

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2019 \$1.70 (inc GST)

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# Herald Sun



Darren Weir with the 2015 Melbourne Cup, won by Prince Of Penzance, and (below) with Ceibo at his Ballarat stables.

## CUP-WINNING TRAINER DARREN WEIR ARRESTED

## ANIMAL CRUELTY ALLEGATIONS OVER SHOCK TREATMENT

**SPECIAL REPORTS**  
**PAGES 2-7, SPORT**

# JIGGERS UP

ANIMAL cruelty allegations are at the centre of a police investigation into champion trainer Darren Weir, as the horse-racing industry reels from another integrity crisis.

Investigators from Racing Victoria and Victoria Police's sporting integrity intelligence unit are focusing on alleged mistreatment of horses.

Weir was arrested yesterday during dawn raids at his stables, before he was grilled for hours by investigators.

Four Taser-like devices known as "jiggers", an unlicensed firearm and what is suspected to be cocaine were

### LEO SCHLINK AND MARK BUTTLER

recovered during the raids on Weir's stables and other properties at Ballarat, Warrnambool and nearby Yangery. Investigators moved in on the properties at 6am yesterday.

The battery-powered jiggers are used to send shockwaves through horses.

It is understood authorities are investigating claims jiggers were used on horses while on treadmills, after blinkers had been put on the animals.

Typically, blinkers would be again used on race day in the hope the horses

would associate it with the possibility of receiving an electric shock — tricking them into running faster.

Weir famously trained the 2015 Melbourne Cup winner Prince Of Penzance, a long-shot ridden by Michelle Payne. Racing Victoria's compliance and integrity officers initiated the probe almost two years ago.

Victoria Police became involved last year as the focus intensified on Weir, 48, fellow Group 1-winning trainer Jarrod McLean, 38, and another Warrnambool man, 26.

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**WEATHER**  
PAGE 54

**TODAY**  
MIN 18  
MAX 21

Cloudy morning with a medium chance of showers

**OZ LOTTO:** Draw 1302: 22, 38, 27, 26, 35, 4, 19 Supp: 25, 36 Div 1: One winner, \$20m; Div 2: \$38,896.30; Div 3: \$3712.35; Div 4: \$399.85; Div 5: \$47.55; Div 6: \$24.50; Div 7: \$16  
[tatts.com/tattersalls](http://tatts.com/tattersalls)

**WORD PUZZLE**

In making a word each letter may be used only once, and the centre letter must be included. No slang, hyphens, apostrophes or plurals ending in 's'. Minimum four letters.  
Good 17, Very good 23, Excellent 30

aery allergy alley ally argyle early gallery galley gayer gluey grey gully gyre largely layer lyre rally rarely really regally REGULARLY relay rely rurally ugly yale year yell yule

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## The jig is up in new scandal

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The three men were arrested and taken to local police stations. Weir — who was co-operative with police — was interviewed for several hours with a lawyer present.

All were released about 3pm, Weir leaving without making comment.

Three jiggers were found at Miners Rest on the edge of Ballarat and one at Warrnambool, as police searched stables, homes, vehicles and sheds.

Assistant Commissioner Neil Paterson said police would investigate offences including those relating to animal cruelty and engaging in conduct that would corrupt a betting outcome.

“We have initially located a number of items which police have seized, including what we believe to be an unregistered firearm, and three conducted energy devices — commonly called Tasers, or in the racing industry referred to as jiggers,” Mr Paterson said.

“At another property, we seized a fourth conducted energy device, and a small quantity of what we believe to be cocaine.”

A rifle was seized, and the *Herald Sun* understands computers and paperwork were also removed for examination.

The force’s sports integrity intelligence unit began its Weir inquiry last August after a referral from Racing Victoria integrity officers.

Australian Federal Police officers were part of the operation yesterday. Victoria Police said the AFP had highly technical searching equipment required for the work.

Police confirmed the investigation was ongoing. Racing Victoria said it had no information or evidence yet to stand down Weir or ban any of his horses.

