



# FRESH FACE

Liz Crow represents  
racing's future

---

BY LENNY  
SHULMAN

ANNE M. EBERHARDT

Liz Crow is a bloodstock agent, stable manager, and pinhooker



**IF YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING CLOSELY** around saddling paddocks and at the owners' names in the past performances on big race days lately, you've seen the new faces that are carrying the Thoroughbred industry forward. They are hedge fund managers and college professors, bankers and big data analysts.

Liz Crow nimbly moves among them, facilitating young professionals' journey into the sport. Crow, a 28-year-old bloodstock agent, stable manager, and pinhooker, also represents racing's new face, and that should come as a great comfort to those concerned about the viability of the sport heading into the future.

Well-spoken, intelligent, and hard-working, Crow has learned well in a short period of time. She manages the burgeoning racing stable of Sol Kumin, and that of Clay Sanders and Marshall Gramm's Ten Strike Racing, and she and partner Paul Sharp just hit a home run on a \$1 million pinhook. She helps short-list at yearling sales for trainer Todd Pletcher and buys yearlings and 2-year-olds for a variety of clients. She joined Bradley Weisbord's BSW Bloodstock 18 months ago and helps keep that running smoothly.

Many young girls develop a love of horses. Crow early on developed a love not only for the animal but for the entire racing game. From the Washington, D.C., area, Crow was riding horses at age 6, but it was her grandparents from Shreveport, La., who took her to the races before



Crow with Sol Kumin, left, and Bradley Weisbord



Crow with Ten Strike's Clay Sanders and Marshall Gramm, left, and Mike Pietrangelo

PHOTOS COURTESY LIZ CROW

she hit double-digits in age.

"They taught me about exactas, trifectas, and wheeling, and I thought that was way better than riding," Crow said. "It was awesome, so at age 8 that was it, I was hooked."

"I dragged my parents to Pimlico and Laurel. We went to multiple Preaknesses, and I made them take me to Laurel one Thanksgiving. They were like, 'Jeez, you're addicted. How did this happen?'"

Riding on the hunter/jumper circuit in her teens, Crow worked hard in the barns and did horse shows on weekends but already had it in her head that she wanted to work in racing. Attending the University of Louisville's Equine Business Program under the late Tim Capps furthered that goal, although classes were sometimes skipped in favor of stallion shows or racing at Keeneland and Churchill Downs.

Answering a bulletin-board ad for an internship in Maryland, Crow went to work for Georganne Hale in the racing office at Pimlico. At 18 Crow was taking entries, going to meetings with stewards, and watching condition books get written.

Hale became the first of several key mentors in Crow's life. Crow worked as a claims clerk at Churchill for racing secretary Ben Huffman, then joined trainer Jonathan Sheppard's staff, getting up close to top mares such as Forever Together and Informed Decision. She spent

a meet at Saratoga living with four other people in a one-bedroom apartment, then headed west for two years, becoming a foreman for trainer Eoin Harty in California, giving medication, taking horses to the track, and schooling and saddling them.

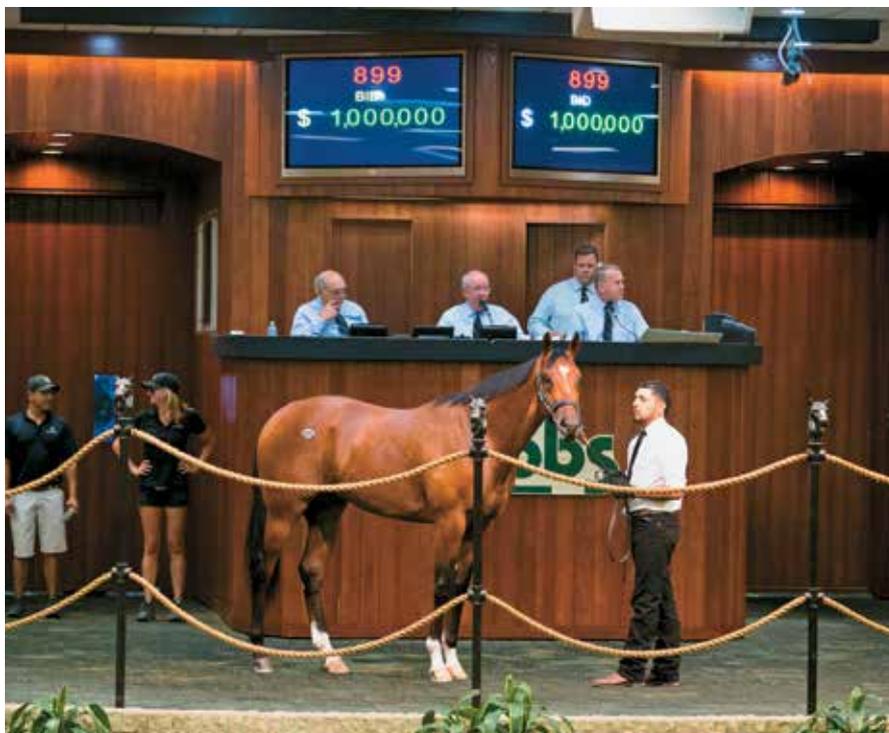
“At some point you have to go to the racetrack and see the end product,” Crow noted. “When you look at breeding or buying yearlings and 2-year-olds, everything is geared to racing, and you learn at the racetrack what trainers can live with. Otherwise, you tend to think every sales horse has to be perfect. But I’ve seen grade 1 winners that are crooked, and I’ve seen what kinds of injuries trainers can work through.”

