

## Steve Cauthen

This tape, made on February 19, 1982, records a conversation between Dr. James Claypool and Steve Cauthen, who is the youngest jockey ever to win racing's Triple Crown. Steve talks about growing up on the race track. He starts with his early days as a horse groomer and continues to the present in which he is successfully doing what he has always wanted to do. He also speaks about his future, in which he is sure that he will be involved with horses, one way or another.

1. Steve remembers that from the age of eight or so on he thought about becoming a jockey. Both of his parents were involved in racing, and although he was not pushed in that direction, Steve feels lucky to have been around the atmosphere of the race track so that he could get a headstart by choosing at an early age what he wanted to do with his life.
2. Steve worked very hard to learn to be a jockey, and he feels that your own success is dictated by how hard you work, but he realizes that luck still plays an important role. Steve talks about some of the work involved in learning to be a jockey. He watches films of races that he has ridden in to see where he can improve. He also watches the other jockeys so that if in a future race he rides against them or rides their horses, he'll know something about them beforehand.
3. Steve contrasts the mental and the physical aspects of a race. He points out that if a horse doesn't have ability there is no way a jockey can make it win. But good jockeys make better decisions than lesser jockeys, and good jockeys also have a feel for horses that makes horses want to run for them. Steve had this feeling about one of his mounts, Affirmed. The horse sensed what Steve wanted him to do before he asked him to do it.
4. Steve remembers his first race. He went to Churchill Downs the day after he turned 16 years old. Although Steve's mount was not a particularly good horse, he was in the race and it was a good first ride. The first race that Steve won was at River Downs. He rode a horse named Red Pipe. That summer Steve worked the season at River Downs, and then he left to go to Chicago.
5. Steve describes the jockeys at Arlington Park in Chicago as being "probably, on any given day, as good as anybody." He feels that the experience of riding with these jockeys helped his riding.
6. Steve discusses different tactics in racing. He explains that a lot of times he rides along the rail because it's the shortest way around, but that it's no good to get boxed in and trapped there. He says that that's where the tactical mind comes into play. Steve explains that you need to look in front in the race and see what you think is going to happen. He also talks about being able to rate a race by knowing a horse's stride and abilities

from having ridden him before, and he describes the feeling in his hands that tells him how much energy the horse is producing.

7. In Steve's first race in New York, he had immediate rapport with his horse, and although this horse had not won a race in a long time, Steve caused an upset by winning the race. Talking about New York, Steve notes that it is the number one place for thoroughbred racing in America. He loved being on the good horses and riding in the big races, but he did not like the life-style of New York.
8. Steve names some of the jockeys that he admires. Eddie Arcaro, also a Northern Kentuckian, was always a hero to him, and Jorge Velasquez and Angel Cordero are two others. Steve admires Braulio Baeza for his coolness and style, and feels a closeness toward Arcaro and Baeza, who have to watch their weight, a problem that he anticipates.
9. When asked to name his favorite track, Steve chooses Saratoga in New York. It is in the country and has an atmosphere of the old-time racing that Steve feels was the age when racing was what it should be. He feels that Keeneland also has this same element of grace.
10. Steve talks about winning the Triple Crown. He remembers that his concentration was so intense throughout the races that he was really not aware of any of the festivities. He thought only about preparing his horse, getting out of the gate, and going through the race. After winning the first race, the Derby, he went back to everyday work in New York before the next race, the Preakness. Steve won the Preakness also, and the pressure started to build. If he won the Triple Crown, Steve would be the youngest jockey to ever do it. The third race was close, but he put out that extra bit at the end and won the Belmont, taking the Triple Crown. Steve remembers that although he was thrilled with winning, he couldn't let it affect him too much, because he had to get up and ride the next day, and he didn't want the excitement to have an effect on his work.
11. After he won the Triple Crown, Steve was on the celebrity circuit. He was Sports Illustrated's Sportsman of the Year, and he won three Eclipse Awards. He says that the Eclipse Awards have meant the most to him because they are given by the thoroughbred industry.
12. Steve discusses the dual life he led while growing up on the track. He had a very public life on the race track while at the same time his life off the track was rather sheltered. His parents saw to it that he was surrounded by the right people, and Steve is thankful for this.
13. After a knee injury put Steve in a slump, he ran into other problems as well. He had gone out to California, and he was having a hard time trying to find good mounts. But Steve was determined to work out his problems. He was offered a job riding in England and felt that the timing was right for him to go. He notes some of the differences in racing in England. The tracks are grass, and both clockwise and counterclockwise courses are run. There

is also a unique mile-and-a-quarter straight course in New Market. Steve mentions also that much of the old tradition of racing is still left in England.

14. Steve talks about his plans for the future. He thinks that he'll be involved with horses in some way no matter what he does. He's got a farm that hopefully will turn into a breeding farm, and he'd like to train his own horses. Steve feels that a good thing about the racing business is that if you learn other aspects of the game, you can still be involved even if you're not riding. He says that how long he'll ride has a lot to do with how long he can keep his weight down to a good level, and his injury comes into the picture also. He thinks that as long as he has good horses to ride, the desire will be there.

Interview of Steve Cauthen.  
February 19, 1982.

[Key: C=Dr. Claypool; S=Mr. Cauthen.  
Brackets indicate editorial work.]

C: Jim Claypool conducting an interview with Steve Cauthen at Northern Kentucky University.

Steve, you probably more than anybody else in the United States--you've been in Kentucky, Illinois, Florida, California, New York--probably more than any other native-born jockey have had an opportunity to look at racing in America. Is there anything that you'd like to say about racing as a sport in America?

S: Well, racing's always been a big sport in America, for years and years, and the State of Kentucky's always been very prominent as far as horseracing is concerned. In the last few, well 15 years, I suppose, it's, racing's been on an upclimb. And the prices of horses and the prize money that the horses are racing for and everything has been skyrocketing along with a lot of other things in the economy these days. But it's been, you know, it's been a very good sport to me and everything that I have experienced through racing has been good.

C: If you had it to do all over again you'd be a jockey?

S: Wouldn't think twice about it.

C: Right. Now much has been made of your early training--you galloped horses when you were 14 years old at Latonia, and your father's a blacksmith, and both he and your mother have been involved in racing. You just grew up in it. When you think back and compare your riding to some of the Latin Americans--Cordero and Avila--is there any advantage, did you feel, having grown up--I don't imagine they grew up in a racing family?

S: Well they did, actually. Angel Cordero was on the racetrack when he was, I think, nine years old, on the track rubbing horses, and he was working for his father. His father, I think, trained a couple of horses. Most of those jockeys actually do start even if they're not born into a racing family, start very, very young, because down in Panama and Puerto Rico where the lifestyle and the sort of the money is very scarce and they usually--if they're small enough and decide that's what they think they might want to do--they have schools down there for jockeys and things. But in my own particular situation I was very lucky because I wasn't forced to be a jockey or anything else. My parents never made me decide what I was going to do. It just happened that I was lucky enough to be around an atmosphere and around that situation where I was able to choose and decide that that's what I wanted to dedicate my life to at an early age, which gave me a headstart on most people.