Last year the *Herald Sun* revealed racing figures were allegedly doping champion horses with performance-enhancing sodium bicarbonate.  
[leo.schlink@news.com.au](mailto:leo.schlink@news.com.au)

# Shock waves

## WHAT'S A JIGGER?

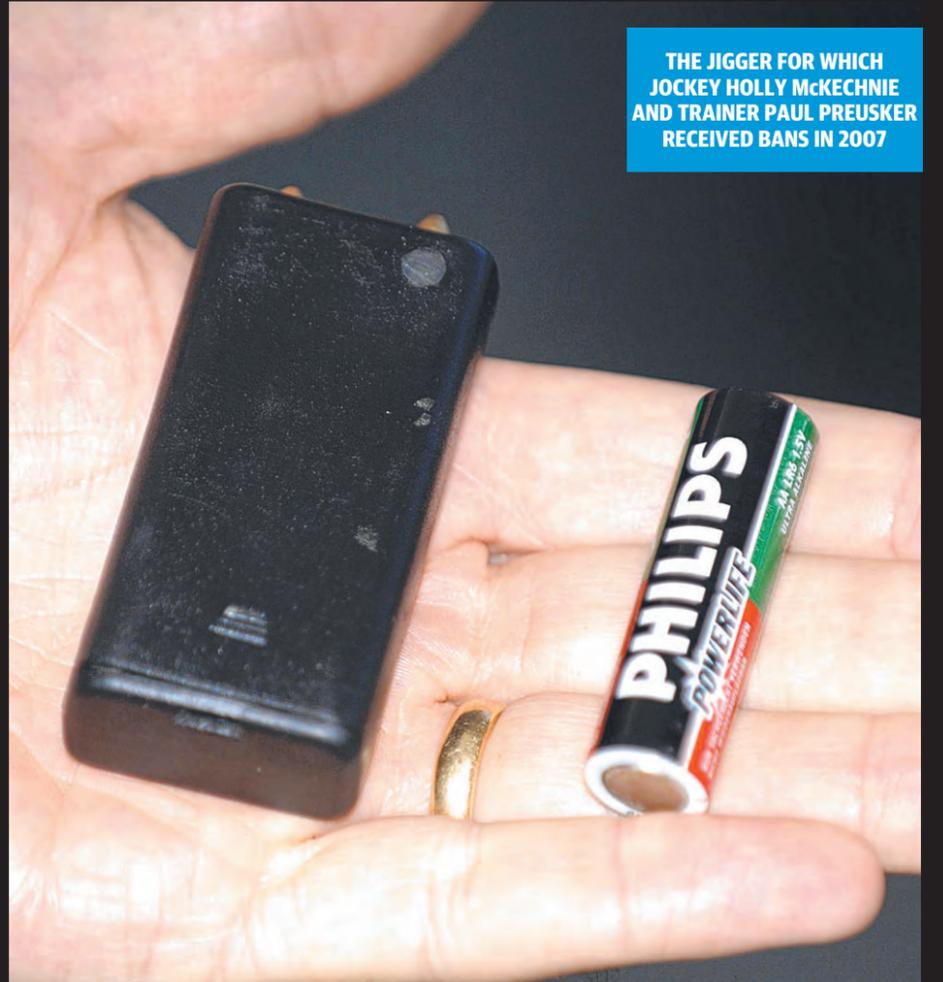
**1** An electrical device used to provide a shock to the horse's neck, similar to a Taser, which is meant to prompt the animal to run faster or try harder

**2** Such devices are banned in Australian racing, with Racing Victoria saying it was an offence to “deliver an electric shock to a person or animal ... it shall be deemed to be capable of affecting the performance of a horse in a race or training gallop”

**3** It is against the rules of racing for trainers, jockeys or stable staff to be in possession of a jigger

**4** In 2007, trainer Paul Preusker was banned for four years and jockey Holly McKechnie for three years for using a jigger on horses during trackwork. Track rider Damien Bradbury was disqualified for 18 months in 2015 after pleading guilty to possessing an electrical device at Mornington

**5** Victoria Police confirmed yesterday four Taser-like devices were among a raft of items seized from the stables of champion trainer Darren Weir during raids on two properties in Ballarat and Warrnambool, with allegations they may have been used on horses working on treadmills



THE JIGGER FOR WHICH JOCKEY HOLLY MCKECHNIE AND TRAINER PAUL PREUSKER RECEIVED BANS IN 2007



TREADMILL PICTURED ON DARREN WEIR'S WEBSITE

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# follow Weir's arrest



DARREN WEIR YESTERDAY

## There's been a century-long buzz about sport's nasty little secret

A "JIGGER" can be many things, not all good.

