Taking Shergar: Thoroughbred Racing’s Most Famous Cold Case

SUMMARY

KEYWORDS

horse, agha khan, sugar, ireland, people, stolen, ira, irish republican army, theft, black swan event, called, money, syndicate, photograph, named, ransom, irish, england, insurance company, police

SPEAKERS

Question, Craig Buthod, Milton Toby

Craig Buthod 00:00

Today's speaker is Milton see Toby, author of taking shugar thoroughbred Racing's most famous Cold Case. Milt is an award winning author, journalist and attorney. With more than 40 years of experience researching and writing about thoroughbred racing and equine law. He is the author of eight books included including dancer's image the forgotten story of the 1968, Kentucky Derby and nor a champion through thoroughbreds unlikely journey from California to Kentucky. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Milton. See, Toby.

Milton Toby 00:43

Thanks for the nice introduction. And thank you for coming today. It's a nice day to be out, although it's a little brisk. I'm going to talk to you today about sugar. And I know I've spoken with a few of you some of you are familiar with sugar in the story. And I'm sure that some of you aren't. So if I'm getting a little too basic for some of you, I apologize if I'm getting too complicated. For others of you. I also apologize. On February the third February, the eighth 1983, one of the most valuable horses in the world was stolen. And the horse was sugar. And what we're going to talk about today is a little bit about the theft. But we're going to talk more about the events leading up to the theft and the aftermath. Because for a lot of people, the sugar story started on February the eighth 1983 and ended a few weeks later when the negotiations stopped. And the interest sort of diminished. Sugar was never found. There was a ransom demanded but never paid. But what I want to talk to you about today is not that story because it doesn't start there. And it doesn't end there. But first, you may think you've wandered into an ottoman discussion. This is a black swan. And the reason why we're talking about a black swan has to do not so much with black swans, but with the events that led up to the theft of sugar, and in my view made the theft inevitable. You notice the subtitle of my talk is the politics of taking sugar. And that's what we're going to talk a lot about today. But up until the end of the 17th century, everybody in Europe thought that all swans were white, because they'd never seen a swan that wasn't white. And it wasn't until Australia was discovered, discovered in quotes there in the latter part of the 17th century that people actually saw a
Agha Khan the third's blin, him winning the Epsom Derby. It was his first Epsom Derby winner. He was getting serious into the horse business by then particularly in England, Ireland and France. He stood blin him for a couple of seasons, and then sold the horse to a syndicate of people in the United States. The people, breeders in England were irate when this happened, because they had mares book to blend them for two years coming. And all of a sudden the horse was gone. There were lawsuits, there was an incredible amount of bad press. And the Agha Khan didn't deal with that very well. A few years later, he sold two more of his Darby winners to American syndicates. And the bad press started again. And one of the questions that I was really interested in investigating when I was doing research for this book was why shugar state in Ireland there were serious offers in the $40 million dollar range supposedly, from a syndicate in the United States to bring him over here at the end of his wrestling career. But he wound up in Ireland where he was syndicated for a lot less money. And one of the reasons I think is because of the current Agha Khan, who is the Agha Khan the fourth still had somewhere in the back of his mind the notion of all the bad press that his grandfather got when they sold linen. I think that was one of the reasons why he was reluctant to send a horse to the United States to send sureguard to the US I could be dead wrong about that, but I can't imagine it wasn't a factor. These are some of the players. At the very left is the Agha Khan the third this was in the mid 1950s Shortly before the Agha Khan died. In the middle is John Shapiro who was president of Laurel racecourse in Maryland at the time. And on the right is Prince Ali Khan, who is the son of the Agha Khan the third when the Agha Khan died, all the racehorses went to Prince Ali Khan who ran a successful stable himself for a few years. Then he was killed in an automobile accident. He was something of a playboy. He had an interesting reputation. And when he died, the Agha Khan the fourth the current Agha Khan took over. And there was a lot of questions about the inheritance here. But let's talk for a second now about these back black swan events. Two things happened in 1969. One happened in Northern Ireland, what happened to the south in the Republic of Ireland? In 1969, there was civil unrest, particularly in the northern part of Ireland. This was the Protestant part of Ireland ever since partition in 1920. And the situation was this. The Protestant segment of Northern Ireland had most of the power. This was there. Sort of birthright because England was now running the six counties in Northern Ireland. The Protestants had the power the Catholics didn't,
