name of the person is placed in the Guild's Hall of Shame. Consequently, the name of Neale Irons has been listed there.

Additionally, Long Riders reported this case to the Mongolian authorities.

Ironically, at the same time Irons was making his ride, three young men were attempting to make a difficult ride along the length of the Rocky Mountains.

American Long Rider Parker Flannery rode from Mexico to Canada.



“We are not doing this for fame or glory, but only to run against the grain of modern society, to reach back and hold on to values and traditions that have bonded all horse-people since the beginning of time. I only hope that we will prove ourselves worthy of the title ‘Long Rider,’” wrote Parker Flannery.

These are concepts which eluded Irons.

Instead he turned the journey into a publicized stunt wherein ego and public acclaim become more important than the horse-human relationship.

One cannot reduce equestrian travel to that of a product. It is never a jar of jam or a dossier of dust-covered facts ready to be presented for scientific inspection. At the heart of the matter is the mutual journey carried out by two sympathetic beings, a Long Rider and a Road Horse. That is why it is never the ultimate mileage that matters. The miles

never blind us. What is at stake in every journey is the fact that there can be no honour in making the journey unless it has been achieved with justice. One must end the journey with an upright heart and a happy horse.

If we could call an International Tribunal of Equestrian Conscience, Irons would no doubt be charged. As it stands, regardless of the miles he rode, Irons is disqualified from applying for Membership in the Long Riders' Guild as he requested.

One of The Guild's primary purposes is to ensure that the travelling horse is never deliberately abused, for as any Long Rider knows, to break the trust of a horse is to invoke a curse. That is why it is said that the souls of horses will rise in judgment against unmerciful riders. Perhaps that is what will happen to the man who inflicted such treatment on his horses?

However, Irons' wicked deeds pale in comparison to four villains from England.

Stephen Julius, David Limb, John Fanshawe and Annabelle Wilkinson

Though they claimed to be "valiant English Conquistadors," four English Oxford University students hold the record for destroying more horses during a journey than anyone in history. During a 49 day ride across Peru this quartet killed, wounded or severely rode 81 horses and 19 mules.

This is the story of how one of the world's most prestigious universities has the distinction of being linked to the most destructive equestrian journey in modern times.

In 1980 four Oxford undergraduates named Stephen Julius (Magdalen), David Limb (Christ Church), John Fanshawe (St. Benet's Hall) and Annabelle Wilkinson (St. Bartholomew's Medical College) announced plans to ride a thousand miles across the desolate Andes Mountains of Peru.



Their intention was to retrace the path of Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro's third expedition in Peru (1531-33), 1,000 miles from Sana to Cuzco.

Lacking any equestrian travel experience they spent three days learning how to load a pack mule from the Italian Army's Alpine troops. This picturesque training method included enjoying a dinner of roast chicken and potatoes, accompanied by bottles of the local wine, in the tent of the lieutenant who was in charge of their "training." This unique episode in Long Rider history was preserved in *The Times* of London.

A lesson in mulecraft

SCENE

Edited by Richard Girling

Later this month four Oxford undergraduates set out to retrace by mule the path of Francisco Pizarro's third expedition in Peru (1531-33), 1,000 miles across the Andes from Saia to Cuzco. Here expedition leader STEPHEN JULIUS describes the team's training exercise with the Alpini, the Italian army brigade which still uses mules to traverse the high Alpine passes. For at least one member of the party, the problem was not so much the mules as the soldiers. . . .

OUR ARRIVAL caused quite a stir. David and I had gone to a barber at Turin Station where, on the command *capelli al soldato*, we had received the statutory short back and sides. However, our intention of conforming to Italian military custom was sadly compromised by the long black curls of Annabelle, who managed to attract a crowd of gaping soldiers even before she tumbled out of the jeep. In an army where women play no role at all, she was to prove a constant source of incredulous amusement.

The job of training us was eagerly accepted by a young lieutenant, who seemed to regard us as a welcome release from the usual drudgery of reluctant conscripts. The first thing we learned was that an Italian army mule is a beast of unexpectedly formidable aspect: it can weigh up to a ton, and packs a kick of literally lethal force. We therefore thought it prudent to pay particular attention to the *maresciallo*, or chief blacksmith, as he explained the correct method of shoeing.

Farricry, we knew, would be no easy matter in the Andes. Not only is there a shortage of forges in the mountains (cold shoeing would be the norm), but there is the more fundamental question of whether or not to fit shims at all. Metal has a tendency to slip on bare rock, so that the local pack animals often go unshod. On the other hand, if driven over long distances, an unshod mule will go lame. It will not be an easy decision.

Next we were taught saddling and packing. An army pack saddle itself weighs 50kg., and a complete load can be as much as 170kg. Some saddles are designed to carry complete mortar assemblies; some have hinged metal frames for shell-cases; others are adapted to the special 100-man field kitchen units. None of which seems to matter much to the mule. It

The expedition route: 1,000 miles along the Inca Golden Highway

plods forward at a steady 30km per day, irrespective of terrain or load.

What half the animals were carrying (at least, on the three-day field exercise we took part in) was food for the other half. Italian army mules are fed on a bulky dry diet of hay and barley so that, without back-up transport from trucks and helicopters, they would soon go hungry. Our Peruvian mules will be on a green diet, though finding enough grass in the dry season will again not be easy.

From feeding, the instruction turned to veterinary medicine and the correct method of applying stitches.

"Where is an intramuscular injection given, Signorina?"

"In the bottom," replied our medical officer, Annabelle.

"Oh no, pericolosissimo, Signorina. You see what happens when you stick a needle into the bottom of a mule."

Our field exercise was taken in company with 12 mules and 20 soldiers. We have been issued with uniforms, but again the effect was distorted by Annabelle, whose khaki drabs took on a shape the army tailors could never have intended. It made her even more conspicuous.

The column wound its way up the mountain in single file—lieutenant in front, then the radio operator, then the loaded mules, each one led by a handler carrying pack and rifle. At midday, after a long climb, lunch arrived by jeep direct from the barracks. Italian soldiers insist that their spaghetti should be exactly *al dente*, even in the field. Today it was followed by roast chicken and potatoes which, as guests of the lieutenant, we had to eat separately. A table (complete with white cloth) was laid inside a tent, with two mortar cases acting as flower holders. The lieutenant rejected wine from the mess cellar, but sent a driver to buy the local vintage. After the third bottle, he decided the column was ready to move off.

Along the way it became plain that the job of a young regular officer in a conscript army is not an enviable one. Many of the soldiers think *sergente militare* a waste of time, with sullen boredom the inevitable result. At one point the lieutenant was reduced to shouting at a serviceman who was lying painting by the roadside: *Madonna Santa Vergine!*

Il mio cuore, Signor tenente (my heart, lieutenant), said the soldier.

Camp was pitched, after a four-hour climb, at the village of Praostina, well above the snowline. At 10 p.m., after sharing a bottle of whisky with the soldiers in the local cafe, we set out into the black for a night march. No mules this time, so the soldiers had to struggle with their own heavy machine guns for three hours through the snowdrifts. Then came shooting practice, with the barrel ends glowing red-hot and redder as they blazed away into the darkness. For once there was no argument: the men were determined to get rid of all the ammunition to save the weight of it on the way back. And the lieutenant was content that they should just get the feel of the trigger, even if it meant shooting straight into the ground.

Red was at four o'clock, followed, almost immediately it seemed, by cries of *Bongiorno Signori*, and soldiers bearing what they were sure was the most appropriate breakfast for English visitors—tea, without milk. There was so much of the stuff that we soon followed the Italian practice of shaving in it.

Three days later, as the weary column of mules and soldiers marched the last few kilometres along the main road towards the barracks, a woman suddenly burst out from a house and began hurling abuse.

Pure le Signorine fanno il militare adesso! (Even girls are doing military service these days.)

Taken aback by the virulence of her references to Annabelle, the lieutenant tried to explain that she was neither a member of the army nor a camp follower. The lady, it need hardly be said, was not convinced.

● The four expedition members are Stephen Julius, David Lamb, Annabelle Wilkinson and John Fanshawe. They aim to make a detailed comparison between Pizarro's account and present-day conditions in the Andes, and to raise money for the Amazon Trust Health Project in Peru. Reports of their progress will appear from time to time in SCENE.

Maintenance course: Annabelle learns running repairs

To round off their equestrian travel education, the students spent another few days with the British army, who taught them the rudiments of how to navigate with a compass.

Having informed the British press that they were making the journey "for the Hell of it," the poorly prepared team flew to Peru.

Voyages & Travels - Peru
Mule ride up the Andes in tracks of conquistador

London Times 6/26/80

From Our Correspondent

Oxford
Four students set off today for Peru, where they will ride 1,000 miles up the Andes on mules. Their trek will follow the route of the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro when he destroyed the Inca civilization in 1533.

Three Oxford University students and a first year medical student from St Bartholomew's, London, decided to embark on the trip "just for the hell of it".

They fly to Miami today and from there, they will travel to Lima, where they expect to spend a few days stocking up with supplies.

"We will then take a bus to the starting point of the expedition at Sana and there we will buy eight mules, four for riding and four for equipment", Stephen Julius, aged 20, the leader said. Mr Julius is a second year classics student at Magdalen College, Oxford.

The route was taken from the original chronicles written by members of the sixteenth century expedition, and the students hope to compare the present conditions along the route with the descriptions in the early documents. "It will be absolutely fascinating", said David Limb, aged 19, from Christ Church, Oxford.

Physical stamina and endurance will be needed as the students climb the Andes.

"It is really hot during the day and really cold at night, but we are equipped with thermal

clothing to cope with the extremes in temperature", Mr Julius said.

The one girl on the expedition, Annabelle Wilkinson, a 22-year-old medical student at St Bartholomew's, is convinced, she will not be outdone by the men. "I think I may find it a bit of a struggle at first, but once we get going, I'm sure I'll be able to cope with the conditions just as well as the others", she said.

The trip has taken 10 months preparation, which included fund-raising, and training with the Special Air Services (SAS) and the Italian Army.

"We went to north Wales where we spent three days with Wing 21 SAS under the command of Colonel Keith Farnes, who gave us a training course in mountain navigation, and survival, and in medical aid", Mr Julius said.