It can be a long-handled extension on which to rest a billiard cue, or a cocktail maker's shaker as used to fix a classic "shaken, not stirred" for James Bond.

But around certain racing stables a "jigger" is a name given to a device also known as "buzzer" or "battery", and is used to shake and stir racehorses with a harmless but illegal electric shock.

It's one of racing's nasty little secrets. But it's not new.

The jigger has been around at least a century: Squizzly



ANDREW RULE

Taylor and John Wren paid jockeys to use them in races in the 1920s, before security film cleaned up race riding.

The man who later trained the immortal Secretariat, Lucien Laurin, ended his jockey career in disgrace in America when barred for being caught with a "buzzer"

in his pocket. Laurin had electrifying success as a trainer in the 1970s, when all human and animal athletes tested the boundaries of performance enhancement.

One of Australia's most famous barristers and war heroes, Sir Eugene Gorman, lived long enough to see Secretariat race. Sir Eugene loved racing. He especially loved winning bets.

One day in the 1950s, according to the jockey who rode a Gorman horse at a city meeting, the great man won so much he bought the jockey a Caulfield house as reward.

The reason the jockey, "Billy" Box, was so sure of winning was that he used a jigger. He asked his friend, champion jockey Scobie Breasley, to let him through on the fence after the home turn. Breasley obliged.

Box jabbed the horse with the jigger in the straight and it hit the line like Phar Lap. As he passed the post, Box ditched the jigger under the rail, where his brother Jacky picked it up.

Sir Eugene's many descendants can assume their forebear didn't know cheating had made his big bet a sure

thing. And Billy Box's descendants have presumably told the tale for decades.

All of which is background to the news that leading trainer D.K. Weir was detained by police and racing authorities yesterday after they raided his stables.

The devices police allegedly found in raids at several properties could be commercial cattle prodders. Or they could be secret custom-made devices, which can range from matchbox size to mobile phone size.

These are reputedly used by the disreputable to shock

horses in training so they will respond to a signal in a race.

Like Pavlov's dogs, horses swiftly learn to anticipate a shock: so if a horse is pricked with a pin at the same time it is given a shock in training, and is then pricked with a pin in a race, it will respond. At least, that's the theory.

All of which might explain why some jockeys get so busy with the reins and throw their hands around like flyweight boxers as they straighten for home. A lot of people will be watching a lot of race replays for signs of pins and needles.

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AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST LEO SCHLINK BREAKS THE DARREN WEIR ARREST STORY



# Herald Sun

7.24am

heraldsun.com.au breaks story  
Darren Weir stables raided

7.29am

First tweet by Herald Sun sport

8.26am

Breaks angle that Weir was arrested, gun seized



TRAINER DARREN WEIR ARRESTED, GUN SEIZED IN DAWN STABLE RAIDS

## Ban call over device use

ANY horse trainer or stable staff member caught using a jigger should be banned for life, one respected trainer says.

The trainer, who preferred not to be named, suggested that if anyone was found guilty of using such a device they had no place in the sport.

"These blokes should get life if they've used a jigger," the trainer told the *Herald Sun*. "They are used to shock an animal; it's irresponsible.

"It's like using Tasers. It's like a massive electrical shock."

He said some farmers used such devices when they

GLENN MCFARLANE

were loading cattle. "If they hit up a great big 500kg bullock it will climb over another 500kg bullock because it's just so intense.

"It's reprehensible. If it's found to be true without a skerrick of doubt they should get life."

Under the rules of racing, the use of a jigger would be classified under the "serious offences" section.

If anyone were charged under those rules, a hearing would be heard by the RAD (Racing Appeals and Disciplinary) Board, not Racing Victoria stewards.

Using an electrical device carries a minimum disqualification of two years, while for a racing industry staffer to be caught with a jigger carries no minimum penalty but is still classified as a serious offence.

One person who was familiar with jiggers many years ago said to be "jiggered" meant to hold a device against a horse's neck to shock the horse into running faster or trying harder.

"You can then replicate it in a race by hitting the horse on its neck with your whip handle, or 'jacking' it with a pin or object to simulate memory," he said.