and it was akin to our civil rights, fights in the United States. There was a lot of civil unrest and the Irish Northern Irish police couldn't handle the crowds couldn't handle the riots. They called for help British troops came into Northern Ireland, and in August of 1969, there were British troops on the ground for the first time in decades. The result was the formation of the Provisional Irish Republican Army. There had always been an Irish Republican Army at least since partition, but the traditional IRA wasn't really interested in violence. The Provisional Irish Republican Army, on the other hand, was very interested in violence. They thought that was the way you drove the British troops out of Northern Ireland, and the goal was a United Ireland. This is a poster from the troubles. It was distributed by Shin Fane, which is the political arm of the Irish Republican Army. And again, the idea here is a united Ireland. They wanted the British out they wanted Ireland back to being one country instead of to the Irish Republican Army waged but they called a long war. Their idea was that if they keep bombing, if they keep killing, eventually the British will get tired of the situation and they will leave. But to make this work, they were spending a lot of money to buy weapons to, to buy supplies. Surprising, surprisingly, surprisingly, at least to me, one of the primary sources for weapons and money supporting the Irish Republican Army was the United States, particularly along the Atlantic coast in the Northeast, where there was a very powerful, very influential Irish contingent. When Lord Mountbatten, who was a member of the British Royal Family, was assassinated by the Irish Republican Army. Queen Elizabeth was obviously and understandably upset about that. She realized that money and weapons were coming from the US. She talked with Ronald Reagan, they were friends, she said, President Reagan, we need to get the FBI to stop this. For several years, the FBI had been ignoring the IRA, they had been giving them a pass because they had more interesting things to worry about. But with Queen Elizabeth and Ronald Reagan, both saying you guys need to fix this, they cracked down on the IRA. The results were a lot of federal indictments, federal trials, and the pipeline basically was shut down. The second leading source of money and weapons was Libya. And around the same time, and we're talking around 1980 81, here, Libya lost interest in the IRA, that they had other things to worry about. So you have a guerrilla band that is trying to drive the British troops out of Northern Ireland, and they're running out of money, they're running out of weapons. They began a campaign to the robbed post offices. They robbed any place they could find and they began kidnapping people. And one of their primary targets were executives from the grocery industry in Ireland. And the idea was, or the thinking was, at least, that grocery stores accept lots of small unmarked bills. And they thought that okay, if you've got a stack of unmarked bills, that's a perfect way to get ransom. Their attempts at ransom didn't work. They were either thwarted by the Irish police, or there was a ransom that actually succeeded. But the the executive was rescued without having any sort of a ransom being paid. Somewhere along the way, probably around 1982, late 1982, a mid level person in the IRA probably named Kevin Mellon, who was a notorious Ira person he had escaped from prison several times. The thought is that Kevin Malin said to his colleagues, we're not making any ground here kidnapping people. We're getting really bad publicity. There's a public backlash. We're not getting any money. Why don't we steal a horse you have the most valuable horse in Ireland, one of the most valuable horses in the world. Just down the road. He was a legitimate target for the IRA. But let's look at why he was the horse was in Ireland in the first place. We'll show you the players here. This is the current Agha Khan. This is one of the richest men in the world. He has an extraordinarily successful racing stable, and somehow he's able to balance the spiritual part of his life with the secular horseracing part of his life. And his followers don't seem to mind for decades at an occasional birthday celebration, more for the Agha Khan the third or for the current Agha Khan. The his followers would celebrate his birthday by giving him his weight in gold. And then they would give him his weight and diamonds or in platinum or something very, very valuable. And if you'll notice from the earlier slide, the Agha Khan The third was not a small guy. There was actually a reason for him to be will kindly say plump, because he was raking in a lot of money based on his stature