They also spent part of their Easter holiday in Italy where the Italian Army gave them instructions on how to load mules, basic veterinary care, cold shoeing, and the techniques of route planning with mules.

During the trip, the students want to raise several thousand pounds in sponsorship to help build medical centres in the countryside they pass through.

The fourth member of the party, John Fanshawe, aged 23, studying law at St Benet's Hall, Oxford, is responsible for looking after the mules who will carry the explorers more than 1,000 miles in three months.

What no one had told the eager students is that there is more to being a Long Rider than just the geographic adventure. Neither the Italian muleteers nor the English soldiers were qualified to warn the students that equestrian travel is uncompromising. It must be considered through the disenchanting view of reality.

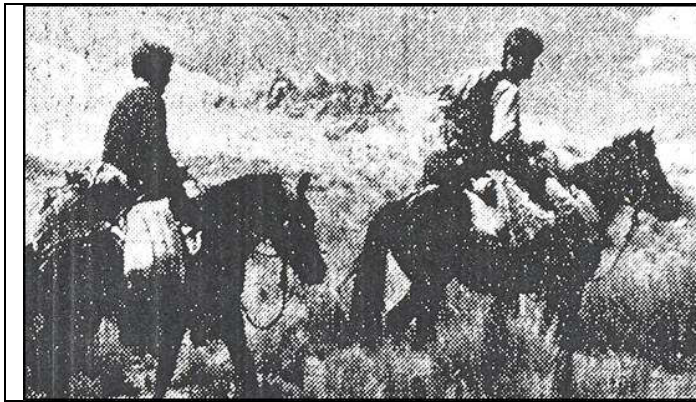
As the naïve students quickly learned, to depart without wisdom is to doom your journey to almost certain hardship and possible calamity. Or in this case the equine victims quickly began to accumulate along Oxford University's *Road of Bones*.

According to a report published in the London Sunday Times soon after the journey began, it didn't take long for the expedition's horses to become exhausted, wounded and starving.

"The continuous rubbing of the saddles and packs was bruising the horses' backs. Attempts to prevent this by tightening the girths were frustrated by the animals' habit of deliberately blowing themselves out. The only remedy was a sharp punch in the ribs."

Nor was improper equipment the only problem. The paper reported that the only food available was a limited supply of dried corn stalks. "The lack of fodder in the mountains exacerbated the horses weakening condition."

Worse was to come. One packhorse fell off the trail and tumbled down the hillside. It survived but because it refused to move on, the English travellers traded it for a sheep for their dinner.



“By the time we spurred the horses into Huaraz, the remaining horses were in a wretched condition. The bruises on their backs had burst into purulent sores,” Stephen Julius told the English press.

Lacking enough horses to continue, Julius went to Lima and made an appeal for government support. According to the British press, “Only the personal intervention of the Peruvian president, who gave them a permanent police bodyguard, enabled them to complete the 1800 kilometre journey.”

With the president on their side, it didn’t take long before the Director of the Guardia police force issued an order for every local police station along their route to provide the gringos with horses. An armed police sergeant and corporal were commanded to accompany the tourists during the remainder of the journey. Thanks to the power of this draconian police order, and the presence of the two armed policemen, the Oxford students were able to hire or seize horses as they continued across Peru.

A different reality often lurks behind the mask of respectability. With an unlimited supply of horses now at their disposal, the students increased their rate of travel.

“In order to gain time we took to night riding, which increased our speed to 85 kilometres (52 miles) a day, riding 24 hours non-stop. By this stage the expedition had turned into an Odyssey. Two hours after sunset one day my horse went into spasms for five minutes and then died of a heart attack. Less than five minutes later the sergeant’s horse followed suit. An effort was made to revive this horse by blowing billows of cigarette smoke into its nostrils, but it was hopeless.”

By the time the team reached Cuzco, death lay behind them along the length of the legendary Inca Golden Highway. Yet like Pierre Vernay, the jubilant Frenchman who rode his starving horse amidst horrified Canadians, the English traveller Stephen Julius was likewise detached from the horrific reality of what he and his companions had actually accomplished.

In a memorial example of self-deception Julius told *The Times* of London, “Our arrival in Cuzco was triumphal.”

However the London newspaper was not blind to the alarming elements connected to this unprecedented equine death march. The London newspaper stated, "The 49 day ride, which in the end depended on animals hijacked for them by local police, finished in Cuzco."

To mark their return to England, in 1981 the university published a book written by Julius entitled, *Oxford University Peruvian Expedition*. No one at the university seemed to be alarmed at the fact that the Oxford students had wounded, killed and severely ridden more horses and mules than anyone in modern history.

Our sympathy goes out to the Peruvian animals whose dignity was outraged not by explorers but by exploiters. Like Neale Irons, these students had turned the journey into a publicized stunt wherein ego and public acclaim become more important than the horse-human relationship.

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LSTimes 10/26/80
THE SUNDAY TIMES

SCENE


Edited by Richard Girling

Oxford conquers the Andes...

ONLY THE personal intervention of the Peruvian President, who gave them a permanent police bodyguard, enabled a quartet of English university students to complete a 1,800km expedition on horseback across the Andes. Following the historic Inca Highway from Cajamarca to Cuzco, the team got through 81 horses and 19 mules—not all of which, sad to say, survived the experience. The 49-day ride, which in the end depended on animals and vehicles hijacked for them by local police, finished with a tumultuous official welcome in Cuzco. Here, in the last of his occasional reports, expedition leader STEPHEN JULIUS describes the agony—and the triumph—of the "conquistadores Ingleses."

THE ASCENTS and descents were endless. After 10 days, the continuous rubbing of the saddles and packs was beginning to bruise the horses' backs. Attempts to prevent this by tightening the girths were frustrated by the animals' habit of deliberately blowing themselves out—the only remedy for which was a sharp punch in the ribs.

The lack of fodder on the Sierra, caused by the worst drought in years, only exacerbated their weakening condition, so we had to risk disposing of a further four rucksacks, leaving only two of the original eight. Worse was to come. While skirting the Rio Guagoreorral, one of the pack-horses lost its footing and tumbled down the hillside. It was uninjured but refused to continue. David attempted a little gentle persuasion. "You and I are going to fall out," he said. "You bloody horse," and ruggertackled its hind legs. But it was



Andean obstacles included extremes of temperature and alti-

no good. Our pedigree horse had to be sold—for 3,000 soles d'oro (£5), plus one sheep. The money went into John's pocket, and the sheep was carried around E's waist, where it happily urinated and defecated throughout the remaining six-hour ride into Corongo.

The zigzag cliff path that led to the town fell 5,000 feet (1,700m) in a horizontal distance of less than 1km. This tendency to meet obstacles head on is typical of Inca roads, and by the time we spurred them into Huaraz the horses were in a wretched condition. Though their diet of maize stalks was filling, it had not provided sufficient nutrition for working animals. The bruises on their backs had burst into purulent sores, and Annabelle had to pump them full of antibiotics. Obviously we needed new horses; equally obviously, none was available. Desperate measures were called for.

On Sunday, August 3, Annabelle and I hiked to Lima; and at 9.00 next morning we submitted un solicitud de audiencia—a request for an audience with the newly-elected President, Fernando Belaunde. A series of newspaper and television interviews helped press our claim for attention, and our summons to the Palacio de Gobierno was not long in coming. The historical nature of our project weighed to some extent with the President; more so the fact that three Germans had just been murdered in the very town in which our expedition was stuck. It would clearly not be good public relations to lose any more foreigners just yet, so we were granted full police protection.

In a 15-page operational plan titled *Ruta Pizarro 01*, the Director of the Guardia ordered every police station on our route to have fresh horses ready for us on our planned date of arrival. On August 15 we returned to Huaraz, and two guardias (a corporal and a sergeant), each armed with M1 rifle and Smith and Wesson revolver, were assigned to accompany us to Cuzco.



Altitude, expiring horses and hard-bargaining villagers

The sergeant was soon to prove his worth. At 5,000m, high above the snowline in the mining region of Cerro de Pasco, even mountain horses found the lack of oxygen problematic, and David's animal crumpled to the ground. Without hesitation the sergeant whipped out his knife and made two small incisions in its ear and tail. The shock of the bleeding brought the animal immediately to its feet.

Poor communications in the



In part exchange for a horse: one incontinent sheep

mountains meant that the operational orders were not always received in time by the police outposts. The result was that, after a 15-hour day in the saddle, the sergeant and I would have to go out ourselves to hire fresh animals from the peasants. A guide would accompany us on the following day's ride, then return the horses to his village while we continued with a new set. Whenever possible, we would bribe the guide to continue for a further day or two, to save delays. There were times, too, when the operational orders had been received but were simply ignored. At Tarma, for instance, the *guardia* Captain was so intently occupied in redecorating a shrine that he seemed oblivious not only to our needs, but also to those of a lengthening queue of battered women and wronged peasants.

In order to gain time, we took to night rides which pushed our speed up to 85 km a day (before Huaraz we had managed only 22), riding 24 hours non-stop. We frequently awoke to

find ourselves on the ground, having dropped out of the saddle. By this stage the expedition had turned into an Odyssey: it seemed that every possible obstacle had been placed in the way of our safe arrival at Cuzco. Two hours after sunset one day, my freshly-changed police horse collapsed, went into spasms for five minutes, then died of a heart attack. Less than 10 minutes later the sergeant's horse followed suit. Guardia Mendekneit and tried to resuscitate it by blowing billows of cigarette smoke into its nostrils, but it was hopeless. Obviously shaken, the sergeant flagged down a truck, whose driver agreed to help us—for a fee. In no mood for games, the sergeant put his hand on his revolver.

"*Muestrame tu permiso o llevanos contigo.*" (Show me your licence, or take us). The driver chose the sensible option. Next day an autopsy revealed that the horses had died from pneumonia, for which we could not be held accountable.

Our arrival in the Inca capital of Cuzco was triumphal. As we passed through each neighbouring village, the mayor would appear in his Sunday suit to offer jug after jug of a sickly alcohol called *chicha*, and relate the history of his village. A jeep-load of photographers from Lima gave us strict instructions not to enter Cuzco before 4 pm. Then, preceded by flashing police cars, we rode down Pizarro's *La ruta de la conquista*, applauded by crowds of well-wishers shouting "*Valientes conquistadores ingleses.*" At the Plaza de Armas, where we entered six abreast, we were greeted by a crowd of well over 3,000. Uniformed schoolgirls with white gloves waved British



The law takes its course

and Peruvian flags, while two bands and a troupe of dancers performed for our amusement.