# TALK, RUMOURS, THEN COPS SWOOP

## Five hours later, Weir still upbeat

Police conduct a thorough search of Darren Weir's Miners Rest property. Pictures: IAN WILSON

**MARK BUTTLER, LEO SCHLINK AND JOSH FAGAN**

THERE have been whispers for months and police yesterday made the bombshell swoop some suspected was coming.

At 6am, they moved on the mighty Darren Weir camp, raiding properties in the Ballarat and Warrnambool areas.

There was no protest from the master trainer when detectives arrived at his Miners Rest property.

He left quietly to be taken to Ballarat West police station and questioned in the presence of his lawyer.

Meanwhile, police went to work. They scoured every centimetre of four properties associated with the trainer.

Stables, horse floats, vehicles and houses came under the microscope of dozens of officers. Horses were led across the road by staff as police started to gather evidence.

Detectives and uniformed officers worked alongside Australian Federal Police, including some wearing National Anti-Gangs Squad uniforms.

The *Herald Sun* has been told the AFP officers were called in because of their superior searching equipment.

They could be seen examining a horse transport truck.

The heavy police presence remained at the property until about 12.30pm.

Victoria Police's sporting integrity intelligence unit started work on the case five months ago.

They are believed to have been given a detailed referral from Racing Victoria's integrity services team.



Police inspect horse transportation vehicles. Picture: AAP

What sparked their initial interest is not clear but, in recent months, there has been persistent talk that the Weir team was under the microscope of integrity watchdogs.

Unfounded rumours have circulated about horses being Tasered while working on treadmills and videos of the mistreatment given to police.

When police moved in yesterday at Ballarat and Warrnambool, they found no Tasers but allegedly uncovered four devices known as "jiggers".

A jigger is a small battery-powered device used by rogue operators to send a shock through a horse as a way to improve performance.

A small amount of what is believed to be cocaine was taken from a Warrnambool property and a rifle taken from Miners Rest. Those items will be examined, as will computers and paperwork.

It is expected betting and telephone records will also form part of the inquiry.

If Weir was concerned

about yesterday's events, he was not showing it.

After being questioned for about five hours, he was driven from the police station, making no comment but giving a thumbs-up to the media. No charges were laid against him or the two other men arrested in the Warrnambool area.

Police said they were interviewed over sports integrity issues, among them obtaining financial advantage by deception, engaging in conduct that corrupts or would corrupt a betting outcome of an event or event contingency, use of corrupt conduct information for betting purposes, and attempting to obtain financial advantage by deception.

Trainer Dan O'Sullivan, who has stables next door to Weir on Kennedys Rd, said he was not aware of the investigation until he saw police at the scene about 7am. Staff working at the stables said last night it was "business as usual", until they were told otherwise.

[mark.buttler@news.com.au](mailto:mark.buttler@news.com.au)



## RAP SHEET

From the Mallee hamlet of Berriwillock to his status as Australia's most powerful trainer, Darren Weir's rise hasn't come without brushes with authority. His rap sheet stretches back to 2001 — well before he was a household name or training force.

## SEPTEMBER 2018

Fined \$5000 after pleading guilty to making false or misleading statements over the identity of seven horses at October 3 Ballarat trials.

## JANUARY 2018

Fined \$500 over late on-course arrival of Night's Watch at Doomben. The horse was scratched and missed the chance to qualify for the Magic Millions.

## SEPTEMBER 2017

Fined \$2500 after pleading guilty to taking Air Guitar to the Burrumbeet trial when the horse had non-steroidal anti-inflammatories in its system.

## NOVEMBER 2013

Fined \$2000 after a security guard arrived at his Ballarat stable to monitor VRC sprint hopeful Platelet, only to find the horse had been transferred to Weir's Warrnambool base without stewards' knowledge. It was the seventh time in five years Weir had been called in by stewards for failing to notify a change of stable.

## FEBRUARY 2008

Fined \$15,000 after pleading guilty to sending Grey Jeune to July 2007 Murtoa meeting with an elevated total carbon dioxide (TCO2) level. Grey Jeune won the Murtoa Cup, but was subsequently stripped of the win.

## SEPTEMBER 2003

Suspended for three months after he was caught with equipment that could be used for stomach tubing at Rupanyup on the way to the August Murtoa races.

## OCTOBER 2002

Fined \$1000 after being found in possession of stomach tubing equipment at Manangatang races.