because his followers were giving him gold and diamonds and platinum. He was spending the money on humanitarian things. The current Agha Khan does the same thing. He spends a lot of money for good things for for his people and also for people in general. He's a great humanitarian, but he's also a really successful third Read owner so he can manage it. You our evangelical preachers don't do so well when they're trying to balance the spiritual and the secular, but he can do it. This is your gars owner. This is the trainer Sir Michael stout. shugar was his first Epsom Derby winner. He continues to be very successful he won a race at the Breeders Cup about a weekend ago. This is a jockey who wrote shugar Walter Swinburne. When he was hired as Michael stout, stable jockey, he was 19 years old, had never won a classic race. And there was a lot of criticism about having him as a jockey when there were many more experienced jockeys who wanted to ride Shergar, but it worked out really well. Walter Swinburne was on my list of people to interview his research. About a month before I made a trip to Ireland, he died. He he he fell out of his second storey bathroom window and killed himself. This is James Fitzgerald. He is the stud groom who was in charge of sureguard when he was stolen. He was kidnapped along with the horse. We'll talk more about that in a second. These are the players. But getting back to why shugar was in Ireland. I talked about black swan events. One of them was the establishment of the Irish Republican Army. The second thing that happened was in the south in the Republic of Ireland, but it also started in 1969. The Minister of Finance who was also a prominent thoroughbred person, pushed through the legislature a bill that eliminated any sort of tax on stud fees. And sugar was going to stand for around 80,000 pounds, maybe 100,000 pounds for each mare he covered. So there was a financial incentive for the very first time to stand a really valuable, really successful stallion in the Republic of Ireland. The Ira was looking for a target shugar was the target. And he was the target because of these two events that started 14 years before he was stolen. That make this in my view, a black swan event. And that's why I titled this talk the politics of taking Shergar. These two events and the chains that they started collided on February the eighth 1983 When the IRA stole sugar, they demanded a ransom they didn't get it. Sugar was never recovered. That's why I'm calling it a black swan event here. This is belly Mani stirred. This was a farm that belonged to the Agha Khan at the time. This is where shugar was standing. This is a stallion barn. It was a four stall barn. This is where the Fitzgerald family lived. Since the breeding shed, down here, somewhere was the road. There was a quarter mile by a paved road that led from the highway up to the barn. There was no security at all. The the only secure I say there's no security this is the security that there was there was a chain with a snap holding this big wooden gate shut. There was a little sign that said visitors please shut the gate. There's more security now. But that was the extent of the security. And this brings me back to the black swan event. Yeah, I suggested that it has to be unexpected. If anyone thought there was a chance that a horse lecture guard would be stolen, there would have been security. There's no doubt about that. There is a lot of security on the farms in Ireland now. Almost exclusively because shugar was stolen. But again, it was a totally unexpected event. One of the people I interviewed was a bloodstock agent named Jonathan, who came to the United States and bought a lot of horses. He since gave up the thoroughbred industry got involved in running a charity in Ireland. But while he was in the business, he had visitors clients who came to his office one day and said we'd like to go see sugar. This was in 1982. After he'd finished his first season it stood. Jonathan said sure we can do that we loaded These people up in the car drove to valley Manny. No one's at the gate. Jonathan gets out. On snaps the snap opens the gate they drive through closes the gate like the sign says, they drive up to the stallion bar, they still haven't seen anybody at all. They're trying to raise somebody who can get sugar out for them can't find a soul. Finally they go to the stallion barn. Jonathan Shepherd opens the gate opens the door. And the door has a big brass plate was sure got his name on it. So everybody knows who the horse is, of course, they would recognize him on site anyway. But they opened the door. Jonathan goes in gets sugar, puts a halter on him brings him over to the door. People pet him.
Turn sugar loose shut the door still haven't seen a soul and they drive away. That was the extent of security at Valley man. prior to February the eighth 1983. This was an accident waiting to happen. Sugar was so famous in Ireland he was essentially a national hero. And everybody in Ireland probably recognize the horse on site. He was very distinctive. He had a white Blaze, he had four white feet, he had what's called a walleye, which is when a lot of the white shows around your eye. So everybody recognize sugar. So if you're thinking of stealing a horse, you probably don't want to steal a horse that everybody recognizes that that's going to be not productive. But that's what happened. And I keep referring to the IRA as the individuals who stole sugar. I call the book thoroughbred Racing's most famous cold case, for one reason and one reason only. There's no doubt in my mind that the IRAs behind it, absolutely none. But the IRA never claimed responsibility for taking sugar. And at