C: When do you think that first occurred, Steve?

S: Well, I considered it a lot from the age eight, sort of seven or eight. I thought about being a jockey a lot but I wasn't sure. When baseball season came I wanted to be a baseball player. When football season was around I wanted to play football.



S: But gradually, by the time I was 12 I could see that I wasn't going to be big enough or strong enough to do any of those sports, and I always did love horses and I always did ride, so I decided at that time that I was going to be a jockey.

C: Did you know you had athletic ability, did you feel like an athlete?

S: Yes, I've always been pretty much of an athlete. I was always fairly good at most things and I might--I even played, I was starting guard on the ninth grade basketball team. And I've played football, but when I was playing football I was the halfback and I weighed about 75 pounds and the fullback weighed 140. So there wasn't much future in it for me.

C: Right. Well, you grew up in Walton and then, of course, you started exercising horses at Latonia, and it's a long way from Latonia to New Market, that's for certain. In your wildest dreams, when you first started exercising horses, did you ever think that you'd reach what state you've reached?

S: Well, not really, because even at that time I realized the luck also involved. I had worked very, very hard to learn to be a jockey and, even at that time, you still as you go through your career you, when you look back on it you see the points in your career that were for the better or for the worse, things that changed your course on the job. For instance, my going to New York for the first time and my decision to go to England and different things like that. But also as you go along, no matter how well schooled you are, you do need some luck. I think usually you dictate your own success by how hard you work at things and you give yourself a much better opportunity to succeed, but you still have to have a few breaks along the way.

C: That's it with jockeys. It seems that probably the layman doesn't realize how much hard work is involved. They think you just jump on a horse and away you go. Obviously that isn't the case. You did a lot of studying of films. I know that you took some of the patrol films off of River Downs--and I guess you still do that, don't you?

S: Well, I don't still--I still watch races that I ride in and watch big races. When I was in England this year I watched the Derby and the Preakness and Belmont on tape. I watch races that I've ridden in and try to see where, if I've made mistakes or where I can improve myself, and see also other jockeys, if they've made mistakes, so that if I ever happen to be riding against them or riding that horse that they were riding, I can maybe improve.

C: Getting back to Cordero, I saw Cordero ride in the Bluegrass two or three times--he usually wins the Bluegrass, as you well know. Did you study him when you went to New York? Obviously he was one of the top--did you study his riding style and his habits?

S: Yes. Angel is a very strong rider. He's a very witty rider as well. And the thing about Angel is, he doesn't ride just his horse, he tries to ride everybody's horse in the race. He is always conscious of what everybody, what he thinks everybody else will be doing. He knows the jockeys, he knows their weaknesses, he knows the other horses. He knows his own horse's and the other horses' weaknesses and

- S: strengths. And he tries, you know, (and he does it very successfully), in figuring out how the race is going to be run and using it to his best advantage.
- C: So there are two aspects, though. There's the physical and the mental aspect of the race.
- S: Yes.
- C: I've always thought, and I'm not positive of this, but I always thought the jockey is more than the horse sometimes. How do you feel about that?
- S: Well there's no way a jockey, if the horse hasn't got ability and can't run, there's no way a jockey can make it win. It's a physical impossibility. But as far as in a big race, or any race really, if you take the best jockey and put him on the best horse, you've got the best chance of winning. If you take the second or third best horse, and put the best jockey on it, you still have a chance of winning, where if you put a lesser jockey on that horse you'd have a much less chance of winning, practically nil, because a good jockey can make good decisions where a lesser jockey would make worse decisions. And also, certain horses and certain jockeys--I mean, good jockeys seem to have a feel for horses that horses want to run for them. Horses will put that bit extra in, that bit that makes you win by a head or a neck instead of getting beat a length or so.
- C: We'll come back to this, but that was my impression of Affirmed and you--you had the feel for that horse and that horse had the feel for you.
- S: Yes. It was almost like we were one being, because he sensed what I wanted him to do almost before I asked him to do it. He was a very intelligent horse himself and had great amounts of ability, but the thing that--timing can mean a lot in a race, too--when you decide to make your move. It's that split-second acceleration that he would give me when I asked for it is what won us a lot of our races.
- C: Is that more so than any other horse you've ever ridden?
- S: Yes. He was probably the most delicate piece of machinery that I've ever been around. He had a sense of being. He was very much of a man himself almost. He carried himself like a champion, he was very intelligent, and he enjoyed the sport. He loved to race.
- C: How'd you feel when you saw him at Spendthrift at stud?
- S: Well, like I see him quite often now. I go down and visit and see him because I like to see the progress he's made. He's made, you know, he was a, you see the changes in the horse as he grows older, like in a man growing older, he's starting to fill out and let down and relax. He seems to be enjoying his work down there pretty well too.
- C: You've kind of restored the Native line through him--Raise a Native, Exclusive Native. There seems to be a contest going on between Raise a Native horses and some of the horses, like Bold Forbes, out of the other line ...

S: Bold Ruler?

C: Bold Ruler, the Ruler horses. It's an interesting thing. A lot was made of the Calumet business and Alydar and so on. Were you aware of that when, you know, they talked about taking the Markeys over at Keeneland, at the Bluegrass, and how romantic that seemed, and their great silks? He won, what--Alydar won by 13 1/2 lengths or so?

S: Yes.

C: Were you aware of all of that media hype?

S: I was, yeah. And I thought it was good. I think it was very sort of a romantic thing or whatever, however you want to put it. It was a very touching thing that after all their success years and years ago that they had come back with a good horse and that--they've been as good to racing as anyone in the history of racing. They've always supported it, they've improved--tried to help improve the breed, which I think in many cases they have. And they're very nice people. But there can only be one winner, so it was kind of a, that was a hard thing for a lot of people to decide who to back, who to pull for, you know. I can't say that I wanted them to win. My sentiments were, although they were--you know, you still have to go out there and try your best for yourself.

C: Now Kentucky money had mixed emotions--they were rooting for Calumet, but they were rooting for Kentucky Boy too. I think the odds sort of reflected that--six to five versus nine to five or something along those lines.

S: Yes.

C: Well let's go back a little bit, because I want to come back and say something about Affirmed. King of Swat--do you remember him?

S: Yes, first horse I ever rode in a race.

C: Right.

S: One-hundred-and-thirty-three to one.

C: Didn't have much chance, though, did he?

