

Espinoza, Victor (HOF 2017): Born: May 23, 1972 From: Mexico City, Mexico.

Born on a dairy farm in Hidalgo, Mexico, the 11th of 12 children. He grew up riding horses and when he was 17 paid for Jockey School by driving a bus in Mexico City—that was 1989 (Quote: “It’s a lot easier riding horses than driving in that traffic in Mexico City.”). He shifted his tack North of the border all the way up to Northern CA in 1994 and was the leading apprentice rider at Bay Meadows and Golden Gate Fields.

In 1995 he began riding in Southern CA. His first big win was in the 2000 Breeders’ Cup Distaff aboard Spain and then in 2002 he won his first of 3 Derbies and first Preakness Stakes (both aboard War Emblem). Espinoza is not married and he has no children. He donates 10% of his earnings to “City of Hope” to support pediatric cancer research.

Following his Triple Crown efforts with California Chrome in 2014 he went to England and won a stakes race at Royal Ascot. He got to meet and chat with the Queen of England in the walking ring.

In 2015, Espinoza earned his second straight Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes victory aboard American Pharoah and was finally able accomplish something he had failed to do in 2014 and 2002 – he won the Triple Crown. When he crossed the finish line first in the Belmont Stakes, American Pharoah became the 12th Triple Crown winner in history and the first in 37 years. Won his second ESPY Award for Best Jockey in 2015 after also winning in 2002.

Inducted into the National Horse Racing **Hall of Fame in 2017**—3rd year in a row to be nominated. Turns 46 on May 23, 4 days after the Preakness Stakes (2018). Won the \$10 million Dubai World Cup in 2016 on California Chrome (2014 Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes winner). Mentioned the word “retirement” earlier this year as a possibility in 2016 (the retracted, ever so slightly).

Didn’t speak English when he moved here in 1990 to become a jockey.