the time, the IRA claimed responsibility for everything bad that happened. They never claimed responsibility for sugar. There were never any arrests. There were never any convictions. The police files are still closed. I didn't have access to those because technically, it's an open case, although nobody has investigated this for three decades. So technically, it's a cold case. Realistically, the IRA did it. I'm very, very confident of that. But the fact that the IRA never accepted responsibility was one of the reasons that people in Ireland particularly sometimes questioned whether the IRA was actually responsible. The other reason was Ireland, is the most horse loving country in the world. And I know I'm saying this in Kentucky, but in Ireland. There's a love of horses that we don't know and understand. And the thought was, an Irishman wouldn't hurt a horse, they wouldn't hurt any horse, but they especially wouldn't hurt a horse like Shergar. My response to that, and this this question has come up to a lot of the people that I talked to in doing research for this, because this is still a very sensitive topic in Ireland. But if you look at the IRA's history, they have bombed places where horses had been killed in 1920, all the way back to the original Irish Republican Army. They derailed a troop train coming back from Northern Ireland into the Republic. 100 horses were killed. A lot of soldiers were killed. More recently, in 1982, the year before sugar was stolen. There was a massive car bomb in Hyde Park in London. The bomb was timed to match the passage of the Queen's guard, Queen's horse mounted guard from the stables to Buckingham Palace. Seven horses were killed, several soldiers were killed. So it's clear that the IRA didn't have a concern for the animals. It was all a political action. But where they were wrong, was the idea that taking sugar wasn't going to generate bad publicity for them and a public backlash. In England after the Hyde Park bombing. People were aghast at the fact that there was a bombing. But there was more public outcry because the horses were killed and because the soldiers were killed. In Ireland, there was an extraordinary public outcry when sugar was stolen. As I was looking through the old newspapers to get to see what was being reported, there were complaints From the families of people who had been kidnapped, who were angry that their father's kidnapping wasn't receiving the same publicity that the theft of sugar was getting. So it was it was an ill advised move to steal sugar. And in a lot of ways, it was an amateurish affair. You're stealing a horse that everybody recognizes. It's a miserable day, you're going to night, it was a coldest night in Ireland in 1983. It was rainy, it was sleet, it was miserable. You got to take the horse somewhere. What they didn't count on was the public outcry. What they did count on. And this is one of the reasons the stuffed has never been solved was the timing. They stole the horse on February the eighth, which is a few days before the start of the 1983 breeding season. So they reasoned that there would be a very, a great interest in getting the horse back because he's going to stand for a lot of money and the syndicate members have serious investments here. So the timing is good. Also on the same day, there was a major horse sale just down the road and kill at Gough's sales. So there were trailers and vans go coming and going all day and all night. So one more trailer on the road didn't stand out. If there hadn't been a sale, one trailer out on the road on a night like this would have attracted attention, but it did. So you're part of the The theft was well thought out. Part of it wasn't. The major mistake though, was thinking that the Agha Khan still on the horse.
The Agha Khan has all the money in the world. But sugar was syndicated. The Agha Khan was one owner. There were 34 others. Can you imagine trying to get an agreement among 35 people to decide whether to pay a ransom? The Ransom demanded was 2 million pounds, little under $4 million. So for everybody, I'll say almost everybody in the Syndicate, this was pocket change. But trying to get them to agree was impossible. There was a lot of concern that if they paid the ransom and got sugar back, every other valuable stallion in Ireland, and there were a lot of them by 1983 would be fair game. The Irish police said officially they discouraged a ransom. Unofficially, they said that they would prevent the syndicate from paying a ransom if it came to that. So this was the issue. They kidnapped the horse that they couldn't get a ransom for. The best guess as to what happened is that few days, probably two, maybe three days after he was taken sugar was injured. He was injured seriously enough that when nobody could take care of him. He was destroyed. Best guess he was machine gun to death in a in a county near the border with Northern Ireland and was buried in a bog. There's some question about that. But that's the best guess. And the best guess comes from a gentleman named Sean Callahan, who was an IRA member who became an informer for the Irish police. He wound up serving a lengthy sentence in prison and while he was in prison, he turned himself in because he thought the IRA was becoming wise to the fact that