S: No. That was when I first went down to--after I got my license, which was the day after I was 16. I went down to Churchill and I got okayed out of the gate and everything and thought I was going to get a few mounts without any problem. After a day or two I realized it wasn't going to be so easy, and I was struggling a bit trying to find a few rides. Finally did get a mount from this trainer, his name's on the tip of my tongue and I can't think of it. But he just said, he said to me before the race, that the horse was only fit to go half a mile, but, you know, it would be a good experience. You know, the horse was good out of the gate and it would be a good first ride. So that's basically what it was. It gave me a start--he was in the race. I was laying third down the backstretch and around the turn and the horse just got to the head of the stretch and just got tired and died.

C: It's a long stretch there.

- S: Long stretch. And he probably didn't get any tireder than I did. But it was a good first race. It taught me a lot--it was a complete different feeling, although I'd worked a zillion-and-three horses in the morning, but it was completely different to being in a race with all of the action around. That first time was almost like slow motion, if you can understand what I mean. I felt like I was in slow motion and everything else around me was going a million miles an hour. It was great.
- C: Must have been stop-frame at the quarter pole.
- S: Yes.
- C: You know, that's an amazing experience. Here you are at--Churchill Downs, of course, is the home of the Derby and much is made of the Derby, but actually all it is is a downtown track, and not very well attended at that time of year. Here you've got these twin spires and this enormous facility there, probably just an ordinary crowd--six, seven thousand--and there you are at the big time, first time out. Then you came right back, rode another horse that day, didn't you?
- S: Yes, I think I rode two that day. And I ended up riding about three or four that meet before I went to River Downs.
- C: Well the one thing I can say, Steve--I saw you win your first race over at River Downs with Red Pipe, as I recall. It's a little bit different. You were at Churchill Downs, and then, of course, they took you to River Downs. I guess your father arranged, or your mother arranged ...
- S: Well what happened was my uncle owned or trained Red Pipe for a guy that happens to be my attorney, Don Werscher. And at that time--see, I'd worked for my uncle along the track and I'd brushed, groomed horses for him years before. So anyway, they called me from down at Churchill and they said, you know, if you want to you can come and ride this horse. And so I said, yeah, sure, love to. I drove up that day with my agent, Eddie Campbell at the time, and the rest just sort of, just happened. The horse broke sort of slow, he was always a slow starter in a five-furlong race, and I was way out the back. Must have been 15 lengths behind at the three-eighths pole, or even further maybe. And then the old horse got his stride and he started picking up, just like an old freight train--we just overhauled them in the stretch, and I won. It was a tremendous feeling. The whole family was there, and all my friends and everything, which was, I think it was a good thing that it happened there really because it meant so much more to have them all there with me at the time.
- C: Five-and-a-half furlongs, you don't usually come 15 lengths off the pace.
- S: No.
- C: I think it was muddy that day--I don't recall exactly.
- S: Yes.
- C: Well that was the first one and then you went on to break the meet record. They run River Downs in a dual meet. You won a certain number in the first and then

C: you came right back and you beat Carlos Marquez's old record. What did you win, 120 races or something like that?

S: Yes, something like.

C: When all that was happening what were you feeling?

S: Well, I was, I kept--my father was with me the whole summer and we kept studying things and tried to improve on what I was doing wrong. I had the help of an old jockey who was champion apprentice himself, fellow called Jackie Flinchum. I used to get a lot of advice from him, and basically I was just trying to keep improving, improve my skills. Hopefully, you know, from there--I was getting a lot of success and I was pleased but I wasn't satisfied with that--I wanted to at least try to do better. One day there was a stake race down at River Downs, I forget what it was, and I was riding a filly in it for Warnerton Farms, and a fellow named Norman Cassey came in and he had a filly in the race. I think he actually won one division of the stake. He saw me ride there, and after the race he came down to talk to me. He said, "You know," he said, "you should try to go to New York." And he said, "If you want to, I'll, I've got horses in New York and if you want to come up to Saratoga you can come up and ride one day there and meet some people and see how you like it." He talked to my father. We left it at that for the time being. I suppose a month later I did end up going up to Saratoga for the day. It was good, I really enjoyed it. I met Lenny Goodman that day and I met a few other people. And I flew back. I ended up--I rode two horses that didn't have any chance and I finished out the back. But my dad had said to Lenny Goodman, if I ever did decide to come, would he consider taking me. Lenny said, "Well, yeah, I think I would." But anyway, we let that, it was left at the time at that. I finished the season at River Downs, then I decided to go to Chicago.

C: Arlington.

S: Arlington Park. One of the reasons was I had a real good friend of mine, Chuck Taliaferro, and my family's, that was training down there, and that afforded me somebody to live with, because I was only 16. And also, you know, he had a few horses that he was going to put me on to help me out. And I went there and I was very successful there to start with.

C: Was there a different type of jockey at Arlington? You know, much has been made of the type of jockey you might encounter on second-level tracks. I have one jockey in mind--I know you had some trouble with Milord, and a jockey like Juan Soto who didn't see so well. Was there a different--I know Larry Snyder was riding up at Arlington at the time. Each level is a different type of jockey, I assume.

S: Yes. I mean, Arlington is probably not far off the top, you know. There are a lot of very good jockeys down there. There are some good jockeys at River Downs. Milord is a very good jockey. He was a very good jockey, but he tended to try to use his knowledge adversely instead of positively--you know, instead of winning a race which he knew he had the best horse, he would mess around and carry out the stretch and try to play tricks with you, which was good for me at the time because I learned so much from him that it helped me later in my career. But, like you said, you do have, you know, you have a basic standard of jockeys around tracks here. You have some good jockeys that have weight problems and are riding here



