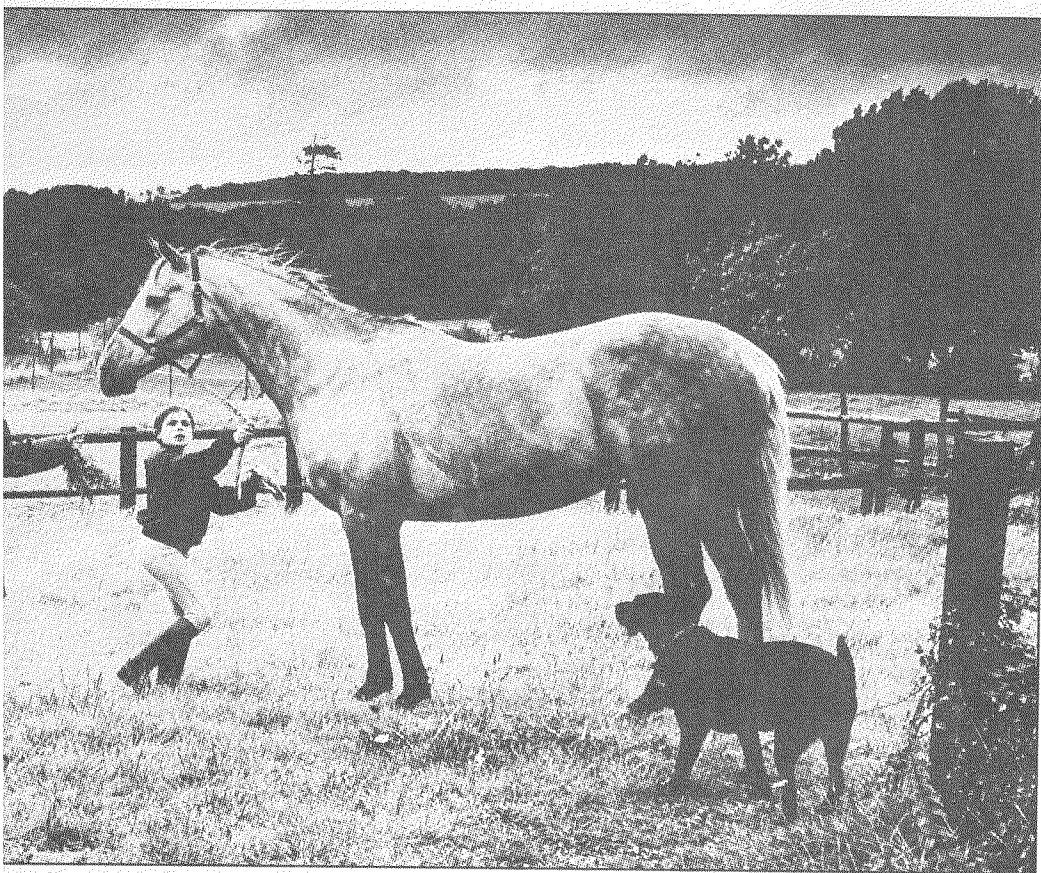


f the horse 'rippers'



ally assaulted with a long blunt instrument./Photograph by John Voos, *Independent*.

nisses the cult theory. 'Belonging to a cult, however bizarre its practices, requires an intellectual framework and an ability to relate socially.'

He said the animal attacker will be mentally, psychologi-

cally and educationally disadvantaged'. He would 'almost certainly' be male and young. In his childhood he may have shown signs of cruelty to animals and have had a predilection for arson. He was likely to

be a menial worker with animals.

Because he was equipped with knives and other instruments and had clearly stalked his prey beforehand, the attacks were likely to recur. 'He obvi-

ously thinks about the attack in advance, which shows it is not impulsive and is therefore likely to happen again.'

Police and horse owners remain mystified as to how the ripper gets near to the horses. They say the assailant must be knowledgeable about horses, but equine experts say that without drugging, it is almost impossible to get near the rear of a horse and interfere with it without being kicked.

Horses often appear drugged after an attack, but this may be because of trauma or blood loss. A vet's syringe was found in Mrs Jones's paddock, but police think it could have been picked up in a horse's hoof from nearby stables where veterinary injections were common. Dope tests on injured horses have been negative.

One theory is that the attacker uses 'twitching' — a way of pinching a horse's nose to release pain-killing and relaxant endorphins into the horse's system. However, this would probably require two people: one to apply the twitch and one to attack the horse.

Despite most official beliefs that the attacker must be a loner, Mrs Gray is convinced he must live near people and that someone must have seen him soon after an attack. 'If you attack a horse in the way he has, you will get blood all over your clothes. Someone has seen him and may even be sheltering him. I appeal to them to give him up before he strikes again.'