he was in fact a traitor. And while he was in prison, he wrote an autobiography. He devoted a few pages to the theft of sugar. He wasn't involved in the theft, but because of his IRA connections, and he was fairly high up in the hierarchy. He knew the people who did and his report of what they told him was that the horse injured himself he was killed and buried. The negotiations for ransom continued as if the horse was still alive. There were at least three sets of negotiations may be more than at least three that we know of. But Sean Callahan was a trader. Are you going to believe what a trader has said? Yeah, his. His his statements were always questionable because of his background. One of the things I came across in doing research here for this book was something that has, to my knowledge never been released. There have been no official police statements about what happened, because it's still technically an open case and a cold case. But insurance became an incredible bone of contention after the horse was stolen. Everybody in the syndicate had insurance because they were investing 250,000 pounds a piece to get a share of the horse. So they insured their interests. If you had mortality insurance, and you if you're familiar with the horse insurance, business, mortality insurance is for a horse that's dead. The other type of insurance is theft. If you had theft insurance, you got paid by the insurance companies very quickly, because he obviously had been stolen. If you had mortality insurance only, you didn't get paid, because there was no proof the horse was dead. They never did find his remains. And there are people who are still fighting the insurance companies today, you know, 35 years after the fact. But one of the people who fought the insurance companies and continues to do so is a veterinarian named Stan Cosgrove. Stan is one of the most famous veterinarians in Ireland. And he mortgaged everything he had to buy a share in sugar. For most of the shareholders, it wasn't a big deal. But for Stan, it was it was it was going to be his livelihood, and he was going to retire on shore gars studies. He only had mortality insurance. He didn't have theft insurance. The insurance company refused to pay. He began arguing with them. He didn't have the money to file a lawsuit. So he was just trying to negotiate. That didn't work. Finally, you know, 20 years later, a friend of his who operated a distillery in Dublin, decided to take upstands case. And he got in touch with the insurance company and I came across a stack of papers about an inch thick of correspondence that he had with the insurance company, trying to convince them that in fact, the horse had been killed. And among the statements I came across, was from an Irish police officer named Sean feely who had been part of the sugar investigation from the start, and who was familiar with all the records. And what this gentleman said under oath was that he was involved in investigation he had reviewed all the records. He had also read Shonto Callaghan's account of what happened to sugar. And based on his knowledge of the investigation, his knowledge of the record what Sean Callahan said that the horse had been
killed two or three days after he was stolen was accurate. That's the closest anyone has ever come to an official statement from the Irish police about what happened. There were a number of other prominent breeders who didn't have theft insurance. One group there's a very prominent stallion station in Ireland and county Tipperary named Coolmore. Coolmore came about because of the change in the tax structure. That's when they begin buying very, very expensive yearlings racing them and then retiring to stud. Cool. Morehead three shares in sugar. The owners of Coolmore did, they didn't have that insurance. So they sued their insurance company, their bloodstock agent and the insurance broker. And this is why they sued, they sued for negligence. Because at the time in Ireland and England, if you bought mortality insurance for your horse, you got theft insurance for free, if you just asked for it. But nobody in in the in the purchase, not the bloodstock agent, not the insurance agent, not the insurance company asked for it. So they argued in court, the Coolmore folks did that this is negligence, that they could have been covered for nothing that it wasn't gonna cost anything more. And the judge in the chancery court in London said no, that's not right. There was no negligence because no one in their right mind would ever believe that a horse is valuable to sugar would be stolen. It had never happened before. There was no reason to expect it to ever happen. And if you'll recall my discussion of a black swan event, that's why the theft of shugar was a black swan event. It was a political event. Totally unexpected. But in retrospect, you can look at the situation that got you there and say well, hey, this had to happen. These are two sketches a of the supposedly thieves. They're not very good. And nothing ever came of distribution of these. But the police were working. What hampered the police in a way that made the investigation doomed from the start was the timing. The gang came on to belly man he stood around nine o'clock in the evening. Sugar was taken half an hour later. James