



Shocking secrets

Dear Editor, The dark secrets of horse-racing have repeatedly outraged the public. Now, Melbourne Cup-winning trainer Darren Weir and two others have been charged with multiple counts of animal cruelty. Weir has been charged with nine offences including three counts of "engaging in the torturing, abusing, overworking and terrifying" of a racehorse. Police cameras earlier this year captured the men repeatedly shocking the horse with an electronic device called a "jigger". Weir has already been banned from racing for four years, but that was all racing officials did. Let's be clear – such offences are animal cruelty and must be prosecuted by law enforcement, not kept from sight in internal industry reviews. This is why the charges are so important. Weir trained the 2015 Melbourne Cup winner Prince of Penzance, who was recently featured in a movie glamorising racing. News reports say Weir was widely regarded as Australia's leading horse trainer before the police raid. We have to wonder what the rest of the industry is doing if this is what is being reported about the "leading" trainer. Victoria's Minister for Racing stated "I understand people having a degree of cynicism about racing or, indeed, any kind of sport where there is money to be made from betting." To which we can only add – or any industry where animals are treated as objects, valued only for profit. As well as tormenting the winning horses, we know that about 13,000 "failed" horses are sent to slaughter each year. If you hate animal cruelty, please avoid the races. Desmond Bellamy Special Projects Coordinator PETA Australia PO Box 2352 Byron Bay, NSW 2481 +61 411 577 416 DesmondB@PETA.org.au

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