

COMMENT

'It was, and remains, the most heartbreaking thing I've seen'

Last week we revealed how former trainer Kamil Mahdi, warned off in September 2003 for ten years for cruelty to racehorses, had sounded out the BHA about re-entering the sport. **Peter Scargill**, Racing Post journalist and son of trainer Jon Scargill, says that must never be allowed to happen



IT SEEMS like such a long time ago but when I read recently that Kamil Mahdi is trying to slither his way back into racing I was instantly transported back to a scene of utter devastation, hopelessness and shame.

In early February 2002, I was one of a small group of people, including my parents, who climbed over the gates of the deserted Green Ridge Stables where Mahdi had trained across the road from our own yard on Newmarket's Hamilton Road.

We walked up the short drive and into the courtyard where water was running from a hose straight into a drain and a bright spotlight shone into the darkness, although nothing could have prepared me for the horror that we were greeted with soon after.

Going around the yard, opening stable doors one by one, we found inside emaciated, cowering horses standing on six inches of their own faeces and urine.

I was 14 when we found these poor animals and it was, and remains, the most heartbreaking thing I have seen in my life and it is forever seared on my brain.

We found 12 in total and the condition of five – Awassi, Chillisima, Hamadeen, Mount Holly and Desert Warrior – Mahdi would be prosecuted for after he caused them unnecessary suffering. He was sentenced to 240 hours of community service and a lifetime ban from keeping horses. He was also banned from horseracing for ten years by the Jockey Club.

Of course, Mahdi would like everyone – including the BHA – to forget this event after he has served his suspension from our great sport, which ends soon.

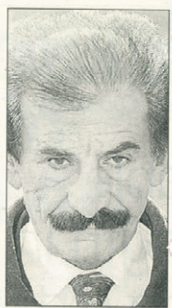
It must not be allowed to happen because one of the bravest, most wonderful creatures I have had anything to do with died following this man's neglect.

The last box we opened that evening contained Desert Warrior and if you were to draw a stick diagram of a horse

Mahdi is warned off for ten years

GRAHAM GREEN
FORMER trainer Kamil Mahdi was warned off for ten years yesterday when he appeared before

of Desert Warrior, Chillisima, Awassi, Hamadeen and Mount Holly between December 13, 2001 and February 7, 2002, when Mahdi, although no longer a trainer



Kamil Mahdi
Guilty of cruelty to horses
the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes, but his licence lapsed on January 31, 2001, and a later application for renewal was turned down on financial grounds.



How we reported the Jockey Club ruling in September 2003 and (above) an emaciated Desert Warrior

it would be an accurate representation of what he looked like.

My parents were brilliant dealing with a great deal of bureaucratic incompetence that surrounded these horses and set about saving their lives instantly.

The horses were walked across the road to our stables and treated with the love, care and respect they deserved. Eleven of them would be rehomed.

As you can imagine, they were tired after being forced to stand in squalid, filthy conditions so they lay down for a rest, Desert Warrior among them. However, he did not have the strength to get back up.

THE vets were called and we managed to lift him into a sling, suspending him in the air. One of my dad's staff broke her ankle when the horse fell on her as we tried to slide the sling under him.

We fed him by hand and spent time making sure he was okay. We had hoped we could keep him when he recovered. Despite everything that happened to him he remained the most kind horse and he deserved a second chance with people who would love him.

One day my dad led Desert Warrior out of his stable a few metres for a pick of grass while Mum cleaned out his bed. Desert Warrior collapsed. He never got up. I still feel utterly hollow whenever I think about it.

A post-mortem found Desert Warrior had zero per cent body fat. Zero per

cent. The vets told my parents he had cannibalised his muscles to stay alive and his chances of survival were always low, as muscle is not reformed the same way as fat.

Mahdi brought shame on horseracing. Mahdi brought shame on Newmarket as the home of the sport. Mahdi brought shame on anyone who has ever watched these wonderful, kind creatures and the name Mahdi should conjure up feelings of revulsion that any man could allow this to happen. Mahdi claims medical and domestic problems absolved him of responsibility but, whatever the circumstances, no excuse is good enough.

Taking care of your horses is the single most important thing in horseracing. People have a duty of care to horses and they are not there to be cast aside, forgotten about and left to suffer because your situation has changed or because it is the easier thing to do.

The BHA has the power to keep Mahdi away from horseracing for the rest of his life and it should seek to implement those powers.

Mahdi says he needs to be with horses. History would show that those feelings come and go.

If the welfare of horses means anything to the BHA and to those of us who love horseracing, Mahdi must remain as far away from the sport as possible and given no second chance. His actions meant Desert Warrior never got one.

COMING UP IN THE RACING POST

Tomorrow

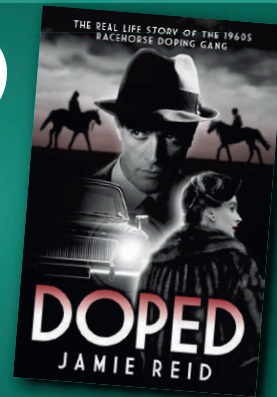
GREAT RACING PARTNERSHIPS



Day two of our week-long series features Vincent O'Brien and Lester Piggott

DOPED

In the first of two extracts from a fascinating new book, a smart two-year-old is got at



Wednesday

PIPE AND SCUDAMORE

Day three of Great Racing Partnerships



DERBY FAVOURITE DOPED SHOCK

The second of two extracts from the new book Doped, by Jamie Reid

Thursday

ALL EYES ON HQ

A top-class card at Newmarket features the reappearance of Classic hope Berkshire in the Somerville Tattersall Stakes