Fitzgerald was kidnapped a few minutes after that. Around midnight, they drove James Fitzgerald around in a car around midnight for a couple of hours around midnight, they let him leave at this little village called Kilcock. And he found a phone called his brother brother came and got him. They made their way back to valley Manny. But while all this was going on, James says Cheryl's family, his wife and six kids were being held at gunpoint by some of the people who stayed to guard the family. And the understanding was very clear in James to Cheryl's mind was that if he called the police or did anything, they his family would be killed. So we're two hours, maybe three, when he gets back to Bally Mani, and he still doesn't want to do anything. The people have gone, the people with the guns have left. There's nobody there. But he still is concerned based on the reputation well earned by the Irish Republican Army that his family is at risk that he's at risk, so he doesn't want to do anything. He finally calls the farm manager and says sugar has been stolen. The farm manager calls Stan cause Grove, the veterinarian Stan Cosgrave calls a friend of his named Captain Shawn Berry, who was one of the primary sources for my research here. And they all gather at the farm at belly mani and try and figure out what to do. It's now about four o'clock in the morning. Finally, they've been trying to track down the Agha Khan they can't find him. Finally, they locate him. And the Agha Khan says you need to call the police. Well, James six year old is still concerned about his family but they finally convinced him that hey, we have to call the cops. Eight hours after sureguard is stolen, the police are notified eight hours even driving very slowly in the weather with a horse trailer in eight hours from Kildare which is about 30 miles from Dublin. In eight hours, you can drive to any point in the Republic of Ireland and also get into Northern Ireland. Eight hours. There was absolutely no way the police were ever going to find out what happened to sugar. The trail was beyond cold at that point. Among the people I talked to was a fella named John coordinate. He was in charge at the time of the Irish police's murder squad. He investigated the assassination of Lord Mountbatten. He was involved in the recovery of some of the people who had been kidnapped by the IRA. He was very, very good. He told me that there was absolutely no doubt in his mind that it was the eight hour delay that during the investigation he had investigated Major Crimes all over Ireland, he considered the theft of sugar
are one of the most important crimes he investigated. And he was distraught, you know, 30 years later when I talked to him that he hadn't been able to solve this one. So this is what where we are here. You know, the horses gone. There are three sets of negotiations ongoing. And everybody is talking as if they are the group who took the horse and that they still have him. This is a grainy Polaroid photograph of a horse that appears to be sugar. You can see of the markings match. He's clearly distressed here. One of the negotiations involved the syndicate and a group of people who said we have sugar, we want $2 million or you going to pay and the syndicate representative said we're not going to pay until he have proof that sugar is still alive. This is three days after he was stolen three to four days. They asked for proof and the proof that was provided by this group of thieves were a bundle of Polaroid photographs. The police at the time said there were no photographs. And they never have officially said that there ever were photographs that were There were proof. One of the people that I came across was an insurance man named Julian Lloyd, who was involved. He was the boots on the ground for Lloyds of London, in the weeks after shugar was stolen. And when I interviewed him, he said something that was really strange. He said, you know, what you really need to do is talk to people from the Mobius group. He said the Mobius group were a group of psychics, who were from the United States who were hired by the insurance companies to locate sugar. The psychics were, according to Julian, people who did something called remote viewing, which I wasn't very familiar with at the time, but am now remote viewing was, and still is the idea that I can sit here in front of you, and close my eyes. And imagine what a missile base in Russia looks like. And I can draw a picture and describe it for you, and it will be accurate. Sounds like magic. So it's the goofiest thing that I've ever heard. Turns out that the CIA and military intelligence and the Nazis back during World War Two, have put an extraordinary amount of money into research and remote viewing. And it has a surprisingly successful record in locating missing people, locating archaeological sites that people haven't been able to find. There's some legitimacy to this. But all he could remember was the Mobius group. I spent a year almost a year and a half trying to figure out what the Mobius group was. He told me that they were working for the CIA doing top secret investigations and remote viewing. Couldn't find anything. Earlier in 2017, I came across one mention in one website on the internet that linked a Mobius group to a fella