- S: because of that, because they can get mounts even with their weight problems here. But as you go to a place like Arlington, you get Larry Snyder's and John Lively's and Don Brunfield's and people like that who are a grade above, well, you know, more than a grade above, and just probably a grade below sort of the real top guys in New York, if they are. They are probably, on any given day, as good as anybody. And, you know, that experience of riding with those better jockeys helped me again on my sort of tutorage, too.
- C: Much was made of the fact that you use the inside rail a lot and then you later had to learn to come out and use different parts of the racetrack and so on. Is that when that started to occur, there at Arlington and later at Hawthorne?
- S: Well, I always tried to use the rail, because it's the shortest way around, and if the track's equal, if the going on the track is equally as good on the inside as the outside, the horse that goes the shortest distance has got the best chance of winning. But then again there's also, with tactics in a race, you have to also not get yourself--I mean it's no good sitting on the rail if you're never going to get a chance to let your horse run, if you're going to get boxed in and be trapped there. It's no good going the shortest way and having, finishing the race with a horse that's full of running but you couldn't let him go because you had nowhere to go. So you have to use your judgement there, you know, that's where the tactical mind comes into play, is to look in front in the race and see what you think is going to happen. Is the horse on the rail going to die in front of you and stop you or is he going to drift off the rail and give you a chance to go up the rail, or are those horses going to split at the top of the stretch, or--you have to weigh these things out during the race.
- C: Now, you created a tremendous amount of excitement here in Northern Kentucky in '76 and '77, people were following your career--probably some that were regular horseplayers but a lot that were not. I remember vividly people going down and looking at the white sheet, saying, "What is Steve," (or "Cauthen," as they called you), "Cauthen riding this day?," and they would bet everything that you rode that day. Were you aware of all this going on?
- S: I don't guess I really was, to the degree what I've since learned has been true. At the time all I was thinking about was riding winners and I had so many things going on with my own business and things, getting out and riding, galloping horses in the morning and worrying about my own affairs, that I didn't quite really understand how great the thing--you know, how many people were following my career. But now I must say, you know, it's a very nice thing to know.
- C: You had success at Arlington and then had a little slump at Hawthorne--because it was a different condition, of course, a different type of racing, I guess, at Hawthorne.
- S: Well, that and the fact that some of the guys that I'd been riding for at Arlington shipped to other places and I was--although I still had Chuck Taliaferro who I was riding for, a lot of the guys that I'd ridden winners for at Arlington shipped on to other places--Louisiana Downs and other places. So I was having to try to find new people to ride for.
- C: Is it very difficult, Steve--you know, I remember Diane Crump and some of the

- C: girl jockeys coming up, well they're contemporary in a sense, and they had difficulty finding good mounts, and I guess a new jockey who was having a great deal of success was having some difficulty. Did the--what I'm really asking here is, did the racing establishment of Chicago, did they open you up as potentially a good rider and want to put you on good mounts, or did they kind of resist that?
- S: No, I think they saw my talent, but without--racing is a game where there's been a million guys that were hot bugboys. I think most people saw that I was, they thought and felt I was a little more than a hot bugboy at the time. They saw I had ability and that I was trying to improve, that I didn't have a big head and that I wanted to be successful. Most people that see those things, I mean, it's to their best interests to try to help you because they're going to help themselves if they put you on your horse and you do a good job for them. So, I mean, that wasn't the problem. But I mean also in racing, through the years people get alliances. Certain guys ride for certain trainers most of the time unless they have a falling out. And that's part of being in the right place at the right time--if you happen to be there and some trainer and jockey have a falling out, so he needs a jockey and you're there, and it happens to be a good mount, and you get it and you win on it, then you've got another stable full of horses to ride and it helps you go on through your career.
- C: Before I take you to New York, I want to ask you a question. You know, they sometimes say a jockey has a clock in his head or he has great hands or he rides at a certain angle--what do you think your strongest asset is? Maybe it's a combination of things.
- S: Yes, I would say it's a combination of everything. I think I do nearly everything very well, without being, maybe, excellent in anything. I think I can improve in all of those aspects. But I do do them all to a very competent level.
- C: How do you rate a race? You talk about that clock in your head. Do you mentally count it or is there just a sense?
- S: No, it's a sense of, it's a sense--you know the horse and you know the horse's stride and you know his abilities after you've, say, ridden him at work in the morning and things like that, and ridden him in a race maybe before. You know what his stride is, you know more or less how fast he can go a quarter-of-a-mile in. And you also, through the feel of your hands, you know how much energy, how much he is actually producing at that time. It's hard, it's a difficult thing to say to a person but you just have to try to relate all of those things into how fast you're going.
- C: So some of it is feeling it in your hands.
- S: That's right. And also the knowledge of how, of the horse's ability. I mean I would know that Affirmed went a quarter in 22, where if I went on a different horse, the same horse could be putting out just as much energy to go that distance but he would be going in 25.
- C: Well, let's take you to New York. Illiterate, that was your first winner in New York.

- S: Yes. Well it's another thing, though. That's another thing about what I was saying about being lucky. It's always important to get off to a good start really. It opens peoples' eyes and gets you the opportunity--it gives them the chance to see you, what you can do and then for them to decide whether they want to give you a chance to do it on their horses or not. So I went up to New York, the first day I was riding, and Lenny Goodman, my agent, had gotten me three or four mounts, I think, that day. Actually Illiterate looked to be the worst one of the whole bunch. She was a filly that hadn't won for a long time. Had been running in decent allowance races and she'd even run in a claiming race, I think, once, a very high sort of, \$60,000-a-claim. And it's the thing where I just got on the filly and I had an immediate rapport with her. She was a bit of a temperamental filly, but me being not such a pushy rider or anything, I just sort of let her jump out of the gate and sat on her for the first part and let her get settled into her stride. When I was, I was sort of boxed in and I waited for the gap and the filly was very game, and when the gap came, we shot through this little gap and she came in and won it. Paid \$66 or something like that. And that sort of opened peoples' eyes up to the fact that I was even there. I mean you could go to New York and I would think if I hadn't won that race maybe no one, half of the trainers wouldn't have realized that I was even at the place.
- C: There you are in the winners' circle, just having pulled a major upset at a New York track. How did you feel?
- S: Well I felt tremendous, not only--it was a great race, the race itself was a very exhilarating one because I did sort of have to get through the gap. I beat Angel Cordero, which was nice. Being as I consider him one of the top riders in America, I was pleased with that fact. But the main thing was that I knew how much it would help me open the trainers' eyes and, you know, help me along my career lines.
- C: Racing in New York in the winter is a little bit different than racing in Kentucky for sure--they talk about how cold it is and how impersonal it is out on that track. I guess it really boils down to a contest between eight or ten men on some fine animals (or not so fine animals), but then you went on to set all kinds of records and break all kinds of records and that led to many, many awards. How did a Kentucky boy get along in New York?
- S: Well as far as the racing, I loved the racing. I liked the racetrack people--racetrack people are a different breed and they're just sort of their own type of people, which I've been brought up with and I like those type of people. There are a lot of characters. So I enjoyed that part of it. As far as living in New York, it's not actually my style of what I--after a few years there I realized that and that's why, although I miss New York and the bigtime racing from the aspect of being on the good horses and riding in the big races there, actually living in New York, I've never missed that at all because it's a very hectic lifestyle and, as you said, there are a lot of impersonal feelings and a lot of--it's the fact that people out there wake up and they know they've got to do a job and they have to sit in traffic for four hours before they, it's like a day in, day out--well, going through the traffic is like a job. It's an hour-and-a-half to work and an hour-and-a-half, just sitting in traffic, horns beeping. It gets on the peoples' nervous system, I think. So it's a very

