

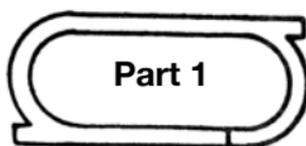
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ASK FOR SECTION BY PAGE NUMBER ↓

NO.	TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
1	INTRODUCTION	Louis Bury	7
2	PREFACE	Doug Nufer	13
3	PART ONE	Doug Nufer	23
4	PART TWO	Doug Nufer	109

Live Workout
Emerald Downs, Auburn, Washington

2003 Season



“It is now post time.”

– Fred Caposella

Cal Nipper by Kelly Lane

He would be expecting a ride while wondering if he shouldn't go, as if he had a choice. He would be a guy who, spending \$4 on a *Daily Racing Form*, could never let it go to waste by not putting it to use. Thrifty, careful, by-the-numbers: the kind of guy who retired in his mid-forties and managed to live on a weekly income you could blow in one night at El Gaucho, he didn't take chances. Twenty years he played the ponies and never took a chance. He had the angles figured, the variables weighted and fixed to coefficients of risk management analysis so that everything could be explained. Call him Cal Nipper.

On the first day of the Emerald Downs racing season, Cal Nipper sat at the breakfast table of his tiny bungalow, waiting for a ride to the rest of his life. If the ride didn't come, there was always the bus, the trip north from this place, south of the warehouse district, south of downtown to catch the shuttle south to Auburn. For some reason, such a backtrack bothered him.

Would he go by bicycle? Every April for about fifteen minutes, he considered fixing the flat on a ten-speed Schwinn he picked out of the trash on Neighborhood Clean-up Day, but Cal Nipper wasn't one to exercise. He would be trim, kind of cute, short, and apparently healthy. He hadn't been to the doctor since his last job. A real job, it would have been, with benefits. Why did a button-down type like Nipper ever quit a decent job, one that at least sent him into the world of women and other men?

Kind of cute or cute if kind? When does a retired middle-aged man living alone have an occasion to be kind

to anybody other than himself? Mother's Day? Halloween? When he buys you a beer?

He quit work to play the races. A decade ago, after more years of study than it takes to take a Ph.D., Nipper devoted himself full-time to the business of handicapping. He kept records, watched replays, and studied tables of figures and probability charts. If that was all there was to the game, he might have been O.K., but the problem was, this wasn't just a job. He had to play. He had to bet.

So now all of a sudden this renewed fascination with horse racing seemed like a yen he should have gotten over years ago, when the customized track variants weren't enough, when the trainer pattern lectures weren't enough, when the pace analysis computer programs weren't enough; when he should have realized he just didn't have what it takes. He decided not to go. He would fix the flat on his bicycle. He would ride to the movies or the farmers' market. He would buy cheese from the woman who seemed to like him, and come home and make a real dinner for a change, something Italian or French, something to go with the bottle of wine he would have always been saving for an occasion. Home to a book. Not another night at the saloon. Not another night on the cable.

Cal Nipper decided. He made the decision not to go, but when I pulled up with my top down, he popped the gate like cheap speed on a procaine cocktail.

Kelly Lane

I am not who I used to be; I am who I ever was. I am the sum of the aspects of the hysteria within me, aspects which can only be released by setting them loose in the world. And these aspects don't reflect on whatever I might have done or been, but determine what I do and therefore who I am. I am in action.

Blame it on The Course, a weekend seminar for aspiring entrepreneurs at an office park, a night spent staring into the meanings of stains in the plastic wood of conference table in Renton, Washington, while a horn-rimmed guru raved about the opportunity to change your life, the opportunity to pull you out of the toilet and put you on the throne. I snapped out of the past and found myself standing in front of a mirror in a room full of men, each chanting to his own private mirror.

YOU ARE A WINNER! A WINNER!

YOU ARE A WINNER!

So here I am, waiting for this guy to come out of nowhere and into the front seat of my life. And I feel good because you know, hey, it could work. I mean, sure I'm sure. I paid the money, I took The Course and here I am with the top down, ready for action. Come on, boy. Into the car. That's a good boy. Be good. Be real good. Mama's gonna make you be real good to her. Mama's gonna make you make her a winner.

Jesus, would you look at this character. Only the good wear plaid.

Henderson Will by Cal Nipper

The one reflected the other, the other reflected the one. The face in the mirror was the mirror in the face.

If each of us might spawn a mob, then us of each might mob a spawn. Didn't it stand to reason that one play the devil's advocate? It reasoned to stand that one advocate the devil's play.

His mind would work as his work would mind: backwards. Rather than every man for himself, himself for every man. Every man could man every everyman. He took The Course; The Course took him. The story of his life was the life of his story, that side flip of a flip side notion that had he (or, I) done everything exactly the opposite, I (or, he) wouldn't have lost.

Gentlemen and ladies, Henderson Will. Instead of following the instructions of The Course, he would follow the course of the instructions. To the game of the rules from the rules of the game, stop-at-a-winner would flop flip to loser-at-a-stop. If he lost, he would stop, if he won, he would go on again, beginning at the top bet of the progression and cutting it after a win. Others would play to win, Henderson Will would win to play, betting not what I would bet but on what might beat me.

Kelly Lane

If I make up Nipper, Nipper might as well make up me. If he is active as a heteronym and not just some character, doesn't he come to life and make up heteronyms of his own, heteronyms whose names might even overlap the names I make up for the guys in my mob? The Course didn't say.

All The Course said was, make up your mob and set them free, free to bet on the stop-at-a-winner progression, on the 2-4-6-8 increases, and when your man wins, he stops. If he loses the first at \$20, he plays the next at \$40, and so on, up to four tries, so the worst he can do is burn two bills.

Nipper isn't in the car ten minutes before another plan pops out: a plan with a man, an inverse freak who does everything the opposite of what The Course taught. That has to be pure Nipper, to figure a way to take back your move while you make it. Pure Nipper or adulterated Lane, since Nipper is my baby, slamming the door on this little quinnella of my personal problems by working up a contrarian who's crazy about thwarting whatever my other half does. Henderson Will by Cal Nipper out of Kelly Lane. Not why. Why not?

So we get to the track and what do we find but this rock bottom welcome mat to the first day of a meet: a five furlong \$5,000 maiden claiming race for fillies and mares. And, who is the winner? A five-year-old Bay Meadows hag who has lost more races than most ever get to run. Her name is Gypsy Chick. None of us have her, of course. Take an even-money sucker horse for a quick leg up on an overlay cavalcade of daily doubles? Face it, boys, that's not Kelly Lane.

Kelly Lane by Cal Nipper

Top down, breeze on, legs up, pop the clutch on the spring for the turn for home to change leads and take command in the stretch to the wire: Kelly Lane. Come on, it's not like she was an even-money multiple loser of cheap maiden claiming heats out of a Frisco past, crooning at a San Mateo nightclub under the name of Gypsy Chick. But even if she did come from a time when I lived in motels, that was over.

She didn't want to talk about the past, except to say there hadn't been any one of the obvious vices, like drugs or drinking. As for the ultimate leg of that triple crown, heads still turned when she went by. Maybe her problem had been nothing but gambling.

She knew her horses. Give her the speed on the lead or any ray of light in a jockey switch or blinker change, and she would be on it, as long as she got her price. Kelly Lane played to win. No dicking around with saver plays, no