General José Suarez, of the *Guardia Civil*, was there to welcome us with a bear-like embrace which reduced the sergeant to tears. The President had sent not only free air tickets back to Lima, but also a congratulatory message which was read out over the microphone in Spanish and English. We followed with speeches of thanks. Then the General's white Cadillac whisked us to the Cuzco Savoy.

● The members of the Oxford University Peruvian Expedition were: Stephen Julius (Magdalen), David Limb (Christ Church), John Funshawe (St. Benet's Hall) and Annabelle Wilkinson (St. Bartholomew's Medical College, London).

Chapter 9 – Arrested in Europe

Russia and Europe are not immune to the infection that causes some humans to destroy horses.

Valerii Popov

Claiming that he was invoking his Cossack heritage, in 2008 Valerii Popov set off on a mad race from his native Russia towards Paris. His goal was the distant Eiffel Tower. This was not a coincidence because one of the most celebrated equestrian journeys of the late 19th century had pioneered that route.

Riding a la Turcoman

There is one method of travel which produces a strong daily rate of travel. It is the Central Asian method known as Ala Turcoman. The Turcomans knew that it was the weight being carried, not the act of running, that wearied the horse. They would ride one horse from dawn till noon, off saddle, then mount and ride the second horse until the end of the day. The unburdened horse regained its vigour during the second part of the day's journey.

A few Long Riders have successfully adapted the Turcoman method. They travel with two horses, both of whom have been trained to trot quickly. The most successful traveller to use this method was the Russian Long Rider Mikhail Asseyev. He rode from Kiev, Russia to the newly-erected Eiffel Tower in Paris, France in 1889. During the journey he travelled 2,633 kilometres (1,646 miles) on his two horses, Diana and Vlaga, by using the "à la Turkmène" method.

Asseyev's method was to ride one horse in the morning and the other in the afternoon, the led horse being completely "naked" – no pack, no weight. For, as all Long Riders understand, the horse's enemy is not the kilometres but the kilograms.



When Asseyev arrived with his two mares beneath the Eiffel Tower, the Society for the Protection of Animals decorated him with a special gold medal because his horses were in excellent shape after such a long journey.

An International Outrage

Asseyev won praise but in stark contrast Valerii Popov ignited a manhunt across Russia and Europe.

On 24th March 2008 Popov set off from the Siberian city of Kurgan to make an 8000 kilometre (5000 mile) long "Cossack Ride" to Paris.



He was riding a stallion named Combat and had a mare named Natasha in tow. At first the journey inspired support from patriotic Russians. In a unique demonstration of equestrian diplomacy, Germany's Catharine-Pawlowna Association, which encourages cultural exchanges between Russia and Baden-Württemberg, offered to host the traveller when he arrived.

But what had begun as a mission of friendship had quickly aroused the suspicion that the horses were being brutally abused.

By the time Popov reached Moscow the horses were starting to break down from the appalling treatment they had received. Ekaterina Lomeiko of Russia's Equi-Help wrote to the Guild to sound an alarm.

"When the traveller reached Moscow we had a chance to look at his horses. The mare is in a very bad condition. She is exhausted, has definite pains in her back and loins, and also has a bad leg injury received while crossing a river. The other horse, a stallion named Combat, is also in bad shape."

The officials at Russia's Equi-Help urged the Guild and its equestrian allies to try to stop Popov's journey before the horses were killed.

The Long Riders' Guild had joined forces with the German based VFD (National Association of Recreational Riders) to encourage travelling with horses throughout Europe. The historic *Charter of Rights* created by the two organisations demonstrated how horse-humans from various parts of Europe had transcended the narrow definitions of "nationalism" and had joined forces to protect mankind's precious equestrian heritage. Protecting travelling horses from cruelty and abuse was a common goal of the LRG and VFD.



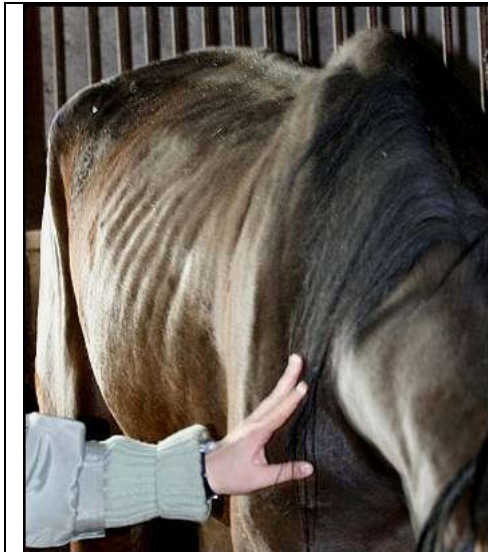
When Popov entered Poland, German Long Rider Dietmar Kostler, who was also an official in the VFD, began receiving reports that the horses were severely injured and under weight.

The Guild and Dietmar were unable to have Popov stopped in Poland for a medical inspection. However the rogue Cossack galloped straight into trouble when he entered

Germany. The horse loving Germans were horrified when Popov arrived in Leipzig. It was immediately apparent that he had ridden the Russian horses to the edge of destruction.

Cossack Cruelty Documented

Ulrich Scheuffele, Chairman of the German-Russian cultural exchange programme, was so shocked at the extent of the horse's injuries that he immediately contacted Dr. Felicia Ruhland, Director of the Illinger Animal Rescue. She drove to Leipzig to inspect the animals. Ruhland was horrified at what she discovered. A medical diagnosis revealed "deformed backs, dragging of hind legs, horrendous saddle-sores and massive weight loss."



Popov's under weight and injured mare.

"To ride these animals any further would have been complete animal torture," Ruhland reported to the German government. It was agony, the official declared, for the horses to be moved, much less ridden. She urged Popov to conclude the journey immediately. He refused.

Yet another hammer blow came from the German government vet who announced in his diagnosis that, "this ride across Europe has resulted in the abuse of the animals, and if allowed to continue, the outcome will be their death."

When it was learned that Popov had inflicted so much damage on his horses the original Russian sponsors of the journey revoked all ties to the mounted outlaw and the German-Russian Friendship Association, which initially supported the ride, vehemently denounced Popov's calculated cruelty.

Yet Ulrich Scheuffele of the German-Russian Friendship Association warned that Popov, who since the beginning had enjoyed an unbelievable media circus, apparently only cared about his personal glory. "Since then he has broken off contact with us."

As Scheuffele predicted, Popov had no intention of stopping. When Popov saddled the injured animals and prepared to continue at all costs, Felicia Ruhland called the police. The German government Veterinary Office confiscated the horses. The authorities determined that the horses were in need of urgent care and should not be ridden. They were transported by motor vehicle to a German equine rescue centre.

Popov's journey then ignited an international diplomatic crisis.

The situation was disclosed to the Russian General Consulate in Frankfurt and the Russian embassy in Berlin. As a result a representative of the Russian Consulate set out to meet with Felicia Ruhland and Dr. Ulrich Dura, head of the Department of Consumer Protection and Veterinary Office to discuss Popov and his horses.

Felicia Ruhland was militant in her defense of the injured horses. "This ride must be prevented from continuing," she told the Russian officials and warned, I shall make sure that he never again has access to animals."

Sadly the serious concerns expressed by Ruhland and Scheuffele were ignored for the sake of diplomatic relations between Germany and Russia.

The groundwork for a possible quiet end to the scandal laden journey began with the visit of a Russian diplomatic delegation. The Vice Consul of the Russian General Consulate in Frankfurt, and the leader of the Russian Honorary Consulate in Stuttgart, together with Popov, and in the presence of German police, gathered to check on the condition of the Cossack horses. Thanks to the care, medical treatment and abundant food provided to the animals by the German authorities during the preceding weeks, the horses had regained much of their lost condition and their injuries had partially healed. But they were still deemed too ill to be ridden.

The collection of German and Russian officials then discussed under what conditions the horses could be returned to Popov. Dr. Friedrich Lindner, a representative of the German State Veterinarian Concerns, was also present. According to Dr. Lindner, his impression was that above all the Russian diplomats, "wanted to make sure that everything could be done without a lot of fuss." Lindner said it was clear how painful this affair of their Cossack countryman was to the Russian diplomats.

Popov narrowly avoided arrest on charges of animal cruelty when he promised the Russian diplomats and German veterinarians that if released he would drive his horses back to Russia in a trailer. Under this agreement the horses were loaded into a trailer and Popov drove east towards Russia.

Then in a stunning act of personal betrayal to his country's diplomats, Popov hid the horses in a Polish forest for several days. Once he felt that he had avoided detection, he immediately drove the injured animals to France. The rogue then secretly off-loaded

the suffering horses in a Paris parking lot and posed with them in front of the Eiffel Tower.



Though depicted in Paris bedecked with a chest full of medals, no glittering awards could hide the shame attached to this repugnant villain who had disgraced Russia's otherwise glorious equestrian traditions. It was reported to the Guild, but not verified, that Popov was arrested upon his return to Russia. He subsequently disappeared.

Yet this was not the only act of blatant betrayal that occurred in Europe.

Peter Csepin & Sandor Bako

Deceiving the authorities and continuing a cruel ride was not a practice restricted to the notorious Russian outlaw Valerii Popov. In a stunning duplication of deceit, two Hungarians employed Popov's legacy of lies.

Sandor Bako (left) and Peter Csepin (right) two Hungarians who called themselves “Hussars”, were arrested and their horses impounded by Swedish authorities in 2012 after the animals were found to have been injured during a journey towards the Arctic Circle.



The Hungarians were using heavy wicker baskets as panniers on their old fashioned pack saddle.

The intense weight and off balance load caused this wound on the white pack horse.





Another horse also had saddle sores caused by the intense pressure of the saddle, which was intensified by the brutal pace of the journey.

When alarmed Swedish citizens discovered how the wounded horses were being treated, they contacted the authorities. The Hungarians were stopped by police in Amal, Sweden and arrested on charges of animal cruelty.