named Steven shorts. I sent Steven shorts, who was living on an island off the coast of Washington State. I sent him a blind cold email saying, Were you ever involved in the investigation of the theft of sugar and thought, I'll never hear from this guy. I got an almost immediate response. And the response began with I don't know how you found me. But now if you're a journalist, you know that that means something. I was a week away from going to Ireland for another research trip, I flew to Washington, I spent two days at Stephen Schwartz's house, he gave me access to three legal file boxes of material that nobody had opened for 35 years. Nobody had ever seen this before. In rummaging through that. I came across an envelope that had this, this photograph, this Polaroid photograph, part of the remote viewing, they wanted to have items that had been associated with sugar. So the people in Ireland and England from Lloyds of London who had hired them, they actually had been hired by Lloyds of London. They sent them a lot of newspaper clippings. They sent this photograph, they sent a shin booth, which is a protective booth that horses were that had been sureguard. And they sent a large piece of felt that was from one of his saddle pads. So the remote viewers could actually touch something that had been touching sureguard some point. I've tried to track down the origin of this photograph and can't. I'm 99% convinced that this is one of the photographs that was offered as evidence if sugar was still alive by one of the groups who claimed to have him. I'm not 100% Sure. But I would bet a significant amount of money that it is just because it came from the sugar people. It came from the syndicate people. It came from the insurance companies. And it was presented as a photograph of sureguard after he was stolen. To my knowledge, no one's ever seen this before until it shows up in the book. But that was the sort of research I was doing. You know, when I try and come up with a
topic for a book. I'm looking for something that is a story people think they know. But in fact they really don't. And sugar fits. Sugar fits very well. But this was one of the most interesting things I came across. I came across this while I was sitting in Stephen Schwartz his living room on a dining room table that once had belonged to Jefferson Davis. And I couldn't believe what I'd failed but let's talk about sugar a little. Yeah, I've told you how valuable he is. I've told you how important he was to the Irish to the syndicate. This is why he was important. This is the Epsom Derby. It's the first classic in our in England, it's the equivalent of our Kentucky Derby. This is shugar winning by 10 legs. This was a 200 and second running of the Epsom Derby. Nobody had won the race by that larger margin before nobody's won by that larger margin since this is what made shugar a national hero. This is the Irish sweeps derby. This is in run at the Carrera in Ireland. The car is about 100 yards from belly Manny said this is your garden winning impressively. This is the King George the sixth and Queen Elizabeth stakes at Ascot in England. This is shugar winning again. He's beating older horses now. It was during the Ascot meeting that he was syndicated. That's when they sold the shares for 250,000 pounds. This is shugar his last race to St Leger at a track called Doncaster. Oops. This is sugar, finishing fourth. This was the second time sugar lost. His first defeat came in when he was two year old in a race at the same course. After the race. The Agha Khan said we're going to retire and the plan had been to race him at the the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, they decided to retire him to study instead. When I was talking to Michael stout about sugar, I asked him about the st. Ledger. And keep in mind this is now one of the most famous trainers most successful trainers in England. He doesn't have to make excuses. He said to me, which I thought was an astounding statements from a prominent trainer. He said that racing sugar in the st. Leger was the biggest mistake I've ever made as a trainer. The going was very soft. Sugar had been raced a lot. He had a a lengthy season. He wasn't up for it. And Michael stout admitted that he should never have let the Agha Khan run him there. This is a statue of sugar at gilthead stood in Ireland one of the AGA Khan's farms. You'll notice it's taken from the left side. This was a photograph that was provided by the Agha Khan studs. And let's look back here for just a second. You can't really see it there. But he's running with the tongue, his tongue hanging out of the right side of his mouth. The Agha Khan hates that. And that's why every photograph official photograph at least of the statue at Gill town studies from the left side. Last year, the Royal Mail in England did a series of postage stamps, honoring famous horses. This ensured our stamp. So this is my take on the politics of the theft of sugar. It was clearly a political act in my mind. But as unexpected as it was, when you look back, it was inevitable. It was inevitable that the Irish Republican Army would be looking for a target. It was inevitable that shugar would be that target because of the economic situation in the Republic of Ireland. So any questions?