- S: that part of it I didn't like, I didn't like living in New York at all. But as things turned out, I had to for that particular amount of time.
- C: Many years ago I went to Texas. It's a different pace of life there but they had a certain reverence for people from Kentucky. Did you sense that in New York, a special feeling?
- S: Well, I think a lot of Kentucky people are there for one thing because Kentucky people love horses--or a lot of them do, the ones involved in horses. And so New York draws a lot of Kentucky people because that's where the good horses race. New York is probably--well it is definitely the number one place for thoroughbred racing in America. And so a lot of Kentucky people are drawn to New York to be around the good horses. So it was not like--when I was on the backstretch it wasn't like being out of Kentucky at all because of the racing people and having a lot of, oh, Kentucky--you know, they say, "Hey, bro. How ya doing? You're a 'boot like me."
- C: Right.
- S: And it was nice, it helped me a lot. It gave me a lot more feeling of not being completely out of my environment. It was good.
- C: Then you encountered an old Northern Kentuckian, Eddie Arcaro.
- S: Yes.
- C: Tell me about Eddie.
- S: Well, my first contacts with him weren't all that great. I'd read his book and I always admired him a lot. He was one of the guys I sort of tried to listen to. I read his books and I tried to take in what I could, learn from what I read about him. And then, the first things that I ever, before I'd ever met him, was when I was about to ride in the Kentucky Derby and when I'd been successful and things were going real well for me and he was sort of saying, well, he wasn't really boosting me too much at that time. I suppose being--he knew the business and he knew the ups and downs and he was waiting for, to see if I passed all the tests--falls and when I lost the "bug" and things like that. So his first few things about me weren't that complimentary and at first I wasn't too sure what kind of a guy he was. Then finally after I did meet him I got to know him better and he was a very nice person. I suppose we had a few talks, not basically about riding, but just how good it was to be successful, to be doing the one thing you always wanted to do.
- C: Was he one of your heroes when you were growing up?
- S: He was, yes.
- C: Any of the others?
- S: I always admired Braulio Baeza a lot. I always admired his style, his coolness and things like that. Velasquez and Cordero probably the other two.
- C: You probably weren't exposed as much to Shoemaker and some of the other ...

- S: Well I was. He was obviously one of my heroes. But he's sort of a unique person, being as small as he is and just sort of--he's led sort of a career kind of different to every--I always felt that when I grew up I was going to have some weight problems, so I had a little more relationship with guys like Baeza and Arcaro and those guys that did have to watch their weight and did have other struggles on their hands just besides going out and riding, where Shoe, he never had to worry about his weight ever.
- C: I assume you've ridden some at Keeneland, have you not, Steve?
- S: I've never actually ridden in a race. I've worked the horses there and also I paraded J.O. Tobin there one day, but I never actually rode in any real races. I rode in a couple of morning-time workout races that they used to have, before I ever started riding. They had two-year-old, four-and-a-half-furlong races just to teach the two-year-olds how to run.
- C: What's your favorite track?
- S: Well, in America probably my favorite track is Saratoga.
- C: Why is that?
- S: I just think the atmosphere there, the beauty of the track for one thing. And it also, it is the one place in New York where I enjoyed living and riding because it's a country atmosphere. It is in the country and it brings back to me so much the old-time racing which I think was probably--that was the age when racing was what it should be.
- C: Well Kentuckians like to think Keeneland has an element of that. I guess that's why they like Keeneland so much.
- S: Yes. Keeneland is another track with the old--you know, they don't use the voice, the announcing system. And the old trees there. It's just a grace and a beauty that you feel should be around horses. They seem to mix very well together.
- C: As contrasted to, say, Hollywood with its ...
- S: Well, with the sort of big motels around the edges and, although Hollywood is a pretty track, and very good facilities and things, it's not the same sort of feeling.
- C: I've seen both Hollywood and Santa Anita (of course Santa Anita is much more picturesque). There seems to be a different feeling on those tracks. There's kind of a remoteness at Santa Anita, as you watch it (of course you probably didn't watch that many races), but you feel like they're far away. Did you get a sense of that?
- S: Yeah, well I didn't probably get so much a sense because most of the time I was riding, I was in the races. I haven't really ever had that much chance to be a spectator. But I know what you're trying to say. It's a feeling that, well, a lot of the people come out not to even watch the horses. They come out for a picnic or so and so. Then you have a lot of the real hardcore gamblers that bet their last dimes and everything. But you haven't got quite the closeness with



- S: the feeling that you're right on top of the race, if you know what I mean.
- C: Well let's talk some about the Derby. Alydar and Affirmed. I know you had a special feeling when all of that was going on. Were you thinking only of Alydar in those races?
- S: Well, basically I was. I know there were other horses in the race and that you have to beat them all, but I knew that he'd already beaten everything else, every horse in the race bar one horse, which was Allen Jerkens' horse, Sensitive Prince, who'd won four or five and had been undefeated. He'd beaten everything else and my horse had beaten the other ones, so I knew that unless, that he was the horse, that if both of our horses fired, it was going to be a two-horse race. And that possibly this other horse, Sensitive Prince, maybe he was a great horse but I couldn't quite see it. And Believe It wasn't that far behind us but he was far enough that I felt if both of our horses fired the way they had been, it was going to be between Alydar and me.
- C: The Derby--you know that's dear to Kentuckians' hearts, but a lot of people have said it's really kind of a crass experience. You have a week of festivities and a lot of merchandising and a lot of money trading hands there in Louisville. Was there a special feeling Derby Week for you in '78?
- S: Yes, oh, very special. But I suppose at the time I was trying to concentrate so much on what I was going to have to try to do that I tried to block out too much emotion before the race. I was basically concentrating on the tactics I was going to use and just praying that my horse came up to the race in good shape, without any problems, any injuries or anything like that. I stayed up--I was riding in New York every day before the Derby anyway, until the day before the Derby. I came down and rode in the Oaks the day before the Derby, but up 'til then I'd kept myself occupied by riding every day and trying not to get too endowed and to lose my concentration.
- C: Did you ride any races Derby Day prior to the Derby?
- S: Yes, I won a race, I think--one of the early races. I won I think it was the third race.
- C: That's kind of traditional to let a jockey that's going to ride later in the Derby to have a race or two, isn't it?
- S: Yes. And it's good, it's nice. It takes a little bit of the pressure off of you, too. To sit up in that jockeys' room before, if you didn't have a race, you know, you could get very tied up inside because it is an emotional experience.
- C: The biggest crowd maybe you've ever ridden before.
- S: Well, without a doubt.
- C: There you are getting dressed, you've got one of the favorites, (it didn't turn out to be the favorite). What were you feeling, Steve?
- S: Well, I must say that at that particular day I felt very well. I was relaxed