The men spent two days in jail and were then released. However the Swedish authorities impounded their four horses. A veterinarian check ordered by the Swedish government revealed that the animals were exhausted, emaciated, poorly shod and had various injuries and saddle sores on their bodies.



One of the horses was severely lame and had suffered damage to its tendons. Its front hoof and horse shoe had been worn away by hundreds of miles of hard travel.

Medical authorities estimated that the horses needed total rest for more than a month and suggested they be put out to pasture for a longer period if possible. Soon after the Hungarians were arrested the Swedish government provided the Guild with the police report, medical documents and photographs of the horses' saddle sores.

In an attempt to deflect blame, soon after Csepin was released from jail he told the Hungarian press that he was the victim of Swedish prejudice. Csepin's defence was that the Swedes didn't recognise the type of smaller horses used in previous centuries.

Talking about the size of the horses was a disingenuous distraction. Csepin wasn't arrested because he was riding a small horse or because it represented an equine ideal from the 1500s. He was arrested because the horses had been neglected, underfed and cruelly abused.

After allowing the horses to rest and recover for more than month, in mid July the Swedish Länsstyrelsen (government agricultural authorities) decided that the horses could be returned to Csepin, their registered owner, under certain strict conditions.

In an ironic duplication of the Russian diplomatic incident, the horses were only released provided that Csepin and Bako promised to transport the animals back to Hungary via a trailer. The Swedish government authorities also stipulated that the horses were not to be ridden or used as pack animals for a minimum of eight weeks.

In order to regain custody of the horses the two Hungarians agreed to these terms. They trailered the horses across the border to Helsinki, Finland – then immediately broke their word to the Swedish government by saddling the horses and defiantly resuming the journey.

In a statement to the public, Csepin wrote that he had regained control of the horses, “after 35 days of waiting for nothing.” He soon bragged on his website that he and Bako were riding south towards Hungary “at an average of 50-70 kilometres a day.”



When it became known that the Hungarians had broken their word, Basha O'Reilly of the Long Riders' Guild immediately filed a complaint with the veterinarian authorities at the European Union in Brussels, Belgium.

The EU's Directorate of International Veterinary Affairs stated the organization could do nothing official to stop the Hungarian horse-abusers because cases of equine abuse

were regulated at a national level. Thus there was no law designed to protect travelling horses from this type of intentional abuse across international borders.

By exploiting this legal loophole, Csepin and Bako rode the horses back to Hungary where they were lauded as national heroes by some members of the local press.

Yet Gábor Kemény, publisher of the Hungarian magazine Jövők soon revealed that Csepin had severely injured or killed four horses during previous journeys to Turkey, Kazakhstan and Europe.

The journalist, who rebuked the Hungarian Ministry of Defence for providing financial support to Csepin, issued this stern condemnation of the disgraced rider.

“Peter Csepin donned the clothes of a Hussar but never learned the most important historical lesson of Hungary’s great horsemen; the horse was the Hussar’s friend and not merely a means to try and become famous.”



The reporter concluded by stating that because of Csepin’s “massive ego, bad attitude, arrogant style and rude behaviour” a journey which “could have been a success became a great shame that humiliated Hungary.”

Chapter 10 - Equestrian Narcissistic Disorder

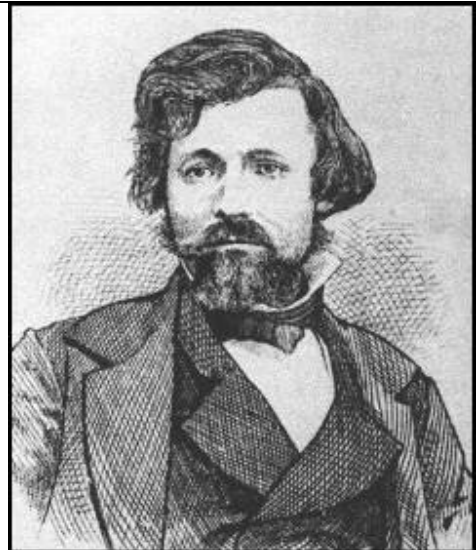
What could link a man from France, another from Wales and a third from China? How could they share a similarity that defies time and is evident through the passage of 173 years? To find the answer we should seek the one thing they had in common – equine victims.

One of the Guild's primary purposes is to ensure that the travelling horse is never deliberately abused, for as any Long Rider knows, to break the trust of a horse is to invoke a curse. That is why it is said that the souls of horses will rise in judgment against unmerciful riders.

Francois Xavier Aubry

If that is true then Francois Xavier Aubry must be suffering for his sins because the notorious French-Canadian horse-killer left a legacy of equestrian infamy. In 1848 Aubry boasted that he would ride from Santa Fe to St. Louis in record time. Inflamed by his desire to win a large bet, the cold-blooded savage proceeded to mercilessly ride six horses to death and left half a dozen more permanently wounded.

The unrepentant Aubry boasted, "I'd kill every horse along the trail before I'd lose that thousand dollar bet."



But equestrian infamy is not a thing of the past.

Bob Jones

In 2009 Bob Jones flew from Wales to Montana where he obtained two beautiful Quarter Horses. Both well conditioned horses were subjected to a detailed medical check and deemed to be in excellent condition for a journey to Texas. Likewise the riding and pack saddles were of the highest quality.

In addition Jones had been mentored by extraordinary Long Riders. During the 1930s Welsh Long Rider Thurlow Craig explored the jungles of Paraguay. In the 1970s that wise traveller in turn mentored a young man named Gary Davis who was about to ride across Great Britain.

Gary Davis and Dandi at the beginning of their journey in 1971.



When Jones contacted the Guild seeking advice, I believed it appropriate to put him in touch with the two most renowned Welsh Long Riders. Thurlow Craig had recently passed away but Gary Davis was happy to help a fellow Welshman achieve his equestrian dream. That is why Gary shared with Jones all the hard earned wisdom that he and Thurlow Craig had learned the hard way.

Of all the advice shared by Gary, one piece of advice was of critical importance. Davis made a point of warning Jones not to tie the pack horse to the riding saddle. Nor was he speaking without experience. It was the legendary Thurlow Craig who in 1931 wrote, “A horse that hangs back on the leading rope nearly tears your arm out but you cannot take a turn around the saddle horn as this is the surest way of injuring the back of the horse you are riding.”

Thurlow taught Gary, who in turn cautioned Jones to never break this fundamental rule. Yet despite repeated warnings, Jones made the basic mistake of tying his pack horse’s lead rope to the saddle horn. When the pack horse balked and pulled back, the intense pressure snapped the tree of the riding saddle. This meant that the broken saddle was no longer distributing the rider’s weight equally across the horse’s back. Instead Jones’ heavy body was pressing straight down on the broken edges of the saddle tree and the sharp edges were cutting into the animal’s body.

What happened next was unprecedented.

Half way through the journey Jones disregarded eighty years worth of Long Rider wisdom and ignored the critical lesson shared by the two noted equestrian travellers. When Gary learned Jones had broken the saddle, the Welsh Long Rider immediately sent an urgent message saying that to proceed with damaged equipment would result in injuries to the horse.

I joined Gary Davis in urging Jones to stop the journey and immediately replace the broken saddle. We were ignored. The saddle was not replaced. In defiance of our concerns, the ride was immediately resumed and the pace quickened. The predictable result was that both horses were soon suffering different types of injuries.

What had begun as a ride founded on friendship had taken an unexpected dark twist. This indifference to the people who had helped Jones was connected to the fact that as he rode south he had begun attracting an increasing amount of media attention. That is when his social life took priority over the welfare of the horses. Bob Jones was relishing being a local celebrity.

Pushing the horses ever harder, he arrived at his destination of El Paso, Texas with two wounded and under weight horses. Jones placed them in a rental barn and walked away because he had more pressing commitments.

Upon his arrival Jones had boasted, "There is a star made up of light bulbs 459 ft long on the Franklin Mountains overlooking El Paso which was lit in honour of me riding into the city. I was given a certificate in recognition of this by the El Paso Chamber of Commerce."

He was given a free suite at an expensive hotel, was the guest of honour at a chilli cooking competition, posed with high school cheer leaders, visited elementary schools – and for two weeks ignored his horses that were covered with saddle sores and raw spots.

After enjoying his El Paso holiday, Jones failed in his final act of ethical responsibility. He had offered to sell the wounded animals to a car salesman. But after inspecting the neglected horses the buyer refused. One day prior to his departure from the USA, Jones rang me and asked if I could organise a safe home for the animals. Despite my objections, he essentially abandoned the horses and flew back to the UK.

Gary Davis summarized his opposition to Jones being inducted into the Guild by saying, "How saddened I am that with all the information I forwarded, so much of it was not adopted. How disappointing it is to give so much time and effort to help someone whose aim, it transpired, was only to be a celebrity."



The effects of the broken saddle can still be seen on the horse two months after it was safely relocated by the Guild.

It was no coincidence that I called upon the respected Welsh Long Rider to share his view of Jones' journey because the heart of the ride was linked back to the horse-friendly nation of Wales. In fact, the value placed on riding horses properly in Wales is evident from as early as AD 950, when riding a horse with a saddle that galled its back could incur a fine of four pence, a figure that would be quadrupled if the skin was broken.

Thus, the injuries suffered by Jones' horses not only placed him outside the pale in terms of modern equestrian travel, they would in fact have been penalized in ancient Wales as well.

In the past these type of abusers, killers and con men were rare. But the creation of social media is encouraging these mounted villains to increasingly pop up.

Zhixian "Unas" Xu

For example in late 2022 a Chinese man named Zhixian Xu contacted me. Using the nick name "Unas", he explained that he couldn't ride but that he had bought a stallion in Spain and intended to ride it to China. I responded by politely explaining all of the potential problems that awaited him. He ignored me and departed.



Two weeks later he sent me photos of his injured horse. The saddle had eight large nails driven into the leather on the underside.



And the girth was a piece of sharp edged cardboard. Both had cut the horse open and there were wounds on the animal's back and stomach. I told Xu he should stop the ride, let the horse recover and replace the saddle. Again he ignored me and disappeared.

The next I heard about Xu was early this year. He had been arrested in Holland and charged with animal cruelty. According to one report the injured horse was so lame it could barely walk. The animal was impounded.

