

Horses reportedly slain for insurance payoffs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — As many as 40 owners, trainers, veterinarians and riders have been involved in plots to kill thoroughbreds and show horses to collect insurance money, according to Sports Illustrated.

Agents of the FBI, Internal Revenue Service and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms are investigating, and indictments are expected, the magazine reported.

The report, which appears in the Nov. 16 issue, raises questions about the injury that led to Alydar being destroyed two years ago. Alydar was the runner-up to Affirmed in three 1978 Triple Crown races and later became one of racing's best sires.

The report details how horses were electrocuted by Tommy Burns, known in the horse industry as the Sandman because when he was around, a horse would be put to sleep. Death by electrocution is difficult to detect, according to vets at the University of Pennsylvania, a leading large animal hospital. Usually, SI said, electrocuted horses were assumed to have died of colic.

Burns faces sentencing Dec. 14 in the death of Streetwise, a show horse who died after suffering a broken leg in his stall. Burns and Harlow Arlie, whom SI said used a crowbar to break the horse's right rear leg, were apprehended by Florida investigators shortly after the episode. Arlie pleaded guilty to charges of insurance fraud and cruelty to animals, serving six months of an 18-month sentence.

SI said Streetwise's death was ordered by the horse's owner, Donna Brown, to collect a \$25,000 insurance policy. Because the ani-

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mal had a history of colic, the policy did not cover that condition and so, the magazine said, Brown insisted the leg be broken.

In the 21 months since Burns and Arlie were arrested, investigators have developed hard evidence that such crimes are widespread. Part of the reason may be the 1986 Tax Reform Act that eliminated performance horses as depreciable assets, making hefty insurance payoffs appealing alternatives.

Harvey Feintuch, a New York attorney who investigates equine insurance claims, said, "We have had a very, very significant increase in the number of claims that just don't look right."

Alydar was destroyed Nov. 15, 1990 after Calumet Farm said he kicked his stall so hard that he shattered his right hind leg, an unusual way for a horse to break one of its strongest bones. Calumet's slip into bankruptcy raised questions about the death of the horse, insured for \$36.5 million.

SI said that according to court records, Calumet had debts of \$120 million and the farm's president, J.T. Lundy, had sold many of Alydar's lifetime breeding rights.

Notes

■ Jockey **Chris Antley** was thrown to the track by a 2-year-old mount, **Koluctoo Jimmy Al**, at Aqueduct yesterday. Antley was taken to Long Island Jewish Hospital, where an administrator said he was treated for minor injuries and released. Track officials said Antley was kicked in the side.

■ **Pleasant Tap**, runner-up to **A.P. Indy** in the \$3 million Breeders' Cup Classic two weeks ago, has been retired and will stand stud at Buckland Farm in Lexington, Ky.