

Response from Gay Alcorn, Editor, The Age:

We have undertaken an investigation into what went wrong with this story. Even though it was a highly unusual set of circumstances, anything we can learn from it we will and we have, including emphasising a long standing policy that any sensitive story needs to be shown to the editor before publication.

We retracted the story online, published a story <https://www.theage.com.au/national/revelation-casts-doubt-on-entrepreneur-s-ice-pipe-video-claim-20220221-p59ydd.html> where we indicate that we were misled, and that others were similarly misled, undermining his extortion claim - Bainbridge declined to answer our questions about the discrepancies. The story noted: "If Mr Bainbridge confessed parts of the story to The Age and Herald, it means he could have misrepresented the financial reports and text messages provided to his lawyer, a crisis management expert and the authors of the Control Risks report."

We published in the newspaper that the story had been retracted online and that we believed we had been misled. We take full responsibility.

Response from Chip Le Grand, Chief Reporter, The Age:

- 1. Why did you accept the claim that the date stamp on the videos had been manipulated?**

Control Risks, a global risk consultancy commissioned by Geoff Bainbridge to analyse the purported extortion attempt against him, accepted in its report that the time stamp on the video had been altered. It notes this requires technical sophistication which is relatively easy to obtain on the dark web. The report was provided to me prior to publication.

- 2. Did you see any of the video material of Geoff Bainbridge before publishing?**

Yes. The video was provided to me prior to publication.

- 3. Did you attempt to check with or speak to Sharri Markson before publishing?**

No. It would have been unusual practice to contact a reporter from a rival publication about a story she had not yet published.

- 4. Why haven't you accepted responsibility for publishing his false claims?**

I do. As a senior journalist at The Age, I take responsibility for every story I write, including those I get wrong.