

TELEGRAPH

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DAVID HOCKNEY
PAINTS THE STAGE

A FAST RIDE TO THE TOP

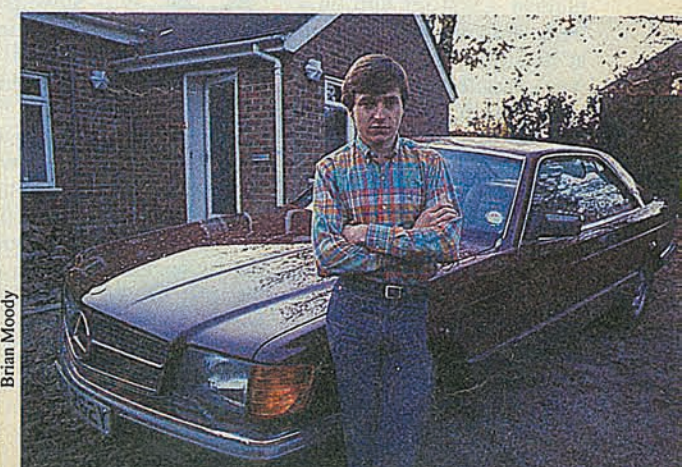
By the age of 17 Steve Cauthen was known as the Six Million Dollar Kid. Still only 25, Champion Jockey in 1984 and with three Classic wins to his credit this year, he is widely regarded as the heir apparent to Lester Piggott.

By Robert Temple

A delighted Epsom crowd and millions watching television saw Slip Anchor win this year's Derby by a remarkable seven lengths. For many it was confirmation that the jockey, Steve Cauthen, was the obvious heir apparent to Lester Piggott's crown as flat racing's top rider. For Piggott, winner of nine Derbys, it was his last ride in the Classic race; it was the first time Steve had won it. "He is next to perfection", says the *Sunday Telegraph* racing correspondent John Oaksey. "He is definitely the best jockey riding in Britain. He has being a jockey down to a fine art".

Cauthen, still only 25, has already stepped into Lester Piggott's stirrups this season as the lead jockey for trainer Henry Cecil, while Piggott has been working as a freelance in his last season before retiring. Now, with three Classic wins already under his belt in 1985 - the 1,000 Guineas, the Derby and the Oaks - Cauthen is tipped to become the first jockey since Sir Gordon Richards to ride 200 winners in a season. He has already

Steve Cauthen (top) in the starting stalls before a race. Lower row, from left: taking the lead on Claude Monet at Newmarket; being greeted by trainer Henry Cecil at the Oaks; watching a game of cards in the jockeys' changing room at Newmarket; and away from the track, where Cauthen leads a relatively quiet, unostentatious life



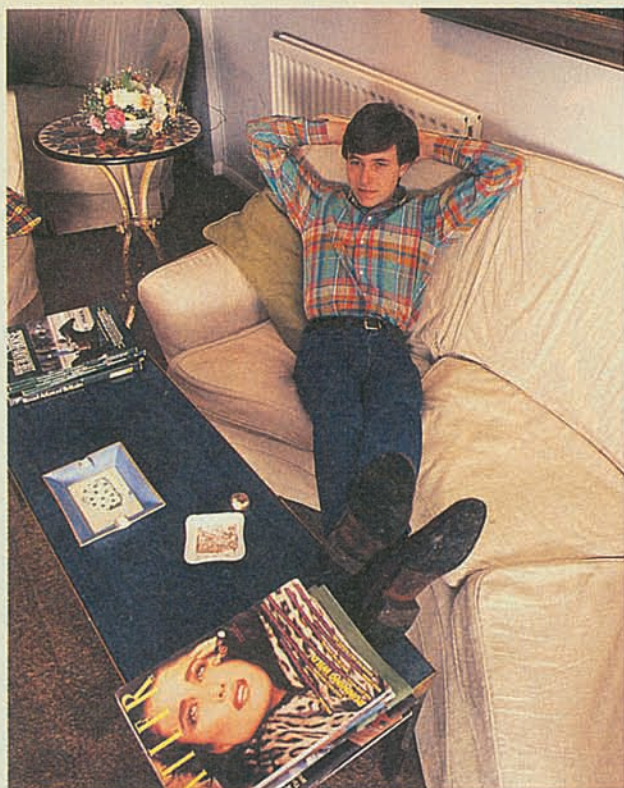
David Hurn/Magnum

Bob Thomas

Ed Byrne

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Brian Moody



Brian Moody

"I have always been told that I was born with a 60-year-old head on my shoulders", says Steve Cauthen (left). True to form, he is already considering what he will do when his riding days are over, and plans to become an owner and breeder himself. Right: Cauthen in conversation with trainer Henry Candy (centre), for whom he sometimes rides



David Hurn/Magnum

set another record by becoming the first jockey to win both the Kentucky and the Epsom Derbys.

