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Part in Disney Film Plays Prominent Role in Irish Jockey's Memoir

Ann Arbor, MI (August 16, 2010) — Irish jump and flat jockey Thomas Foley is enjoying one of the best years of his career and he's not even riding on the back of a Thoroughbred to do it. Starting on October 8 of this year, Foley will appear in Walt Disney Studios' feature film *Secretariat* and on the same day, award-winning American publisher Caballo Press of Ann Arbor will release the story of his life titled *The Simple Game: An Irish Jockey's Memoir*.

Foley auditioned for the part in *Secretariat* in Lexington, Kentucky, and learned soon thereafter that he was selected to portray Jimmy Gaffney, *Secretariat's* real life exercise rider. Of the experience Foley stated, "I read for Randall Wallace, the writer of *Braveheart* and the director of *Secretariat*. We reminisced about Ireland and his time at home shooting *Braveheart*. After my audition he said that I'd done a good job, but I never imagined that it was good enough to land a role and that the experience would end up figuring prominently in my life story."

Shortly after being cast in the movie, Foley learned that Caballo Press would publish his memoir. In announcing the decision the publisher's CEO Rudolph Alvarado stated, "We were drawn to Tom's voice as a writer first and foremost. I can tell you that it is something special. We were also drawn to the fact that Tom's life story offers a personal and compelling glimpse into the world of a self-proclaimed working-man's jockey and the price he was willing to pay to play the game."

Foley was born in Limerick, Ireland, and after completing his training as a jockey at the Racing Academy Centre of Education in Kildare, he immigrated to America. At seventeen years old, he arrived in the States full of the romanticized notions expected in one so young. He soon realized, however, that the horse racing game was a business, and if he was going to survive, he would have to change everything about himself, beginning with his unrequited love for the sport.

Change he did, and in his first full year as a professional jockey in 2001, Foley was the leading money-winning apprentice in steeplechase racing and went on to become the leading money winner over jumps in 2003. The price paid to reach the top of his profession included the loss of his family, his self-respect and his love of the game and the horses that made it all possible.

In an attempt to escape the life he had created for himself, Foley switched to riding on the flat where he went from being at the top of the game to riding thirty-to-one long shots. In due time, he developed an eating disorder, an addiction to sleeping pills and because of his emaciated appearance, he alienated himself from his three boys; a decision that ultimately left him a stranger in their eyes.

It was not until Foley was filming a scene with Wallace that he realized that he had to rediscover his passion for the sport that he cherished as a boy and had come to despise as a man.

“In one scene,” Foley shared, “I was suppose to ride ‘Secretariat’ as close as I could to a camera on the track. Mr. Wallace told me if they didn’t get the shot that it was okay; that we’d get it the next day because he didn’t want to tire out the horse I was riding. I was surprised by what he said. Here was a man with a million and one things on his mind and yet he was worried about one horse.

“It wasn’t until later that night that I realized that it wasn’t him that was different. It was me. I was the one that thought of horses as nothing more than the tools I used to make my living. I knew right then and there that the time had come to rediscover my passion for the game. It was either that, get out, or die. I chose life and my love of my boys, the sport and the horses.”

The Simple Game: An Irish Jockey’s Memoir features a foreword by Otto Thorwarth, a retired professional jockey turned actor and writer. Thorwarth co-stars in *Secretariat* with Diane Lane and John Malkovich. He plays the role of Ron Turcotte, Secretariat’s first-call jockey.

Foley’s memoir can be pre-ordered on Amazon.com or at a savings of over twenty percent at the publisher’s website, www.caballopress.com.

Irish and international retailers can pre-order the piece through Baker & Taylor book distributor or directly from Caballo Press by sending inquiries to bookorders@caballopress.com. The promotional tour in support of Foley’s memoir is in the process of being organized. Foley will be available to conduct book signings and personal appearances in Ireland and also the United Kingdom at the end of December through January 2011. Parties interested in having Foley as a guest should contact Yvette Robertson, at yvette@caballopress.com.

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