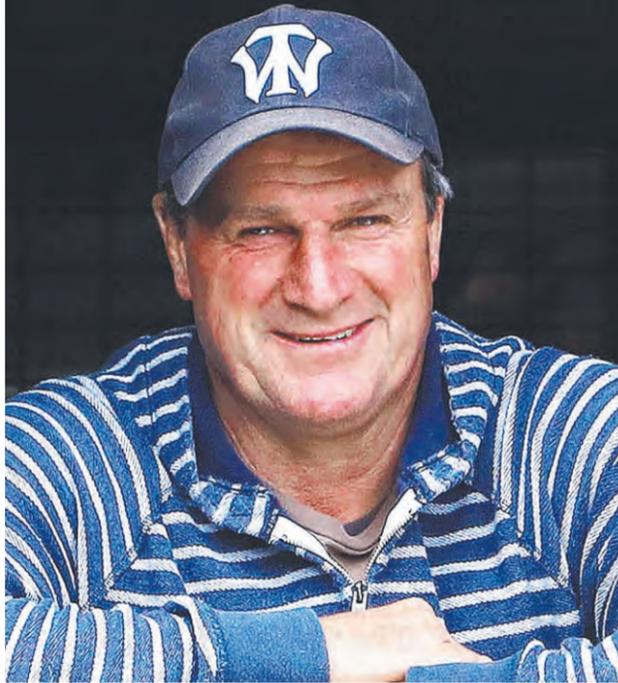
## JANUARY 2001

Suspended for eight weeks for giving false evidence over the late scratching of Amanda Huggenkiss at Warrnambool. He was followed by racetrack detective Peter McMillan into the carpark, where Weir placed the horse on a float for 13 minutes before re-emerging.

Weir was fined \$1000 for removing Amanda Huggenkiss from the saddling paddock at Warrnambool and for having a needle in his possession.

## DARREN WEIR

A champion trainer with one of the biggest stables in the world and a track record of producing winning racehorses. Since starting out, Weir has prepared 36 Group 1 winners and famously took out the 2015 Melbourne Cup with \$101-bolter Prince Of Penzance and Michelle Payne.



## MASTER TRAINER

- Age: 48
- Winners trained: 3542
- Career prizemoney: Almost \$150 million
- Group 1 winners: 36
- Group 2 winners: 30
- Group 3 winners: 77
- Most winners trained in a season: 491 (2017-18)
- First winner: 1995
- Melbourne Cup wins: One (Prince of Penzance, 2015)
- Major wins: Humidor (Australian Cup, Memsie Stakes, Makybe Diva Stakes), Black Heart Bart (Futurity Stakes, CF Orr Stakes, Underwood Stakes, Memsie Stakes, Goodwood), Brave Smash (Manikato Stakes, Futurity Stakes), Lucky Hussler (Toorak Handicap, William Reid Stakes), Voodoo Lad (Winterbottom Stakes), Trap For Fools (Mackinnon Stakes), Extra Brut (Victoria Derby), Land of Plenty (Toorak Handicap), Amphitrite (Thousand Guineas)
- Stables: Ballarat, Maldon and Warrnambool



HUMIDOR



AMPHITRITE

WEIR'S RISE NOT WITHOUT BRUSHES WITH AUTHORITY

# Sinister twist in rags-to-riches tale

WITH one of the biggest stables in the world and an undeniable track record of producing winning racehorses and collecting eye-watering prizemoney, Darren Weir was on top of his perch.

And as recently as Tuesday night, it was business as usual.

With 10 new purchases on their way to his stables at a combined cost of \$1.4 million, Weir had apparently laid another foundation stone for the future.

Touching down at Melbourne Airport on a balmy evening, he could not have suspected the chaos about to unfold at his Warrnambool and Ballarat stables the following morning.

Police raids netted a firearm and Taser-like devices known as jiggers. Cocaine was also allegedly found.

Police said Weir and two other men were quizzed in "relation to sporting integrity matters, including obtaining financial advantage by deception (and) engaging in conduct that corrupts or would corrupt a betting outcome of event or event contingency".

The three were also to be questioned about "use of corrupt conduct information for betting purposes, and attempt to commit indictable offence namely obtain

## LEO SCHLINK

financial advantage by deception."

The bust was the result of a long-running investigation initiated almost two years ago by Racing Victoria.

