

# Secretariat, the big red horse

Business



The Kentucky Derby- Secretariat The outcome of the last race had left everyone a little hesitant.

Secretariat, also affectionately called “ Big Red,” was ready to run in the Kentucky Derby. The prep race before the Kentucky Derby was not exactly a positive, reassuring step forward for Secretariat. He had a major winning streak as a 2 year old, and was continuing amazingly as a 3 year old.

However, Big Red couldn't quite pull ahead and win his last race. Everyone wondered if that meant he was losing his edge.

Big Red was born on Meadow Farms in Caroline County, Virginia, as the result of a lost coin toss. A deal was made between two big horse racing farms, in 1968. The deal was that the winner would get the foal from a proven stud, (father) and a dam (mother) with promising bloodlines. The Chenery family can happily say that losing that coin toss, and consequently getting the colt that was not considered worth it, was definitely worth it. Everyone except Penny Chenery, Big Red's owner's daughter, slightly doubted he could win this HUGE race. She had not been around horses in a long time, but she returned home when her father was ill.

Once she got back on the farm, she couldn't make herself leave. She helped persuade the barn managers to train Secretariat because he had promising bloodlines. People scoffed at her, because in the 60's and 70's, “ women didn't know what was best for a business.” She proved them all wrong. “ Lucien, tell me you believe he can win... Please? I need to hear you say it. I need someone else to believe in him,” Penny pleaded.

“ I believe that this is his day. He can win it, I know he can, but Ron has to push him!” “ We will do what we can do, Lucien. It’s his chance to fly, but he has to want to win, too. I am nervous about this race, and you know I am... The last time I ran it, was during the accident,” Ron interjected. Everyone stood nervously outside Secretariat’s stall in the race horse barn at Churchill Downs. The tension was blatantly obvious.

The nervousness in the air was so intense, that it could almost be heard. Perhaps the slight “ hummmmm” all around was the buzz of electricity coming from the hyped up stallions, and their anxious owner’s. The sky was blue, and the sun was shining. All around you could hear the prancing of the horse’s hooves clicking on the pavement. No person involved with any of the horses could bring themselves to eat the food being sold at the concession stand. The nervousness they felt clawed at their stomachs, and made keeping the food down, nearly impossible.

The horses, however, didn’t have that problem. They happily scarfed down the buckets of grain and bags of hay that were placed in their stall. Many of the horses were shipped in to The Downs a few days before the race, so they could settle in and get used to the setting. May 6th, 1973, was the big day. A few hours before the race was going to begin, the real preparations began.

“ Ok, Ron. I think we should start warming him up now. We have about 2 hours before the race is to start,” Lucien said, with a hint of nervousness finally showing through his voice. “ Yes sir. Gimme a leg up?” Ron asked. “ 1, 2, 3...hmp! Up you go, shrimp.

“ Hey now. Easy with the name calling. I don't see your fat ass up here, riding Red to the winners circle, now do I, Lucien?” “ Point taken... You know I would if I could...” Lucien led Big Red, with the little jockey on his muscular back, out of the barn and into the sunshine. “ Luce, something's wrong with him. He's not himself,” Ron stated in a slightly shaky voice.

“ I'm sure he's just excited. That's why he's prancing,” replied Lucien. “ Nah, he feels...Easy Red! Whoa buddy, it's ok!” Lucien struggled as the chain shank slid through his sweaty hands, while the massive horse reared into the air. “ Ok, I believe you, Ron. Now what the hell is up with him?!” Ron held on to the thin mane of his steed, and kept his balance until he planted all four hooves back on the ground. “ Oy, it's ok Red.

It's fine. I know you hate him...That's why we gotta beat him today...” whispered Ron into Secretariat's ear. “ Who are you talking about..... oh. Ah, it's Sham...Hello.

Now get away from my horse. He doesn't need to deal with your shit,” spat Lucien. Lucien glared at the fat, balding man who was leading a tall bay horse, ridden by a tiny Spanish jockey. Sham was the rival of Secretariat, and his biggest competitor for this race. Secretariat had beaten Sham in three previous races, and Sham's trainer, Frank “ Pancho” Martin, hated Lucien with a passion for having a more successful steed. The two horses glared through the five feet of space between them, as if nothing else existed.

Sham was cocky and arrogant, just like his trainer and jockey. Secretariat was big hearted and loving, just like his trainer and jockey. Sham began to

<https://assignbuster.com/secretariat-the-big-red-horse/>

paw at the pavement, and an eerie sound came from the metal shoes grating on the cement ground. Big Red threw his head into the air, with an annoyed squeal. Just as Lucien was about to tell Pancho to get the hell away from his horse, Sham made his move. The bay stallion reared onto his back legs, and struck out at Secretariat.

In response, Secretariat reared as well, trying to protect himself, and his people. Sham's metal clad hoof dealt a blow to Secretariat's front leg, causing him to return to the ground on all fours. "Control your damned horse! For Christ's sake, Frank, get him away!" Lucien screeched. Ron immediately dismounted and took Red back to the barn while Lucien let his fury out on Frank. Ron told Penny what had happened, and they promptly applied ice to Red's leg, to keep swelling to a minimum.

Anyone who looked upon those people would see the fire that burned in their eyes. Everyone wanted that win, and it would be easy to say even Red himself wanted to win, especially to beat Sham. Penny kept Secretariat's leg iced as long as possible. An hour before the race started, they decided they couldn't wait any longer, and they had to get him warmed up. Penny led Red up and down the aisle while Lucien watched his prancing gait.

"He's a strong horse. I think he will be fine. He's not lame, and he still has his spunk. Come on Ron, let's win this race!" Lucien bellowed. Lucien gave the little jockey a boost onto the lanky three year old, and led them out of the barn once again, wary of their enemies.