The discovery that Xu had ridden an obviously injured horse for 1500 miles did not surprise me. What shocked me was when I learned that this man had published more

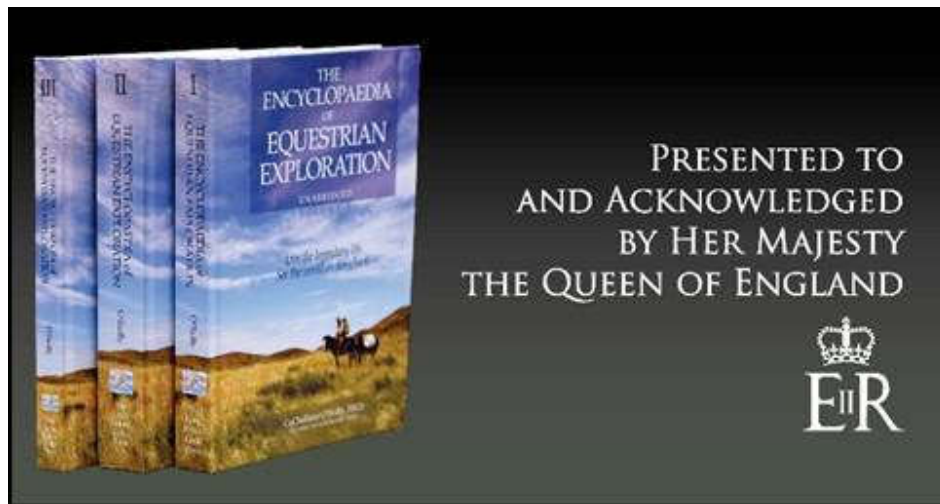
than 3000 photos on Instagram and had 185,000 followers on the Chinese version of Facebook.

Diagnosing the Dilemma

At the first international meeting of the Guild, American Long Rider DC Vision famously stated, “They either get it in ten miles or they never get it at all.” The accuracy of DC’s statement is confirmed by the actions of Aubry, Jones and Xu. No matter how far they rode, they were as devoid of compassion as the day they left.

This report documents those lawless individuals who have harmed horses around the world. Yet despite the wide spread locations of where the animals were injured, their human tormentors all share one thing in common.

The three-volume *Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration* is the most extensive study of equestrian travel ever created. During my years researching equestrian travel I have collected evidence of what I term “Equestrian Narcissistic Disorder” (END).



Narcissism is often associated with egoism, vanity, conceit, selfishness and an indifference to the plight of others. The “others” in this case refers to the horses which are exploited, abused, starved or killed by merciless travellers or mounted criminals.

There are many common traits found in the actions of individuals who exhibit the presence of Equestrian Narcissistic Disorder. These include an excessive need for admiration (*CW Cooper*), a preference for showy clothes or historical costumes (*Peter Csepin*) and a tendency to be an exhibitionist (*Cyril Bertheau*). They commonly overestimate their abilities, exaggerate their achievements, brag persistently and emphasise any trace of danger or hardship (*the Oxford Students*).

Because their personal goals take precedence over the horse’s well being, they proceed recklessly. If a horse is injured, they are reluctant to halt the journey (*Pierre*

Vernay). They are often in a state of denial about the seriousness of setbacks, injuries or defeats (*Valerii Popov*). Even if the horse is killed or injured, they commonly refuse to express remorse or accept responsibility (*Francois Xavier Aubry*).

They intentionally hide from others their neglect or abuse of horses. They are concerned more with how they might be perceived negatively or in an unflattering light should clear evidence of their abuse be revealed. Even when confronted with the evidence of the harm they have caused, rather than immediately engage in humane, corrective action, they instead ponder over how they can dampen or minimize the negative publicity they are about to receive (*Doc Mishler*). To them, "image" is of prime importance. The horses that befall their neglect come secondarily, if at all.

Having learned how to use the horse to secure the public's trust or to attract an audience, they use cunning to exploit others without regard for their feelings or interests. Their manipulative efforts thrive by continually enlisting the help of unsuspecting victims whom they meet as they ride across the country (*Richard Fipps*).

They tend to avoid Nature, targeting urban areas which in turns mean they are inclined to follow main roads. Most prefer couch camping in a host's house to sleeping in a tent (*Chris Emerson*).

Since they are searching for fans, not equals, they avoid contact with genuine Long Riders but take every opportunity to attract the attention of the press and social media (*Jerry Andrews*). Their desire for attention becomes addictive (*Bob Jones*). Desperate to be labelled the first, the fastest, bravest, sexiest, etc, they never volunteer information about other equestrian travellers to the media, as they are averse to being held in comparison (*Zhixian Xu*).

Most are anxious to deny, ignore or belittle any spiritual aspects of the journey or cannot identify with such an experience (*Craig & Curtis Heydon*). After the trip is completed, they are disinclined to share critical or even life-saving information with others, as this knowledge may benefit Long Riders whom they define as competition (*Wilbur Frost*).

Having essentially ridden alone, they are unable to have friendship with their peers within the equestrian travel world. In his or her eyes, the completion of their journey reinforces a view of himself as being historically special (*Neale Irons*).

Chapter 11 – Trouble in Texas

Cyril Bertheau

On April 12, 2023 I was provoked into writing this book when England's *Daily Mail* newspaper published an article that was an exercise in irresponsible reporting. The subsequent public uproar was fuelled by the legitimate concerns expressed by citizens in many countries who were appalled at witnessing an unfolding tragedy.

In 2012 when CW Cooper of Texas announced that he was going to ride around the world in 1,000 days, the public scoffed until dead and injured horses starting piling up all the way to New Mexico.

Thus, eleven years later when another inexperienced braggart named Cyril Bertheau told English reporter Lillian Gissen that he intended to ride 2,000 miles from Austin, Texas to Seattle, Washington in 100 days the fairy dust was flying fast and thick.

Bertheau had no training, no pack horse, and was carrying no food or water. The flashy horse he had bought off Craigslist was described by the public as a "fashion accessory." Yet instead of asking Bertheau how he had selected the horse, had he conditioned it prior to departure, what route he intended to travel through the harsh terrain, and how he intended to feed and shelter himself and the animal, Gissen was distracted by Bertheau's flashy story of how he had supposedly quit a "six figure job" and was making the journey so as to fulfill "a family tradition."

It was pure pony bologna and Gissen ate it up. Fox News, which had previously fallen for counterfeit cowboy Richard Fipps' web of lies back in 2005, also failed to exercise caution and once again promoted a mounted fantasist.

To put this case into context imagine if Cyril Bertheau had walked into the Austin airport and asked to rent a plane that he intended to fly to Seattle. The person in authority would have immediately demanded to see Bertheau's flying license and his flight plan. The idea of allowing an illiterate with no training to attempt to fly to Seattle would have been instantly rejected because of the obvious potential danger of injury or death to other innocent humans en route.

But the naïve English reporter and Fox News failed to recognise that a stunter like Bertheau can buy a cowboy hat, borrow a saddle, obtain a horse, and after deceiving the press into printing their crackpot idea - set off on a mute equine victim whose existence will soon include the ugly reality of starvation, dehydration, injuries and often times death.

The Daily Mail may not have done its homework but it didn't take long for the American equestrian community to discover that Bertheau lacked all the qualifications needed to make such an arduous equestrian journey. For example, thanks to the Instagram photos and Tik Tok videos Cyril was busy spewing onto the internet, the public quickly

noticed that Cyril had placed the bit upside down and backwards in the animal's mouth. But wearing fancy leather chaps and shiny spurs, Bertheau waved at the TV cameras and on April 9th set off on a journey filled with controversy.

Public Appeals

It won't surprise you to learn that the ink wasn't dry on the Daily Mail article before emails starting arriving at the Long Riders' Guild.

Brianna from Washington wrote, "Seeking Voices to Prevent Animal Cruelty - I am a grad student studying Equine Welfare. As I'm sure the Guild knows there is a man named Cyril riding a Tennessee Walker from Texas to Washington in 100 days with no preparation. The videos Cyril has posted on his social media show that the horse has lost weight and is already lame. My goal is to gather as many voices and groups who are educated and experienced in equine care and sports to push US Congress to pass federal legislation to prevent people from imitating this incident without the proper preparation and equipment."

Further south Sherry from Texas also voiced her concern. "I am sure you are aware of Cyril Bertheau, the idiot riding from Austin to Seattle. The poor horse only weighs 850 pounds, has sores all over his body, his spine is now showing, and despite being lame is being ridden long distances every day. I am begging you to do something! This kind quiet horse does not deserve what this stupid man is doing to it."

A Mounted Mercenary

The public's concerns about the horse's welfare were justified. Yet it soon became apparent that there was another element at play.

This book is filled with various types of unsavory characters. But Bertheau managed to expand the definition of vulgar when he revealed that he was motivated by a lust for fame and an aching for cash. Soon after departure he changed his story and boldly announced that he was actually making the journey so that he could sell the film footage to Netflix. He also stated that he intended to auction the horse to the highest bidder, so long as that individual would agree to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

This reinforced the possibility that Bertheau was making the journey for personal gain and carried with it another potential threat.

Loren Zawari is the kind-hearted American who bought Doc Mishler's starving horse, only to discover that the money had been used to purchase another equine victim. When Zawari learned that Bertheau wanted to make a profit from the suffering of his horse, the rescuer warned Americans not to pay a predator.

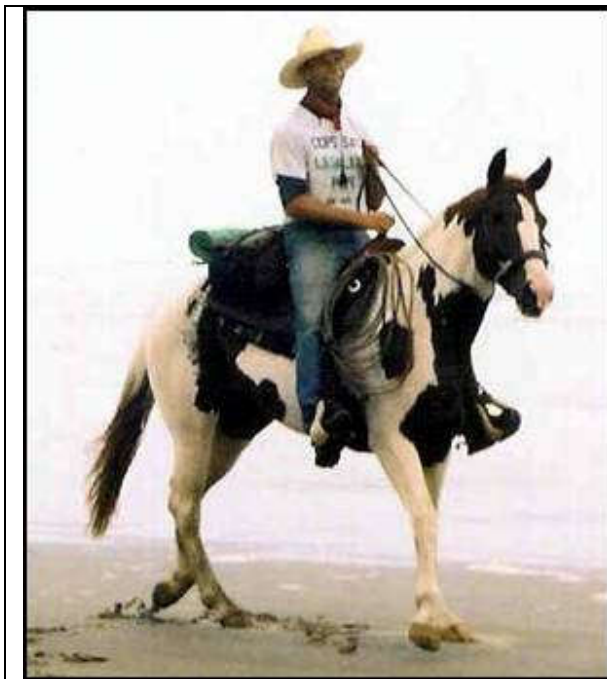
"It is disheartening to note that Doc Mishler utilized the \$500 to purchase another horse. This situation highlights the point I want to emphasize. Cyril has expressed his intention

to sell Falcon for an exorbitant sum of \$60,000. It is deeply distressing to think that Cyril might resort to such deceitful tactics. The thought of him laughing off the situation and producing videos of purchasing another horse solely to mistreat it is nothing short of infuriating," Zawari wrote to the Guild.