- S: enough--I mean, I had the adrenalin, it was running, but I wasn't nervous. I was confident in the horse, I was confident in myself. I just had a feeling that whatever happened, whether I won or lost, that all I could do was go out and produce my best, try my best, and whatever came of that would have to be the result. But I was confident in my horse and myself and I just was hoping for the best.
- C: Five-forty-one and you're on the number two horse and you come on the track and they play "My Old Kentucky Home." Did you hear it, did you feel it?
- S: I sort of heard it. The concentration that day (well, all throughout the Triple Crown) was so intense that, although I heard it I think semi-consciously, I didn't let it affect me emotionally. I wasn't even thinking about it. All I was thinking about was the basic things I had to do: warm my horse up, make sure he was loose and limber and ready, and then I was thinking about getting out of the gate alright. And then from there going through the race.
- C: A lot of people were yelling to you and making remarks. You probably--you don't hear all of that, I guess. Hale Broun down there in his moldy-colored coat.
- S: No, if your concentration is good--which it has to be--those things just sort of bounce off of you.
- C: The race itself, Raymond Earl broke out in front.
- S: The race went absolutely perfect for me because I didn't want to be in front but I wanted to be just off the pace. And then wait for Alydar to, well, wait until I knew he was about ready to challenge and then beat him to the challenge, you know, make my move first. And Raymond jumped off real fast, which gave me a nice lead, I was second. And then Sensitive Prince, who broke slow, came rushing out on the outside, which was fine. That just let it be perfect because when Sensitive Prince crossed over in front of me my horse settled down, relaxed a little bit more, which I'm sure saved him a bit more energy for the finish. And the rest of the race just went fine. I mean, I sat behind those two and they went very fast the first quarter-and-a-half and they started to come back after about three-quarters which was just perfect then. My horse started moving up to them effortlessly. From then on I was just really waiting, wanting to save something in case Alydar, you know, for his challenge, which never really actually came in the Derby.
- C: Right. You beat him by a length-and-a-half.
- S: I beat him without really ever having to--although I hit Affirmed a couple of times just basically to keep him up to his work rather than--he wasn't fully extended that day at all.
- C: You had to get after him sometimes, didn't you?
- S: Well, whenever he was being challenged you didn't have to, but if he got to the front and was clear and nothing was really actually battling with him he would tend to relax. And that's--you know, if he had happened to relax, another horse really, with a lot of momentum, could have come up and caught him on the line or something, which, you know, that's what I was trying to prevent.

C: After the Derby--did you begin to think about it after the Derby? You'd won the Derby, now you had a Triple Crown possibility and obviously only one major obstacle. You went back to riding in New York again?

S: Went straight back to New York and rode there. The basic everyday--I think the everyday work and things kept my mind off of worrying about it too much because it, what it basically came down to was that it was no point in worrying about it.

[End of side 1 of the tape.]

C: Next part of the Triple Crown is the Preakness. Can you tell me something about that race, how you felt, what happened there?

S: Well, as far as that went, everything--the horse trained super from the time, from the Derby to the Preakness. And Alydar was training very well, too, so it was just really going to be another clash with him. It was a smaller field than the Derby. I think there were eight or nine in the Preakness. And I drew what I thought was a good post position, seventh on the outside, so I didn't see any problems with the first part of the race, getting in trouble or anything. I was just going to ride the race as it came up and, as it came up, no one went for the lead really. The first quarter was pretty slow so I decided that I might just as well sit in the front on the horse and wait for Alydar there as anywhere and dictate the pace myself, and that's what I did. This time Alydar was ridden slightly different, a bit closer to the pace and about the quarter pole he came to challenge and I could see him. But I had a lot left, not that it was easy. I mean, I had the horse--we both, both horses were flat out to the finish, but just managed to hold him.

C: Velasquez was the rider, is that right?

S: Jorge, yes.

C: Jorge. You'd outsmarted one of the real veterans or you had a better horse. As it turns out, you had a better horse. So now you've won two parts of the Triple Crown and you're thinking--what are you thinking?

S: Well I guess the pressure started to build up by then. I thought it would be great and there were only 11 that've ever done it before me, or 10 before that, he [Affirmed] was the 11th that ever won the Triple Crown. And also I was thinking that I'd be the youngest jockey to ever do it. You know, all those things went through my mind somewhat. But when it came down to the end fact again we had to get out there and do it first or else it didn't matter. So I just tried to keep my concentration. The horse again was in fine shape. That was the farthest that he'd ever been, either horse, a mile-and-a-half and Belmont is a very tough mile-and-a-half track. I was just trying to figure out the best way to conserve my horse's energy and to have enough to get a mile-and-a-half and to withstand the challenge of Alydar because I knew that Alydar was probably going to be even tougher over a mile-and-a-half than at any other distance. He always seemed to be finishing the best. But I also knew that my horse was tough and that no matter how far they went he'd be pulling out as much as he could. If they went two miles he'd be digging in at the end of two miles, so I was confident in the horse. I knew it was probably going to be the closest race we ever had because the way it was going to work out it seemed like it wasn't going to be any pushover. The

- S: way the race turned out it was a very slow first half, even the first three-quarters was fairly slow. And then it just gradually built up. I'll never forget when Alydar joined me, sort of down the backside, that's one time I did hear the roar of the crowd, and most of the time you can't even hear the roar of the crowd when you're right in the stretch. But on the backside that day I could hear the crowd when they saw Alydar move up to challenge, which was seven furlongs from home. They just, they knew it was going to be--I guess they sensed the spectacle or whatever. And it was the greatest race that I've ever seen--been in, obviously, or seen. It was a thrill to be in it. At the head of the stretch, my horse was beginning to, I could feel him slightly tiring under me. Just seeing that we both pulled something out, that sort of extra, that little bit extra that you don't sometimes even know that you've got. Sometimes you feel almost dead-tired and you just, something inside you wills you, your will to win. We just both pulled out that little bit extra and when I pulled my whip through and gave him one smack down the back on the lefthand side I could feel him just put that bit more out and that was the point of the race that I thought we were going to win, which was about a furlong from home. He just, I could feel him get that second wind, that second bit of energy. It went right down to the wire but I was, oh, the last 150 yards I was confident we were going to win.
- C: There you were, in less than two years, at the pinnacle of racing. Then all of the media hit you. Were you just kind of in a daze, did you--you're describing what happened there, but what happened after the race, all the adulation and the writing and the whatnot?
- S: Well, after the race I had to do the press conference thing, which always happens. Then they had a big party--the Wolfsons, Laz Barrera, myself, Lenny Goodman, my agent, my family--we all went out to a real nice place for dinner and had a real good time. But basically I couldn't let it affect me too much because I had to get up and ride the next day. I had nine mounts and I wanted to win those races, too, although I'd just done what was the biggest thing that, I reckon, had ever happened to me in racing. I still, I had to get back and get to work again the next day. So, although it was a great thrill and a great moment, I didn't let it affect me too much, so that it would affect my work because I didn't want to be going out, riding someone's horse and thinking about what I'd done yesterday. I had to think about what was going on at the time.
- C: How'd you do the next day?
- S: I think I won about three races the next day.
- C: So, it's a business with you, it's a profession.
- S: Well, although I have sentiments too, like anyone else, it is a--if you want to be good at it you have to treat--you can't let your mind wander. You have to concentrate very highly, like I'm sure anyone in any sport does. If you're a basketball player and you won the world championship the year before, if you go the next year thinking about, just relaxing and thinking that, "Oh, I won the championship last year," you're going to get beat because you're not concentrating on, you're not putting your abilities to their best use. And I've found that to be true all through my career.