Today Cauthen has a small house near Henry Cecil's stables at Newmarket, having recently moved there from Lambourn, Berkshire—only a few miles from Crowthorne, where his ancestors are thought to have come from (the name Cauthen may be a corruption of Crowthorne). He speaks more with a Berkshire burr than a Kentucky drawl, but he still regards his father's 50-acre farm at Walton, Kentucky, as home. "It's one of the few places I can be left alone", he says. To everyone in Walton he is now a celebrity and for the past couple of years there has been a big sign painted on a water tower saying "Home of Steve Cauthen". "I'm flattered that they think me worth it", he says.

His father, Tex—Texas-born and married to a Kentuckian—first set him on a horse at the age of two, and at 12 Steve told him that he was going to be a jockey. A few days after his 16th birthday he had his first professional win and shortly afterwards, when he was 17, he earned the title of the Six Million Dollar Kid when, in his first full season, he won the American championship and \$6m. for the winning owners. But that was followed by two lean seasons,

before he was spotted by British racehorse-owner Robert Sangster and persuaded to leave the American circuit and ride for him and his trainer, Lambourn-based Barry Hills. He then had a spectacular win in his first race here, the 1979 2,000 Guineas (his only Classic win before this season), but there were four years when he seemed to have no luck at all: equine virus hit Hills' stables, and Cauthen found great difficulty in adapting to the British turf after the dirt racecourses of the U.S.

"But now he has completely adapted himself to our conditions", says John Oaksey. Cauthen proved it last season by taking the jockeys' championship with 113 winners to the 83 of runner-up Pat Eddery and Lester Piggott's 78.

Henry Cecil is, naturally, enthusiastic about his new leading jockey. "Steve is, if anything, more ambitious than I am, so together we should make a great team", he says.

His quiet confidence and ability to mix well with jockeys, owners and trainers has been an important part of his success here according to Roger Mortimer, author of *The History of the Derby*. "He is sophisticated and well-mannered", says Mortimer. "Some of the

jockeys have been brought up with nothing and then suddenly, as lads of 18, they've got £20,000 a year and it goes to their heads".

But Cauthen gets on well with fellow riders and works hard at keeping their friendship. "I have never been in a fight in the jockeys' changing room", he says (scraps are quite common there), and he worries about how his success may affect his colleagues. "If you see someone is beginning to become a bit envious you try to make it better. But there are some people who are going to feel envy whatever you do. You just have to leave them alone".

Occasionally Cauthen has been cast in the press as part of a fast-living set, but the truth is quite different. He dutifully signs autographs for the numerous female admirers at the tracks, but he is a genuinely shy man and is puzzled by them. He suspects the idolatry may be unhealthy.

Already a dollar millionaire before he came to Britain, he is almost certainly a sterling millionaire now. But although his share of the Derby prize money is known to be about £15,000, Cauthen's income, like that of all jockeys, is a closely-guarded secret. His wealth is not obvious. He has one car, a Mercedes, and considers the telephone in it an indulgence. He has an assistant to deal with the world

beyond the race track and is learning to fly, but otherwise he has a small house and a modest lifestyle, preferring to invest his money rather than spend it.

A single-minded perfectionist, he is fond of good food, but drinks nothing but tonic water and fruit juice. He also knows that as a jockey of 5ft 4in. he must keep to a strict diet, high in carbohydrates rather than protein. He sticks to a strict regime of being in bed by 10 p.m. so that he can be on the famous Newmarket gallops by 6.30 next morning. There is little time even for his favourite pastimes of golf and shooting.

"In the years to come it will be his weight he'll have to watch.", says John Oaksey. "But he is intelligent and surely one of the most amazing 25-year-olds in the world".

"I have always been told that I was born with a 60-year-old head on my shoulders", says Cauthen and proves his wisdom by already thinking about the days when his riding career will be over. He says he intends to emulate Slip Anchor's owner, Lord Howard de Walden, and become an owner and breeder himself. He has already bought a 300-acre farm near his father's, which he is turning into a stud farm as a family business with the

help of his younger brother Doug.

Retirement may be a long way off—as he retires Piggott is nearly twice Cauthen's age—but Steve Cauthen knows that a fall could end his career. He has had plenty of tumbles, and won the championship last year in spite of riding for six weeks with a broken toe (especially uncomfortable because he rides with the balls of the feet in the stirrups rather than in the English style, with the stirrups resting against the heels).

Cauthen's determined pursuit of excellence may stem from his religious conviction: he is a devout Roman Catholic. "Every person should try to achieve perfection", he says. "Perfection is there with God. We can never attain perfection, but we must always be striving towards it. That's what life should be about".

Superstition is ever present in the racing world, and although his Christian beliefs may make him doubt any sign of it he recalls an augury of success at the beginning of this season. When he moved to Cecil's stables he had headed writing paper printed with the figure of a jockey at the top; the number of the jockey's mount was 12, and that was the number both of Slip Anchor when he won the Derby and of Oaks winner Oh So Sharp. ①