Refusing Advice

As this book proves, Bertheau isn't the first uninformed self-centered fool that has put a horse's life in danger. But that doesn't mean his arrogance and ego should automatically allow him to abuse a horse from Austin to Seattle.

In response to the emails requesting that the Guild take action, I contacted American Long Rider Howard Wooldridge, who had ridden "ocean to ocean" across America in both directions.



Mounted on his mare, Misty, in 2003 Howard rode 3,100 miles from Georgia to Oregon. In 2005 the team rode 3,300 miles from California to New York City. After 6,400 miles Misty was in perfect health.

On April 23rd Howard reached Cyril via telephone.

"My advice was simply to shed unnecessary pounds (like his 4 pound chaps, breast collar, brushes etc) and begin to walk about one mile on his own feet out every three miles traveled."

Howard's advice was rejected. On the 28th Howard sent Bertheau a text.

"Cyril, the Long Riders' Guild received an email yesterday from a woman who had seen your horse. Per this woman the horse is injured and underweight. It was also reported that you rode 40 miles in one day on this injured horse. Your response?"

Silence!

Howard concluded that Bertheau is “A publicity slut looking for adoration and glory.”

A Public Precedent

As this book demonstrates, people who display the traits of *Equestrian Narcissistic Disorder* react in a predictable manner. For example they defiantly ignore well-meaning and accurate advice offered by ethical equestrians.

This possibility is reinforced by the two Texans who have brought such infamy to their state.

In Chapter 3, I explained how American Long Rider Jayme Feary wrote the notorious CW Cooper an open letter in 2012, wherein he politely urging Cooper to reconsider his ill-conceived journey.

“Dear Mr. Cooper, I do not wish to pile on. Many equestrian travelers, due to no fault of their own, are not prepared for such a long ride. I don't pretend to know your heart or your motivations but your record with your first four horses indicates you were not ready for such a long ride. Many of us have postponed our rides, stopped them short, or abandoned them altogether when we came to the same realization. There is no dishonor in that.

We at the Guild support any person who has a dream to ride, but we believe that on a horseback journey the horses must come first. I suspect you do not wish to intentionally harm your animals, but so far in a short distance you've churned through four horses. I encourage you to examine your heart and decide if a horseback journey is the best vehicle to help you achieve your personal goals.

The equestrian travel community will support any person who rides with honest motives, a good heart, and a respect for the animals that carry him or her forward. But if a person demonstrates that he or she is putting his or her own ambitions ahead of his animals' welfare, or is he or she is taking advantage of the kindness of strangers, we will follow and haunt that person to the ends of the earth until the journey ends. I implore you: End your trip now.”

Cooper ignored the polite request.

In 2023 a remarkably similar open letter was sent to Cyril Bertheau by a concerned American horseman.

“Dear Mr. Bertheau:

I understand your desire to ride across this beautiful country on horseback. What a way to experience what our forefathers experienced as they spread out across this continent dedicated to taming a wild land.

You said in press interviews it is a family tradition for the oldest sons of your family to do a great adventure. Surely what you are doing is worthy of that title. In your exuberance

to embark on the adventure of a lifetime, it is important that you not lose sight of your horse's welfare. Vet techs who have examined the horse have told the press anonymously that the horse is losing weight, maybe dehydrated, and seems to have spur rubs and pain in his back leg.

I don't pretend to be an expert in riding horses long distances. What I do know is the incredible potential for good your journey could be for a nation that seems to be coming apart at the seams. With a bit more forethought and preparation, your journey could do great things.

I implore you. Talk to the veterinarian professionals and determine honestly if your horse is up for this journey. Accept their professional advice. If necessary rethink the trip for now. It would not be a defeat.

Prepare with all the wisdom of professionals who know how to do a journey like this correctly. Then, you will be greeted as a hero everywhere you go. You will be riding not just to fulfill your quest for adventure but for the greater good. Your horse will arrive at each destination along the way cared for properly with food and water and rearing with the same determination as you to get back on the trail.

Don't think of this as a defeat. Think of this as an opportunity to learn. Think of this as an opportunity to do things bigger and better. Don't let the legacy of your trip be a trail across this great nation of your animal's pain, suffering, and eventual painful death. Make it a transformative moment of triumph, a reminder of the fact that as Americans, we may be from widely diverse locations and backgrounds, but together, we share a fundamental love of this country and of the incredible horses who helped us lift it from the dirt and set it free."

The letters written in 2012 and 2023 both "implored" the men to stop their journeys. Both overtures of sincerity were rejected.

In fact Bertheau not only ignored the appeal, he published a Tik Tok video wherein he pretended to be crying and mocked "all the people who are worried about my poor little horse."

If an inept driver wrecks a rental car there will be legal consequences. Likewise by defying advice and mocking the public's well-founded concerns, Bertheau's exercise in self-deceit provoked unexpected results.

The Public Takes Action


In late April a woman in west Texas saw Bertheau. According to this eyewitness the horse was "barely walking." Because she is a knowledgeable horse owner, the woman introduced herself and offered to let the man and his horse rest at her nearby ranch.

She trailered the exhausted animal to her home, where the horse drank buckets of water. It is important to note that during the next four days Bertheau never fed or watered his horse. The woman took care of the injured animal. Bertheau was too busy bragging to the woman's boyfriend about his plans to sell his film footage to Netflix and to auction off the horse at the end of the journey. According to Bertheau's hostess the

horse was suffering from different types of injuries, was underweight, dehydrated and in pain along the spine.

When Barbara Godwin, the publisher of *Horse & Rider Living* magazine, received this evidence she contacted the legal authorities in Tom Green County, Texas. The publisher was disappointed when local law enforcement declined to investigate or take action.

In the face of such official apathy I contacted Wendy Hall. She was the American equestrian who organised the *Stop Doc Mishler* Facebook campaign in 2016. That programme had not only proved to be effective, it also acted as a precedent when dealing with Bertheau.

	<p><i>The result was the creation of a "Stop Cyril Bertheau" Facebook page and a national campaign designed to gather evidence and monitor the horse's health.</i></p>
<p>Stop Cyril Bertheau ></p>	

Plus other forms of focused protest were created as well.

A petition entitled *Stop Cyril Bertheau 2Raw2Ride Horse Abuse* was created. It states, "Cyril has continued his journey against vet recommendation and the Long Riders' Guild." The petition quickly gained 3262 signatures. Sarah Grams, one of those who signed the petition, wrote, "This horse doesn't need to suffer for Instagram votes and Cyril's mental illness."

Another form of protest was aimed through Tik Tok, the social media platform that Bertheau is employing to advertise his journey. A second petition was launched that warned, "A Tik Toker is Abusing His Horse for Internet Fame." The petition said that the horse "was essentially being used as a vehicle in Bertheau's pursuit of publicity and fame." It urged Tik Tok to "deplatform" Bertheau's account because he was exploiting his horse.

And a group of citizens created the Falcon Express action group so as to monitor Bertheau's movements and report the horse's worsening condition to medical authorities.

It became increasingly obvious that Bertheau had badly misjudged the public's reaction but his situation took a dire turn when real reporters began to ask hard questions.

An Internet Villain

On May 6th Tony Tran, a reporter at *The Daily Beast*, emailed me. Two days later Katie Balevic, a reporter from *Insider* magazine, also sent the Guild an email. Both reporters had been following the growing controversy swirling around Bertheau's journey. Suspecting that Bertheau's answers might not be correct, the reporters asked if I could provide accurate information about horses and travel.

When I responded first to Tony I warned him not to be fooled, told him about the Las Vegas Sun reporter who had been deceived by Richard Fipps, and urged the reporter to ask Bertheau hard questions about the reality of equestrian travel.

"Tony, speaking as a reporter, an editor and an equestrian publisher let me warn you - don't be misled by the romantic notion of horse travel. Reporters in the past were deliberately deceived by mounted charlatans and consequently were roasted by their furious editors when it was discovered the reporter had fallen for a pony fairy tale. If I was interviewing Bertheau I would grill him on the equestrian facts. For example, how did he plan his route and how did he condition his horse prior to departure?"

Tony's interview did indeed confirm Bertheau's ignorance.

Bertheau told the reporter that in preparation for the trip most of the training was in "preparing the horse mentally." Specifically, Bertheau's quote was "if you think about it physically, how do you train a horse? It's by riding, so I've been gradually increasing the mileage since I started."

Tony asked me, "What is your take on this? Is this a proper approach to undertaking a 2,100+ mile long ride journey with a horse?"

I replied, "Permit me to state the obvious. This single discovery confirms the magnitude of Cyril's lack of knowledge. Saying he was preparing the horse mentally is rubbish. What he admits without saying so is that he gave the animal no physical training prior to departure. This is an admission of enormous ignorance."

Tony also confirmed another critical fact. Bertheau was riding blind.

"Bertheau told me that he has not mapped out a precise route for the trip from Austin, TX to Seattle, WA. He said that 'it's more of a feeling out process.' He claims he can't plan the whole route in advance due to a variety of factors like 'energy expenditure' and when his horse needs food and water. What is your take on this?"

I replied, “Bertheau’s statements confirm important facts – namely he does not know what he is doing, he did not properly prepare and he does not know how to safely proceed. His statements prove that he is riding blind and making it up as he goes. Plus his use of yogurt and yoga terms like ‘energy expenditure’ are a desperate attempt to hide his lack of knowledge. Instead of learning from wise Long Riders he has invented what I will hence forth describe as the *Ouija Board* method of route planning.”