C: What kind of people are the Wolfsons?

S: They're very good. They're very interested in breeding, they love horses. Mrs. Wolfson, the daughter of Hirsch Jacobs (who was, probably could be considered one of the world's greatest, if not the world's greatest, trainers throughout history), has always sort of had a special relationship with horses. She likes to get up and touch them and cuddle them and talk to them. And they're great sports people. They like to see a good race and a good battle. They're good sports--they take losing pretty well, as well as they do winning.

C: It seems that the wealthy, or at least those who have real, sincere interest in breeding, are more like what I perceive to be English racing, where it is a sport. It isn't just the money, it isn't just business. How do you feel about that? Do you think that's accurate?

S: Well, I do, yes. For instance, Affirmed was sort of syndicated for a lot of money, and a breeding, a share to breed to Affirmed is worth a lot of money, but they took their own mare, and they didn't sell the whole, they kept a lot of him for their own breeding purposes because they want to see his progeny and race them themselves to know--I think that's one of the great feelings that breeders get out of thoroughbreds is to have probably owned the sire and dam and then breed another great horse possibly from horses that you've had a close relationship with. Which is the same with me. I have a few horses and I breed. It would be a great thing for me to breed a real good horse by Affirmed.

C: You have a share in Affirmed?

S: I have breeding rights, I have three breeding rights too. To breed a good horse out of him would be a great feeling.

C: You've gotten some horses out of him?

S: We've got one foal at the moment.

C: Is it training?

S: No, it's just a baby.

C: Well you might be a trainer before it's all over with.

S: You never know. And that's another good thing about racing, that if you try to learn other aspects of the game, you've always got something to fall back on too. There are so many things in racing, you can still be around the horses. For instance, if I couldn't ride next week, I could still be involved with horse-racing.

C: After you won the Triple Crown then you kind of went on the celebrity circuit. You were Sports Illustrated's Sportsman of the Year, had won three Eclipse Awards, began to appear at myriad tracks here, there, and yon. I guess the adrenalin was flowing then.

S: It was a good time, yeah, in my life. I think the Eclipse Awards meant the most



- S: to me, basically because they're given from the heart of racing people, the thoroughbred industry. So as far as awards went, those were the awards that meant the most to me in my heart. And I enjoyed, I think the riding at the other tracks was good experience for me to try--I guess I knew at that time then that people wanted to see me, were interested in me, and it was good to know that and to be able to go and try to show them my abilities, to perform successfully in front of them. I mean going to those little tracks meant a lot to me because I wanted to do well there as much as anywhere, to show my appreciation for the peoples' appreciation for me and try to give them a good show.
- C: Up to this point, Steve (and we'll get to Santa Anita and England in a minute), up to this point who had impressed you the most in the racing industry or influenced you the most? There must be somebody that stood out above all the others --you've run into all kinds of people.
- S: Well there's different kinds of people, there's so many different kinds of people in racing. There's different kinds of characters. Lenny Goodman had probably as much influence on me as anyone. He was my agent. I worked very closely with him and he was a very honest person, which I think did a lot for me and helped me through, as I was growing up put me on the right tracks. Besides my family and everything at that point, he just went to further my moral feelings about life. And taught me to do the right things instead of the wrong things, which you can easily do.
- C: You were living kind of a dual life there. You had a very public life and yet you had a kind of a sheltered life. Your parents carefully saw that you were with the right people and ...
- S: Very important, I think. I think it was probably--I wouldn't want to let any, having gone through that experience, I wouldn't want to just sort of send a 16-year-old person up to a place like New York without any good people to advise and help him along because it's a very--especially going through that particular amount of publicity or whatever you want to call, it's kind of hard to handle if you didn't have the right people around you to laugh and joke with, you could end up thinking that you were somebody special or something.
- C: Well, look what happened to the Franklin boy, for instance.
- S: Exactly.
- C: Then you went eventually to Santa Anita and of course much has been made of the problems you had out there. I saw you ride there. I guess you had lost about 90 straight or something like that. What I noticed about you in the paddock there was that you had sort of grim determination. Is that what you were feeling at that time?
- S: Yes, I was. It was all--I think, you know, my slump had to do with a lot of different things. For one thing I'd had an injury. I'd fallen at Saratoga and my knee, although it was working, wasn't quite 100%, which affected me a little bit, I think, honestly. And also the fact that we were going out to California, which was not my base. New York was my home base, where I had--like I was saying before,

S: when the trainers left Arlington I had to find new people to ride for. Well, when I went to California the only stable I had to ride for was Laz Barrera's stable and his horses were not ready, they weren't running very well at the beginning of the meet. I think Affirmed, his first couple of races, wasn't 100% himself. Also, other than that, I was riding sort of 30- and 40-1 shots, most of the time. And things just sort of seemed to bloom, flower into my slump. But the one thing, like you said, I did have was the determination that, although at the time I couldn't even see all the reasons why I wasn't winning, from winning three and four races a day to not winning one in a hundred was a big change for me. It was very difficult to not--basically I couldn't figure out what I was doing wrong, if I was doing anything wrong, or why I wasn't getting better mounts, or different things like that. But I did have the determination to not let myself fall down and just to quit. I wanted to prove--well, not to anybody but myself--that there was nothing wrong with me and that I all of a sudden hadn't changed from being a good rider one day to completely not being able to ride the next. I knew that wasn't the case. So I just--and the press didn't help me. They didn't seem to be behind me trying to boost me to win. They seemed to be on the other side a lot of the time. I think a lot of that has to do with--there's a big sort of, the press in California and the press in New York. Each thinks they have the best horses in the world, the best jockeys in the world, and the best everything. So when I, being a New York-based rider, going out there, and when I was in that slump, I think they used it as a good thing to write about, because, you know, to say well he's not so great and the California jockeys are. This proves they're better than New York jockeys or anything else. That all sort of led to my confusion, I think, at the time. But looking back on it, it was a great learning experience. It made me prove to myself that even at the worst of times you have to dig in and just work out your problems, not sort of lay back and expect them just to pass over. You have to always be conscious of what's going on around you and try to figure out your problem and deal with it.

C: Did some of the jockeys there try to help you?