Weir's world was suddenly a lot more complicated. Business was not quite what it had been on Tuesday.

The boy from Berriwillock, the Mallee hamlet with steeping grain silos, now faces his greatest challenge.

Established as the nation's pre-eminent horse handler, Weir's feel-good rags-to-riches story has suddenly taken a sinister twist.

Plucked from obscurity by eagle-eyed horseman Austy Coffey as he sat on a pony in the shadows of "Berri's" silos, Weir's unconventional rise to stardom began 33 years ago.

Weir is revered in the bush, particularly the Mallee.

Renowned as a hard-as-nails footballer, he is a keen AFL follower.

A father to two daughters, Weir recently bought Trevenson Park, a former stud near Maldon, central Victoria.

He spends plenty of time at the remodelled bush retreat, which has a 1920s homestead.

Reputedly tough but fair with his employees, Weir retains the support of some of

Australia's most influential owners. But as a school dropout, his passion was always horses.

Renowned as a masterful judge of horses, Weir worked for John Castleman in Mildura and then hall of famer Colin Hayes at Lindsay Park as part of an apprenticeship designed to reach the top.

Granted a training licence when he was just 25, Weir impressed fellow trainers with his work ethic and capacity to wring the best out of bad-legged horses.

Self-effacing, Weir has never been a big-noter. Always something of a lone wolf on the racetrack, he is rarely seen communing with rival trainers.

Since starting out, Weir has prepared 36 Group 1 winners, famously winning the 2015 Melbourne Cup with \$101 bolter Prince Of Penzance and Michelle Payne.

With a career total of 3542 winners, he was seen to be at the height of his powers with a swag of triumphs — until Wednesday morning.

Weir has a trio of training operations, with headquarters based at Ballarat, stables at Warrnambool and the private training establishment at Trevenson Park.

Two of those venues were turned over by authorities yesterday. Four jiggers were

found, along with a firearm.

Weir's startling achievements have always polarised but there are those who believe it uncharitable to question his methods and authenticity.

With the case against Weir yet to be tested, accusing fingers now far outnumber the backslappers. Others point to a history of crossing the line.

It is a cluttered history. And possibly just the tip of the iceberg.

In 2001, Weir was suspended for eight weeks for giving false evidence over the late scratching of Amanda Huggenkiss at Warrnambool.

Weir was followed by racetrack detective Peter McMillan into the float car park where he placed the horse on a float for 13 minutes before re-emerging.

Weir was also fined \$1000 for removing Amanda Huggenkiss from the saddling paddock at Warrnambool and for having a needle in his possession.

A year later, he was fined \$1000 for possessing stomach tubing equipment at Manangatang.

In 2003, he was caught with gear that could be used for stomach-tubing while taking horses to Murtoa races and was banned for three months. Stewards intercepted Weir

and another man at Rupanyup, 15km from Murtoa.

In February 2008, Weir was fined \$15,000 for sending Grey Jeune to the Murtoa races the previous July with elevated TCO2 levels.

In November, 2013, Weir was fined \$2000 after a security guard was sent to his Ballarat stables only to find top sprinter Platelet had been floated to the trainer's Warrnambool base.

The horse was scratched from the Group 1 VRC sprint on stewards' orders.

At the time, it was the seventh instance in five years where stewards had spoken to Weir about failing to notify them of a change of stable.

In September, 2017, Weir was fined \$2500 after pleading guilty to taking Air Guitar to the Burrumbeet trials with non-steroidal anti-inflammatories in its system.

Last year, Weir was fined \$500 by Queensland stewards over the late on-course arrival of Night's Watch at Doomben.

The horse was scratched and missed the opportunity to qualify for the Magic Millions.

He was also fined \$5000 after pleading guilty to making false or misleading statements over the identity of seven horses at the October 3 Ballarat trials.

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It is believed Darren Weir and two other men will now be interviewed in relation to sporting integrity matters, [@LeoSchlink](#) reports.

MORE: [trib.al/7GkGEnS](http://trib.al/7GkGEnS)



**Herald Sun**   
@theheraldsun  
**BREAKING**

Trainer Darren Weir has been arrested after police seized a gun and a Taser during dawn stable raids this morning....

1:51 PM - 29 Jan 2019 (California, USA GMT-7)

6 Retweets 11 Likes



 6

 11