The Daily Beast made history when it described Bertheau as an “Internet Villain” and became the first publication to subject a controversial horse traveller to a rigorous questioning. Illustration courtesy of Elizabeth Brockway.



I concluded by saying, “As this information proves, Bertheau is trying to disguise the fact that he knows nothing, has put his horse’s life at risk, and is now attacking those who have voiced their well justified concerns about the animal's welfare. Bertheau is a disgrace to every horse loving American.”

Declines to Speak

Katie Balevic at *Insider* didn’t find Bertheau as forthcoming. In fact he “declined to answer questions about his horse’s health and busybodies.”

Bertheau also refused to answer questions about how he selected his horse, what the training consisted of and how much hay and grain he was feeding the animal.

The article did note that Bertheau had set up accounts on Venmo and Cash App that said “All donations will go for beer.”

When Katie asked me via email if Bertheau had adequately trained and prepared for the journey, I replied, “Any authentic Long Rider knows that just because you buy it, doesn’t mean the horse is ready for the road.”

Avoiding Reality

Arrogance and ego should never automatically allow anyone to abuse a horse.

Yet having dealt with people like Bertheau for years I am confident that he will continue to blame everyone but himself. His sense of self-justification will take precedence over the welfare of the horse. He will condemn anyone who challenges him.

Yet the press and the public are increasingly expressing impatience with Bertheau's arrogance.

Raleigh Lilith is an American with many years of equestrian experience. She is also active on Tik Tok and social media, where she expressed her firm disapproval of Bertheau.

"I don't care if you chose to go out in the desert and die. But I care that you are dragging a helpless animal that doesn't have a choice. Not only is this insanely delusional, cruel and abusive, it's just plain dumb. People like him should be banned from all social media platforms and he should be reported to the SPCA. I predict he will quit because he doesn't want to go to jail for animal cruelty charges," Lilith stated.

And even though Bertheau is still a long, long way from Seattle, his story has spread beyond the narrow confines of the equestrian community.

Josie Fu is a reporter for *One Green Planet*. On May 19th she wrote, "As the saga continues to unfold, we must prioritize the health and welfare of animals in our pursuits. Our relationship with them should always be based on respect, understanding, and responsibility, never sacrificing their well-being for our ambitions.

Wise words! Let's hope that Cyril Bertheau heeds them.

Chapter 12 – Stopping Horse Criminals – Past and Present

When a person suffering from Equestrian Narcissistic Disorder starts injuring or killing horses the public is justified in seeking to have the journey stopped. But how can they do that?

I would be doing the public a serious disservice if I did not explain that the evidence presented to date represents a tiny fraction of the equestrian travel world. Overwhelming evidence proves that there has never been a higher standard of ethical behaviour than is evident in the four generations which now constitute the Membership of the Long Riders' Guild.

With Members in forty-eight countries, every major equestrian explorer alive today belongs to the Guild, including Hadji Shamsuddin of Afghanistan, who rode a thousand miles through that war-zone, Jean-Louis Gouraud of France, who rode 3,000 miles from Paris to Moscow, Jing Li of Russia, who rode 5,500 miles across Siberia to China, Tim Cope of Australia, who rode 6,000 miles from Mongolia to Hungary, Claudia Gottet of Switzerland, who rode 8,000 miles from Arabia to the Alps, Adnan Azzam of Syria, who rode 10,000 miles from Madrid to Mecca, and Vladimir Fissenko of Russia, who rode 19,000 miles from Patagonia to Alaska.

More than a hundred of these extraordinary Long Riders are also Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society, including:

Sir John Ure KCMG LVO, who rode across the Andes -

Stephen McCutcheon, who undertook a ride from Delhi to Peking -

Gordon Naysmith, who rode 20,000 kilometres from South Africa to Austria -

Pedro de Aguiar, who at the age of seventy made an 19,000 kilometre journey in Latin America and -

Robin Hanbury-Tenison OBE, who has made a number of equestrian expeditions in all parts of the world, including riding the length of China's Great Wall.

I don't use the word "hero" often or casually because I have been privileged to call an extraordinary group of men and women my friends.

For example I was a close friend of Scottish Long Rider George Patterson who rode across the Himalayas in the winter of 1949 to alert the world to the Chinese invasion of Tibet. Swiss Long Rider Otto Schwarz, who rode 48,000 kilometres on five continents, was an older brother to me. Likewise my life was enriched by astonishing women such as my deceased wife Basha who rode her Cossack stallion from Russia to England. For more than 20 years my life has been deeply influenced by the presence of these astonishing mounted Argonauts.

Sadly during the same time period I have had the misfortune to routinely endure the crimes, lies, cruelty and perversity of a group of mounted criminals whose existence has largely escaped detection.

Some names are automatically associated with crime. For example if I but mention Al Capone, John Dillinger and Jesse James you instantly recognise the names of notorious law breakers. Yet the names of CW Cooper, Richard Fipps and Vasili Popov are equally infamous in the equestrian travel world but unknown to the public.

Thankfully these episodes with equine criminals are rare and the exploits of genuine Long Riders are a constant reminder to the public of why the Guild is so unique.

That is why I believe it is important for the public to hold up an authentic Long Rider and compare him to these cruel counterfeits. Against those whose acts have besmirched the reputation of equestrian travel, let us inspect the journey, the deeds and the beliefs of a hero of the Guild.

In 2013 a young man named Filipe Leite wrote to ask if I would mentor him. As a child Filipe's father had read *Tschiffely's Ride*, the most famous equestrian travel book of the 20th century, as a bedtime story to the little boy.

One of the most important things that Tschiffely taught the child was to never abuse his horse. The legendary Swiss Long Rider wrote, "There is one thing I am very proud of, which any horseman will appreciate, and that is to be able to say that my horses never had sore backs."

Having just gained his degree in journalism from a Canadian university, Filipe summoned up his courage and wrote to me to say that before settling into a predictable life he wanted to emulate his hero Tschiffely and make an equestrian journey. Filipe asked if the Long Riders and I would help him. An extraordinary demonstration of the Guild's equine brotherhood then took place.



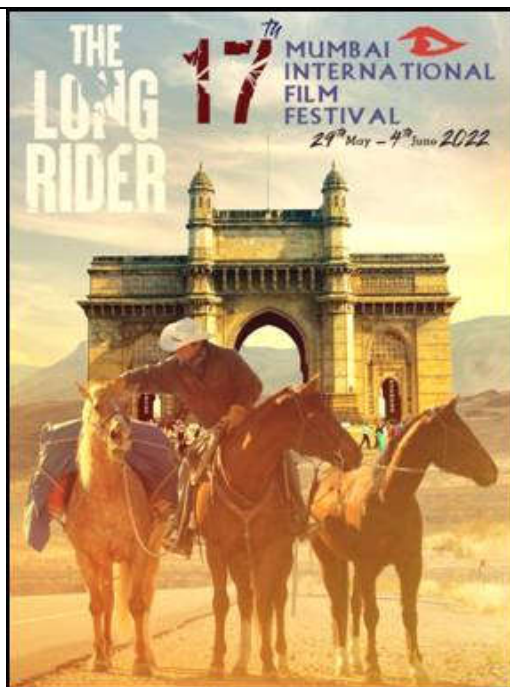
First Canadian Long Rider Stan Walchuk (right) taught Filipe about horse packing and mountain travel.

Then German Long Rider Günter Wamser, who had ridden from Argentina to Canada, cautioned Filipe about international border crossings. American Long Rider Bernice Ende, who had 20,000 miles under her saddle, met Filipe and warned him about the dangers of American roads. Finally Brazilian Long Rider Pedro de Aguiar educated Filipe about jungle travel.

In addition I provided Filipe with a copy of the *Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration* and Kelly de Strake of Custom Pack Rigging donated one of his famous adjustable pack saddles to the young traveller. After intensive study and careful planning, Filipe set off in the company of two beautifully conditioned horses, riding south along a carefully prepared route that took him into horse travel history.

Over the course of the next ten years Filipe made a three part journey that took him 10,000 miles “Across the Americas” from Alaska to Patagonia. At the conclusion of each part of the journey, he wrote a best-selling book.

In 2022 Filipe created a documentary, “The Long Rider,” that has won 19 international awards. In April 2023 when the Western Heritage Award was presented to Filipe at the Cowboy Hall of Fame, Filipe dedicated the award to the Long Riders who had helped him complete his journey.



Filipe has matured into a celebrated journalist, author and documentary film maker. But he is first and foremost a Long Rider and his underlying message is crystal clear. After his journey was completed, Filipe shared this important thought with the Guild.



Filipe is seen in Yellowstone National Park with Frenchie and Bruiser.

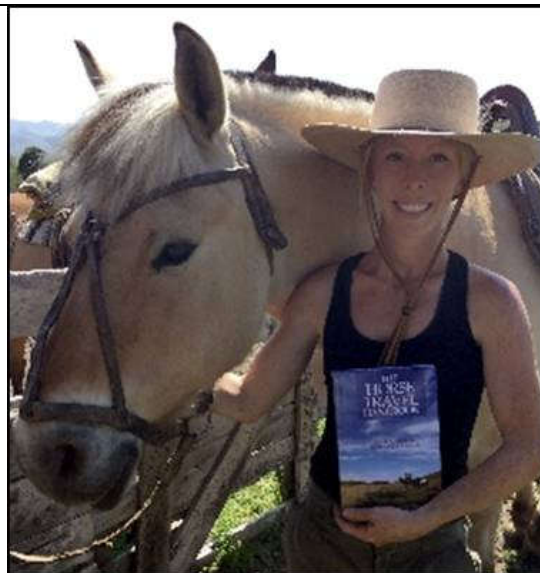
“People today have a hard time realizing that a horse is an animal with a heart and a soul who feels pain and sadness. Instead there are too many people who think of horses as a machine like a motorcycle or a car. They don’t understand that, unlike machines, horses need to rest and be taken care of twenty-four hours a day. In my opinion this has to be the hardest part of my becoming a Long Rider, the constant need to care for the horses like they are your children while travelling dusty trails and dangerous roads. Every day, when my horses’ day ends, mine continues. I drink after my horses drink. I eat after my horses have eaten. I sleep after I know my horses are safe. These horses are the true heroes of my Long Ride,” Filipe wrote to the Guild.