S: Well, to some degree. But that's a problem that I don't think they can, when you're a professional working with other professionals and you're riding against them--if you were on a team sport I think it might be a little different. But as jockeys, each man's out there for himself, it's a little bit more difficult. I think some of them had good intentions but none of it quite worked, you know, it didn't sort of help.

C: There was one--I think it was McInanny. Isn't he from Kentucky?

S: Ron McAnally.

C: Yeah, McAnally, right. Wasn't he originally, had ridden in this area at Latonia?

S: I think he might have done, yes, before he started training.

C: But like you say, you get at a certain professional level, it doesn't matter. You're there to win.

S: That's right.

- C: What happened, how did you get to England? That's the next question.
- S: Well, originally, the year before, Robert Sangster had tried to get me to come over. I was supposed to ride Hawaiian Sound in the Derby that Shoe rode him when he got beat a head. But I couldn't go, I didn't feel I could go because I was riding Affirmed in the Triple Crown and I didn't feel that it would be fair to go over there sort of three days before and take the chance of getting jet lag--it was right before the Belmont. So I turned down the opportunity, although I did want to do it, but I just didn't feel I could. So when I was going through the slump and everything, he contacted me and offered me a job to ride there for him in England. So after considering it, and seeing the pros and the cons, I thought it was a very good deal and that there was no better time to try it than now, because before, the previous year, I'd had Affirmed, J.O. Tobin, Noble Dancer, and all--stacks of good horses to be riding--and at this particular time I didn't have anything really to hold me down, so I said at that time I felt I'll go and try it for a year and if I like it, you never know, I might stay there forever. And if I don't, well I can always come back.
- C: You probably are one of the few American jockeys that went that route, went from America to England. It's usually--well, it isn't usually, but when it does happen, it'd be the other way around, wouldn't it?
- S: A lot of English jockeys have come over and European jockeys have come over in recent years. But, I think, probably the last American to be really successful was Tod Sloan, over in England. I think European racing is more concentrated since there's less--there's a lot of racing but there's just as many people, it's very condensed. And I think a lot of European riders that don't quite make it over there come over here for--they haven't necessarily not made it because they haven't got any ability but maybe they just haven't been given the chance. And America is the land of opportunity--you generally get a chance to show your ability some time or another. And it's proven true in the cases of Jean Cruguet and a few other guys that have come over here from there.
- C: It's a different type of racing obviously. A lot of grass racing there?
- S: It's all grass.
- C: And of course you're running the other way, I guess?
- S: Well, they run both ways. They have clockwise and counterclockwise courses. And they have a mile-and-a-quarter straight course at New Market, which is something which is a complete different thing to anything you've ever, anyone in this country would ever comprehend.
- C: How many horses do you usually ride a day?
- S: They have normally six races a day, sometimes seven, so I normally probably ride four or five races a day.
- C: I'm reminded in looking back at old-time racing of the 1800's (I was doing some research on the Derby once) of the similarity of how races were run in our 1800's and how they might today be run in England. Are you aware of that--the concept of

C: the purse, just the whole tone of the thing?

S: Yes.

C: You've said once it's more of a sport there, of course.

S: Yes, like I said I like Saratoga, I like England. It's got so much of the old, so much of the tradition is still left in it, although it's growing into--it's a big business there as it is here. The horses are selling for millions of dollars and the prize money is very big. But it's still, they still have, their attitude towards the racing is more sports-minded and it's a nice thing to have, to be able to work in that sort of an atmosphere.

C: It has class.

S: Yes.

C: Looking back on the Derby originally, one of the early concepts about the Derby was that it would be a match race between Tennessee and Kentucky horses, the best type. Is there a sense of this--are the best horses of Scotland matched against the best horses of England or Ireland or whatever it might happen to be? Is that still a concept?

S: Well each--France, England, Germany, and the different countries in Europe--have their own, sort of, races and they have races for their champion two-year-olds, three-year-olds, and so on. And then, usually, there's a race called the Champion Stakes where horses from, all the top horses from Europe challenge each other and that's for older horses. And the Arc de Triomphe is another race like that where all of the countries, you get, each country is sort of being represented by their horse. So it's an international flavor, that adds the international flavor to it, just like, say, the D.C. International and races like that.

C: Are you glad to get back to Kentucky when you get a chance?

S: Oh, I always like to get back, to see my family, my friends, to be on my farm, which I am proud of and like to be around, and to see the horses, our mares, and things. And also, it's not a bad place to live.

C: Steve, what do you think you'll eventually do? Have you given it any thought? I know you can't ride forever.

S: No, that's true. Well I think I'll be involved in horses in some way no matter what I do. I've got a farm, which hopefully will turn into a breeding farm one day. And I can see myself getting into the breeding side of it more, possibly training a few of my own horses. I wouldn't open a public stable I don't think. But I could see a lot of enjoyment and pleasure out of training some of the horses I've hopefully by that time bred. Maybe a few winners, I hope.

C: Do you think you'll ride five more years, 10 years--probably don't know, do you?

S: I don't really know. In my case it's got a lot to do with weight, how long I can hold my weight down to a good level. My--also injury comes into it. And desire.

- S: I think as long as I have good horses, decent horses to ride, the desire will be there. For instance, I have no desire to ride \$2,000-claimers anymore. There was a time when it didn't matter if it was a \$2,000-claimer with three bad knees and a, you know--I'd love to ride it. But now, after having ridden good horses you get to a point where, after you've been on a good horse, it's nice to be around good horses. And I think as long as I can ride good horses and be successful to some extent--to an extent that I am satisfied with--that the desire will be there and that I'll continue.
- C: This English jockey--Piggott, Lester Piggott--what sort of a fellow is he?
- S: Well, he's a strange character, very quiet and sort of keeps to himself, but a very dedicated--he's dedicated to riding winners. He's got that tremendous desire to win every little, any race he can win, whether it's the Arc de Triomphe or the Epsom Derby or a little claiming race somewhere in one of the country meetings. This year he was Champion Jockey for the tenth time. It's people like him that inspire people to continue and try to excel.
- C: It seems that some jockeys have personality quirks. You describe him, and certainly Hartack had his manner, and some of the others. You haven't developed that so much --you seem to be just dead-on. Do you think that has to do with your family upbringing or ...?
- S: Yes, I'm sure it does. For instance, Lester Piggott was, well his parents were good to him but they're (and I don't exactly know how he was brought up), but I'm sure that that had a big effect on him. Also, he had a speech impediment when he was younger, which he does still have a slight impediment, but that's probably affected his sense of, his humor and his feelings about some things. I think your environment as you grow up and the way you learn, your--the importance of learning all the time, throughout your life--makes you into the person you are. Everyone's different. There are not two people in the world that feel the same about everything and that's why it's such an interesting world.
- C: Steve, I've taken a lot of your time. I want you to come back five years from now and we'll take a look at this, okay?
- S: Be a pleasure.

[End of the tape.]