Although the racetrack experience was valuable, Crow hoped her future was in bloodstock. Harty’s veterinarian was Sam Bradley, the brother of Lexington-based bloodstock man Pete Bradley, and so Crow’s next step was to intern for Bradley while the industry tried to excavate itself out of the Great Recession.

“I didn’t have the money for a full-time person,” said Pete Bradley, “but after her internship, I told Liz if she wanted to stay on she wouldn’t make much, but she would move forward in the industry, and I was right. She helped manage the racing partnerships, did short lists, maintained our web site, and did client relations. I’ve always prided myself in mentoring people, and Liz is one of the best I’ve mentored.”

Being able to work with Bradley and his partner Eddie Woods for four years moved Crow up in learning how to look at sales horses and pick out good ones. Plus, she put together partnerships for top runners such as Dacita, Roca Rojo, and Dayatthespa. When Weisbord offered her the chance to partner with him, she was ready to move along again.

“I’d seen Liz pounding the pavement at sales and she seemed to be a hard worker,” said Weisbord. “My business had focused on racehorse management, private purchases, and stallion syndication, and I was looking for a partner to assist with those areas but also be the boots on the



**Union Rags—Poco Mas 2-year-old—a \$60,000 yearling purchase—sells for \$1 million at this year’s Ocala Breeders’ Sales’ April sale**

ground at auctions around the country. She has a really good eye.”

Scouting talent at the sales, Crow utilizes a specific game plan gleaned from watching Pete Bradley and Woods operate, plus her racetrack experience.

“

***What I like about this is that it doesn’t feel like a job; it’s my life’s passion.”***

— LIZ CROW

“First, I look for the right kind of frame and physical that makes for a good athlete,” she said. “Next I look at their demeanor and attitude. A lot of this is whether their brain can hold up to racing. You watch them walk at you and see their conformation and decide what you can and can’t live with; what will stop them at the track. I have to like their physical and

their attitude before I see if I can live with their conformation. Then I look at the pedigree page to see if I can afford them.”

Several of Crow’s clients are owners she met while working for Pete Bradley. Sanders and Gramm of Memphis-based Ten Strike Racing have supported Crow from the beginning.

“I was in with Pete when he put the partnership together on Dayatthespa,” said Sanders, who works in bonds and risk management. “Liz did a lot of customer-relations, and we built a strong bond and quickly realized she had a lot of talent in handicapping and conformation. When we started our own syndicates, Pete was our bloodstock agent, but our budget was a lot less than what he focuses on, so Liz has bought horses for us, and we’ve had success with her.”

Crow bought Allied Air Raid for Ten Strike for \$50,000 in 2014, and the son of Midshipman won the 2016 Unbridled Stakes and placed in several graded stakes, earning \$352,200. Last year Crow bought yearlings for Ten Strike that are now promising 2-year-olds.