Question 49:17
If you have a question, go ahead and raise your hand. I'll bring the mic to you that way everyone will will be able to hear you. When you were interviewing people like Sir Michael stout, were they willing to talk to you about it? Or did it? Were they not so willing?

Milton Toby 49:36
The people who were willing to talk were willing, the people who refuse to talk obviously were not and there were several of those. There were also a few people who wanted to talk without being acknowledged as a source. Michael stout was initially interested only in talking about sugar as a resource but After about an hour of chatting with him and being driven around new
market, we began talking about the theft and what it meant to him. So it’s sort of dependent on
the person’s relationship with the horse. So some people were very willing some word. And I
the Agha Khan was not interested, he refused to be involved at all. He said he wanted to put it
behind him. Or at least that’s what he what his representative said that he said, if you’re the
Agha Khan, and you are as rich as anybody in the world, you have about seven layers of people
before you ever get to the Agha Khan. So I have no idea whether he ever saw my request to to
look at his records. I'm guessing that he might have but I would be just as likely to say he
wasn't and that somebody else was saying, we're not going to bother the AGA with this. We're
just going to say no.

**Question 50:54**
It did. charcoal or did he breed successfully? Or was there an opportunity? I'm sorry? Did he
have progeny sugar,

**Milton Toby 51:05**
he stood one full season it stood. He had 34 named foals. He had two or three not nice horses,
but probably not as good as people expected. He had a horse that won the Irish St. Leger,
which was, you know, a classic in Ireland. But generally, they were probably not as good as you
would think. Because when you look at how much money the syndicate members had, you
have to think he was bred to as good a book of mirrors as anybody would ever cover. So it
would have been interesting to see what would have happened in future said seasons. Do you
try to talk to anybody in the heart top hierarchy of the era I, I had a, an associate in Ireland who
made contact with some people in the IRA. And they wouldn't talk. Basically, I mentioned a fella
named Kevin Mellon. He he has denied being involved. He still lives north of Dublin, and goes to
the betting shops almost every day. So I haven't gotten anything definitive from the IRA. And
again, I think part of that is because even now I think they view the theft of sugar as an
incredible mistake. And they just don't want to be associated with it. Other than to say, Hey,
don't do anything about it. Yes,

**Question 52:31**
to your knowledge, were there any subsequent copycat thefts, other valuable horses, especially
in the states here?

**Milton Toby 52:42**
There were a there have been a few really good racehorses that have been stolen. There was a
brood bear named fan for louche, who was a Canadian champion. She was stolen at Claiborne
farm back in the 70s, and she was recovered down in Tompkinsville. The family down there said
they found her wandering along the road with a rope. They were using her as a riding horse for
their kids named brandy, and were stunned to find out that they had a horse that was carrying
a really valuable fold. There was an Italian horse that race for a Nelson bunker Hunt of the hunt
family that had that were involved with the Dallas Cowboys for a while. But this horse was
stolen in pardon me. Her name was carnuba in Italy, and she was recovered to she was
recovered in standing in the yard of a butcher shop. There have been a couple of yearlings that have just vanished out of the Keeneland sale over time, but there's been nothing on the scale of sugar. And there's been nothing, no serious stuff that hasn't been resolved. Thank you very much. Thank you