Once they exited the barn, Lucien led Red around the whole circuit of the barn, just to keep him moving and warmed up. The closer it got to race time,  
<https://assignbuster.com/secretariat-the-big-red-horse/>

the nervous everyone became. Everyone knew that this race was a big deal, and there was a lot on the line. Some of these horses were trying for the Triple Crown, and nobody had won the Triple Crown races in many, many years. The sun had begun to slowly descend in the western sky, but it was still sweltering. The horses and people alike were sweating and swatting flies.

They were all anxious to get out of the heat, but that paled in comparison to the anxiousness they felt for the Kentucky Derby to start. About 15 minutes before the race whistle sounded, Lucien began to walk with Red to the starting gates. It usually took a little while for everyone to get the fiery horses to the gate, and into the correct chutes. "Ok Ron... It's time for me to hand you over to them... I know you can do this, and I know Red can do this, too. Just do your thing, and let Red do his," exclaimed Lucien.

"Yes boss. Will do," Ron replied, with a confidence that could be felt, more than heard. Ron wanted to win this more than anything. The first whistle sounded right after Secretariat was lead into his chute. He was always easy to lead in, while the majority of the other stallions were full of liveliness.

A few minutes went by while the remaining horses were ushered into their chutes, and Ron took the time to send up a little prayer and talk to Red. "Ok big boy. This is your one shot. This is the only time you'll get to run this race. I know you'll gimme your all...and I hope it's enough to win.

Let's just fly, Red. Let's make Miss Penny and The Boss Man proud... Mr. Chenery isn't doin' so good, I know this ' cause he never used to miss a race. Let's run this race for him, and make him a proud boss. M'kay buddy?" The <https://assignbuster.com/secretariat-the-big-red-horse/>

warning shot went off, and Ron pulled his goggles into place, and took two-point position. Secretariat restlessly pawed at the earth beneath his hooves.

The final shot rang out, and for a fraction of a second the world was still, then the chute gates burst open, and the sound of thundering hooves filled the air. The crowd screamed and hollered, cheering on the horses. Penny looked nervously for the blue and white checkered pattern that Ron wore in this race. She needed to see if he had gotten a good start. Penny's heart sunk.

Secretariat was only three from last, and he didn't seem to be going very fast. She had seen him run much faster before. "Go, Ron, GO!" Penny screamed. She took a breath and tried to convince herself that he was still going to win. Maybe his leg was bothering him.

Maybe everyone was right. Maybe she had been wrong about his ability to run this mother of all races. No. She was not wrong. She couldn't let herself think that way.

He could win. Slowly, Secretariat began to gain speed, and position. He passed one, then two, then four horses! He was getting even faster! That was unheard of! Horses never increase speed as the race goes on, because they always tire and start to lag. Secretariat was then only two from the lead, only one away from Sham. Ron was letting Secretariat run, but he wasn't yet pushing him. Ron glanced under his arm to see how close the others were.

It was then that he was bumped from the other side, and his foot slipped out of the stirrup. His mind flashed back to the accident, and his heart stopped beating. He could see the way things would go. He would lose his balance and fall from his steed, and be trampled by the other pounding hooves. Somehow, Ron snapped out of his panic-stricken state and tried to find his footing.

Only two strides had passed, and Ron had found his stirrup again. He took the whip out of between his teeth, and tapped Red's right shoulder. Red instantly responded. The final corner was almost upon them, and this was where Ron was going to make his move. He swatted Secretariat's right side with the whip and in another burst of speed, the stallion pushed forward.

They rounded the final corner, and they were still only two from the lead. This was where Ron acted. He switched the crop into his left hand and flashed it in front of Red's left eye so he could see it. " Now. Let's. Go.

Red!" Ron yelled. With an astounding final burst of energy, Secretariat launched himself forward, and within a second he had passed the second place horse. Ron gave one last nudge in Red's side, and pushed him forward. Sham was the only one left between them and victory. Red could tell what he had to do.

With energy that nobody imagined he could have left, Red powered forward and passed Sham! He lead by a nose, then a head, then an entire length, but Secretariat kept pushing stronger yet! He passed the finishing flag with multiple lengths between himself and Sham! " IT'S SECRETARIAT! AND HE'S GOT HIMSELF THE KENTUCKY DERBY! This is a new track time record!

<https://assignbuster.com/secretariat-the-big-red-horse/>



Secretariat has done it!" Screamed the announcer. Penny Chenery was crying from the joy she felt as she rushed out to the winner's circle. She, Lucien, and their groom all stood in the circle surrounding Secretariat, with Ron, beaming on his back. The long woven Blanket of Roses was draped over Red's shoulders, and the cameras began to flash like lightning. Immediately the journalists asked if Secretariat was going to try for the Triple Crown. Of course he would! Secretariat had just set the new Churchill Downs track speed record, and he was going to show the world just how amazing he was.

After the buzz of the win dimmed down a bit, Penny, Lucien and Ron headed home, with Big Red in the trailer. When they finally pulled in the driveway of Meadow Farms, Penny sighed a breath of relief. She got out of the truck and hurried inside to tell her father about the win of his colt. Mr. Chenery was still not well, and he was slowly slipping away.

Penny told her father the good news, and he just stared off into space. She began to weep, and laid her head on her old father's shoulder. He gently squeezed her hand once. She smiled and told him she loved him, then kissed him on the forehead and helped him into bed. The next morning Penny awoke to find her father had passed away in his sleep.

A tear rolled down her pale cheek, but she knew that he had waited until his colt had won, to leave and soar to heaven. Penny smiled, despite her sadness, when she pictured her father healthy again, riding a tall, muscular horse up in the clouds. She knew he was happy again, and she knew he was proud of her, and Secretariat, the big, red horse.