Crow has formed Crow-Sharp Pinhook



LOU HODGES

**Ten Strike's Allied Air Raid winning the Unbridled Stakes at Louisiana Downs**

Venture with veteran Ocala horseman Paul Sharp. With 11 investors in tow for their first year, they bought nine horses in 2016, including a Union Rags colt for \$60,000 that brought \$1 million at the Ocala Breeders' Sales April auction.

"It was an unreal experience," said Crow. "I love pinhooking and that was a home run."

Added Sharp, "It was a good year, to say the least. I get stuck on the farm sometimes, and Liz is always up to date on pedigrees and racing and what's going on. She's very honest, her work ethic is great, and she's an excellent judge of horse flesh who can see the big picture, which is a must when you're pinhooking. I'm 55 and started working in this business when I was 15, and that's the first time I've sold a \$1 million horse."

Crow seemingly needs 35 hours in a day to complete her myriad tasks, but it's clear that hard work doesn't faze her, even if there are challenges to keeping all her ducks in a row.

"It's all about organization," she said. "I write a to-do list every day and try to strategize on how to approach each sale.



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

**Crow with a set at Keeneland**

I spend chunks of my day watching racing. I manage Sol Kumin's stable along with Ten Strike and Al Shaqab and some smaller outfits we help. I'm the liaison between the trainer and owner many times. I go to farms and check on horses. And then I go to every major public auction."

That's a family-style plate, especially for someone of Crow's tender years. Her

affinity for the sport undoubtedly aids her ability to multi-task and accomplish so much in a day.

"What I like about this is that it doesn't feel like a job; it's my life's passion," she said. "It's a lifestyle more than a job, and I get pretty wrapped up in it."

Although it will be nice when the time comes when we are not surprised by the ascension of women to top places in rac-



JOE DIORIO

Crow with Paul Sharp, center, and trainer Jeff Mullins at OBS

ing's hierarchy, her gender, added to her age, makes Crow even more of an anomaly.

"Day-to-day, I don't feel any difference being a woman in this industry, but you do look around and notice most roles are filled by males," said Crow. "I do think that's changing, and the next generation coming up seems to be more diverse, which is encouraging. But I don't have a chip on my shoulder. I've been treated very fairly in this industry. It would be nice to see more women trainers, and I don't know many other female bloodstock agents other than Marette Farrell, who is great."

It would seem a full-time job just to keep up with the whirling dervish that is owner Kumin, who owns all or part of some 100 head of horses. The Boston-based hedge fund manager is constantly eyeing private as well as public purchases and is engaged on dozens of top runners.

"Pete Bradley is one of my favorite guys, and I knew Liz well from those days," noted Kumin. "I was also doing business with Bradley (Weisbord) when she went to work with him. Liz does a lot of the legwork in managing my stable. She was out to WinStar Farm the other day, where we have five horses laying up, and she told me how they were doing. She has bought yearlings and 2-year-olds for me.

"When people are good to me, I'm going to be good to them, and I wanted to support her when she left Pete. She is

talented, incredibly hard-working, and she's honest. She bought (a piece of) Mind Your Biscuits for me, and I love her for that."

"Sol and Michael Kisber, who works with Clay in Memphis, wanted another horse for the Breeders' Cup last year," explained Crow. "October is a great time to buy horses because even if they've won a stakes (Mind Your Biscuits had taken the Amsterdam, G2), they can be 15-1 in the Breeders' Cup, and that makes owners second-guess their horses a bit. So we bought a piece of him, and he ran third (placed second) in the Sprint, then won the Malibu (G1) and the Golden Shaheen (G1), and has taken us on such a cool ride. Mind Your Biscuits is my first grade 1 winner as an agent, having officially put a deal together. You want to do well for good people, but it takes luck and a lot of things to go right. Even the private purchase market—you're risking more money and hoping the reward is bigger, but it's not that easy.

"When you identify a horse you want to buy, you have to order all the sheets and pedigree information and look at its residual value; see how much you might be able to earn with a filly, for instance, before sending her to a breeding stock sale. You put all that information into an email to your client, explaining why it would be worth making an offer, and if they agree, you follow through in making an offer to the current owner.

"The owners we work with understand the game. It takes a lot of patience, and you need a good team around you. You hope you've picked the right people to do their jobs."

An impressive line-up of young, intelligent owners have committed to the belief that Crow is that person. **BH**

**Crow prides herself in her organization and writes out a 'to-do' list every day**



ANNE M. EBERHARDT