In words that would have warmed the heart of Captain John Codman, Filipe went on to explain the care with which he protected his horses.

“My route was drawn up with the horses’ health in mind. I only ride five days a week and never more than thirty kilometres a day. I stop every hour for ten minutes to let the horses graze and drink water. At lunch-time I stop for an hour and let them relax. If the horses are sore, I stop until they’re well. I only travel if they are healthy and happy to go on.”

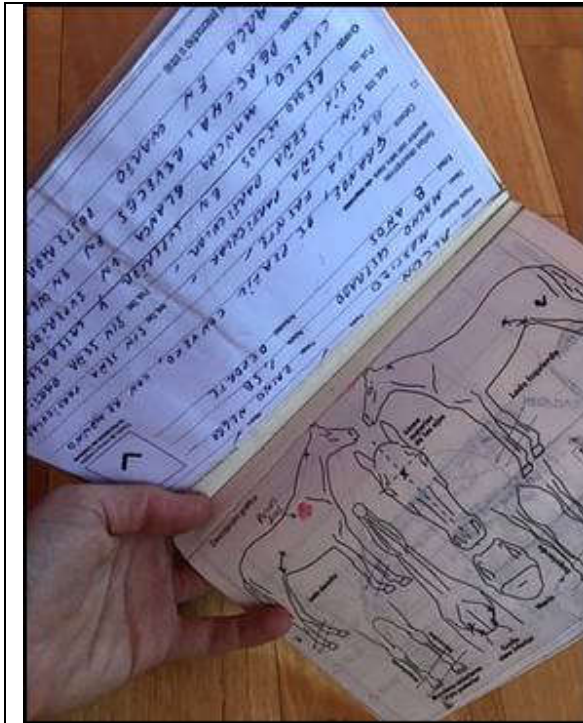
This concept of protecting horses from harm is taken very seriously in some countries. Argentina is a strong example of equine ethics in action.

Prior to making a solo ride across Argentina, American Long Rider Stevie Anna Plummer read "The Horse Travel Handbook", written by the author and published by The Long Riders' Guild Press. This taught her how to condition her horses, how to plan the route, how to feed and water during the journey, and how to judge the daily health of the horses while travelling. Her horses completed the journey in perfect condition.



Authentic Long Riders from the Guild learn from the *Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration* that to offset a charge of animal cruelty, they should document the health of their animal during the course of the journey. They know that prior to departure they should ask their original veterinarian to provide them with a signed and dated document which clearly states that the horse is in excellent condition at the time of departure. The document also states that the veterinarian has no medical objections to the horse making the journey.

In Argentina this concept is part of a national policy designed to protect horses from inter-state travel abuse.



Prior to departure in 2017, Stevie Anna was required to obtain an “Equestrian Sanitary Book.” This official government document describes the horse in detail. It certifies that the animal is healthy and ready to travel. As the Long Rider proceeds, inspections are noted at each state border. Veterinarians, police and the public all use this book as instant evidence of the Long Rider’s protection of the horse’s welfare.

Mountains, deserts, swamps, jungles, deadly drivers; no matter what the Americas threw at Filipe or Stevie Anna their horses ALWAYS came first!

They represent all the ethical Long Riders documented in the *Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration* whose journeys reach back 500 years. Seeing such a demonstration of equine ethics provides the public with the evidence needed to question the actions of those individuals whose actions appear to be causing harm, injury or death to horses.

Thankfully history offers us a hopeful precedent, one where citizens concerned about their horse’s welfare worked together to take action against mounted criminals.

America did not organize a national law enforcement agency until 1908. This meant a clever thief who stole a horse and galloped it into an adjoining state could not be pursued by a county sheriff. When national politicians neglected to protect local horses from this on-going threat, Major David McKee of Missouri formed The Anti-Horse Theft Association (AHTA) to combat the problem.

In an age that lacked mass communications marvels such as mobile phones, twitter, and email, the AHTA was the first equestrian organization to incorporate the concepts of neighbourhood watch and crowd-sourcing. A highly organized network of members not only kept a strict eye on local horses, they were ready to hunt horse thieves until an arrest was made. Most importantly, because they were travelling as private citizens, AHTA members could cross state lines with impunity.

A series of carefully conceived strategies helped the AHTA outwit rustlers. When a horse was stolen, the theft was immediately reported to the president of the nearest AHTA branch. Using the telegraph, the president alerted other branches in a wide area. Then he assigned ten local members to locate the thief's trail. Once this was determined, two members were assigned to track the thief until the culprit was found. The AHTA covered the expenses incurred during the chase, repaying them from the modest fee members paid to join.

The value of the stolen horse was never the deciding factor in such a quest. The AHTA pursued a horse thief relentlessly because he had broken the law and injured the local community. Yet its members were not blood-thirsty vigilantes who hung thieves from trees. The citizen detectives took to the saddle, chased law-breakers, gathered evidence, informed local sheriffs, assisted in the arrest and then testified in court.

Not only was the AHTA efficient, it was effective.



Between 1899 and 1909, the Oklahoma chapter (above) alone caught 400 horse thieves and retrieved horses valued at nearly \$100,000. Thanks to the organization's diligence, by 1916 the AHTA had branches in many states and 50,000 members nationwide.

Time has marched on but the motto of the AHTA, "*Protect the Innocent; Bring the Guilty to Justice*" could be applied to the innocent horses who suffer at the hands of sinister modern abusers. And the basic concepts that made the AHTA a success have already been employed to bring horse abusers to justice.

Sadly, as the examples in this book confirm, we cannot wait for a Heavenly judgment when we are witnessing an act of equine cruelty being perpetrated before our eyes. Regardless of all the things that work to separate us, every ethical human understands that our mother tongue is "horse" and we have an ethical duty to protect these animals from premeditated harm.

This study confirms the existence of heartless, lawless, reckless people who have no regret or remorse. Overwhelming evidence demonstrates that mounted abusers repeatedly ignore well meaning accurate advice from knowledgeable horse owners and Long Riders. The photographs in this book prove that there are humans who will knowingly saddle an injured horse, who are capable of ignoring glaring open wounds, who will force starving horses to travel, who will sacrifice the animal's life in order to aggrandise their out-of-control ego.

When these cruel humans appear among us they ruthlessly destroy the noble creatures entrusted to our care.

When these crimes become known, it understandably causes agitation and anguish among the public. Everyone knows that abuse should not be blindly tolerated. The public understands that personal ego is not a justification for species arrogance.

When the public sees such a calamity unfolding, an alliance of concerned citizens has a duty to take action to stop the criminal in his tracks and protect the horse(s) from intentional abuse. Even though the AHTA was employed in the 19th century, in the 21st century a similar concept was successfully employed when citizens banded together to create Facebook action groups. These groups then stopped the journeys of C. W. Cooper, Jerry Andrews and Doc Mishler. Citizens who employed the internet also brought about the arrests of Peter Csepin, Sandor Bako and Craig & Curtis Heydon.

Citizens and lawmakers, no matter what the country, should agree on these fundamental principles.

If a traveller injures the horse, he stops the trip! If he chooses to travel on a wounded or starving horse he risks being arrested, jailed and his having horse impounded! If he ignores justified concerns expressed by knowledgeable equestrians and medical authorities then the public has a right to pool their resources, investigate the journey and urge the authorities to enforce animal protection laws.

Epilogue – A Warning to Horse Abusers

In 2019 police in Corrigan, Texas arrested a man who was filmed driving his horse at 70 miles an hour in the back of a pickup truck. The police noted that the horse's back hooves were almost completely out of the truck and that the animal was only secured by the reins. The Polk County District Attorney received a report citing animal cruelty.



The horse's fundamental right to food, water and protection from physical harm can never be ignored. As a sign of our humanity, we have an individual ethical obligation to protect the horse from abuse. The Long Riders' Guild and its Members represent a global dedication to the sacred friendship between species.

At two-thousand plus pages, and still growing, and having been visited by millions of people world-wide, the Long Riders' Guild website is an open-source gift to the world. Thus, the history, stories, legends, and knowledge stored on this website represent the largest repository of free equestrian travel information in human history!

www.thelongridersguild.com

In addition, the three-volume *Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration* will soon be available on the Guild website for free. This is being done so as to encourage would-be travellers to learn the essential knowledge required to make a safe and successful horseback adventure.

<http://www.thelongridersguild.com/Books/eee.htm>

Finally, there are more than 670,000 emails in the Guild's main computer going back twenty-three years. The Guild was created to enable people to complete a life-changing equestrian journey so no request for assistance is ever declined. As the many Long Riders described in this book demonstrate, there is a network of international support available to help those who are willing to be taught.

However this book confirms that some individuals are resistant to learning the basics, will ignore valid advice, will harm their horses, prey on the public and mislead the press.

If that is the case before you put your foot in the stirrup and swing into the saddle, heed my warning, Horse Abusers.

If you depart on a journey without properly conditioning your horse –

If you employ a faulty saddle or a damaging pack saddle –

If you ignore the rules of safe equestrian travel –

If you ride your horse too hard, too fast or too far causing exhaustion -

If you starve or dehydrate your horse –

If you cause an injury or wound your horse –

If you disregard that injury and continue to travel –

Then the Long Riders' Guild and all horse-loving humans will be compelled to contact the nearest legal authorities and seek a veterinarian evaluation, possible impoundment of your horse and perhaps legal action against you.

Such an action will not only bring your journey to a halt but will cause adverse publicity to you and those affiliated with you, including the heritage of your country.

If you are an egotistical stunter, a social media addict, or a mounted con man trying to deceive the public then understand this. The Long Riders' Guild and the horse loving public will not stand idly by and witness the death and destruction of innocent equines.

CuChullaine O'Reilly F.R.G.S
Founder, The Long Riders' Guild



CuChullaine O'Reilly is the Founder of the Long Riders' Guild, the Executor of the Tschiffely Literary Estate and the Director of the Long Riders' Guild Press. An award winning journalist, he is the Editor of Equestrian Investigations for Horse & Rider Living Magazine. O'Reilly has spent more than forty-years investigating equestrian exploration and history. He is the author of The Encyclopaedia of Equestrian Exploration and The Horse Travel Handbook.

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