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Kentucky Confidential the new 'dark horse' for best Kentucky Derby coverage

Eclectic writers, filmmaker rewrite the rules for covering America's greatest race

March 22, 2011 -- The Kentucky Derby is one of the most heavily covered events in American sports, but rare is the news outlet that looks on it as a storytellers' paradise. Kentucky Confidential (kentuckyconfidential.com), a new website dedicated to the country's signature horse race, is designed to immerse its followers in the rich, carnivalesque atmosphere, past and present, that makes the Kentucky Derby so unique. The site will be unlike any other in the history of racing coverage, delivering:

- true (and not-necessarily true) stories from the backstretch
- tall tales and little-known historical marvels from the Derby's rich past
- kinky stats and contrarian handicapping
- straight-shooting, expert contender profiles and news
- lures and snares of Louisville nightlife and bourbon culture
- guerilla video from one of the underground's best filmmakers
- the finest in photo journalism

Breeders' Cup 360 developer Jessica Chapel and Red Smith Kentucky Derby writing award winner John Scheinman have created Kentucky Confidential to unleash the talents of some of the sharpest, most eclectic minds in racing journalism: Pete Denk, Claire Novak, Brendan O'Meara and a legendary sportswriter working undercover as "Blinkers Off" will be joined by award-winning filmmaker Jeff Krulik and the brilliant racing photographer Scott Serio to present coverage of the Derby that is a veritable feast for the senses. Kentucky Confidential will publish daily for the two weeks leading up to the Derby.

"I absolutely love following all the Kentucky Derby coverage, but as someone who has been on the front lines at Churchill Downs for a pretty long time, it started to feel kind of predictable," said Scheinman, who covered the Derby for eight years for The Washington Post. "Jessica and I both decided it was time to shake things up and give writers we love and admire free rein to fire their best stuff. Bring big-time talents like Jeff Krulik and Scott Serio into the mix, and anybody even remotely interested in this event is going to have to follow us."

In addition to its unique approach, the website is a first foray for turf journalism into crowd-funding. Kentucky Confidential launched a campaign beginning today on Kickstarter (kickstarter.com), a platform that lets people back creative projects and get great rewards and experiences in return.

"Crowd-funding is an exciting new model for supporting journalism," said Chapel. "With Kickstarter, fans of the Kentucky Derby and great storytelling get a chance to directly contribute to the creation of the turf writing and video that they most want to see online, and be rewarded for doing so."

Kentucky Confidential has attracted attention from across the racing scene, and the Breeders' Cup Betting Challenge (bcqualify.com) has signed on as a charter sponsor for the website.

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