



Sussex Police Exhibit 9 – PC Stacey statement 14/09/2020

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MG11

WITNESS STATEMENT	
Criminal Procedure Rules, r 16.2; Crim  Justice Act 1967, s.9	
URN	
Occurrence Number: 47200114690	
Statement of: KIERON BRACEY	
Age if under 18: Over 18 <small>(if over 15 insert over 15)</small>	Occupation: Police Officer
This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.	
Signature:  #CB421 BRACEY, K.	Date: 14/09/2020 09:15
Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded <input type="checkbox"/>	

I am making this statement in relation to the Devonshire bar on the 11th of July 2020.

The reason for making this statement is how the Devonshire bar was firstly breaching Covid-19 legislation under the Emergency Covid-19 legislation and the general poor management of the venue. I was asked by the duty police sergeant Mosley CM617 and my own sergeant APS Williams CW297, after significant resources were drained by the customers who were becoming violent and not abiding emergency legislation risking public health.

I passed the Devonshire bar at around 0015 hours on the 11th after witnessing multiple groups of people arguing and getting in each other's personal space with some people starting to become physical which was stopped prior to it escalating. This was in full view of the Devonshire bar to which the Devonshire staff did not report to Police, after dispersing the drunken crowds which multiple mentioned drinking in the Devonshire bar.

The Devonshire bar had a significant amount of people inside the venue and in the outside drinking area which had no social distancing protocols in place nor anything in attempt to protect customers, staff and general public health.

Artur KAPLANI who identified himself as the licence holder and owner had no control over the entire venue and at first he did not see the issue with his venue being over capacity. Artur had two door staff on the entry and exit of the venue which had no one way system to prevent people pass and due to the venue doorway the social distancing guidance would not be possible.

The door supervisors were walking in and out of the venue without monitoring who is coming in and out of the venue. In particular whilst at the location I noted that not a single person had their identification checked ensuring firstly that customers were legal to drink in the venue and secondly that door staff were turning away anyone who potentially had been dealt with earlier in the night. Whilst Police were in attendance door staff were told by Police that the entry point

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must be manned at all times. However Door staff have then again gone inside and were socially talking to customers without any facemasks or social distancing consideration. And in my opinion dealing with door staff they were very unprofessional and little understanding of the basic role which again Artur was not managing his staff.

Whilst the scene developed and the venue was in chaos due to Police trying to enforce the Covid-19 legislation people became frustrated and sudden restriction as they had to line up by direction of the door supervisor. This again made matters worse as there was a long line down Devonshire square next to customers of the venue drinking in the outside area. The line had no social distancing measures and again all items. APS Williams requested to see the track and trace book of all names and contact details of customers who attended the venue in the case of a confirmed case of Covid-19. In this book which was situated at the front of the venue had 10 names in the book. This was a massive discrepancy as there was over 100 people in and around the venue at the initial point when Police became involved with the venue.

Artur was asked what his maximum capacity was, he stated it was 75, I would say he had more than 75 as there was massive groups congregating all over the bar and dance floor. This was concerning as the close proximity of all parties meant that there was multiple people within 1 meter of each other, which was a detriment to public health and the safety of all parties. Nobody within the premises had any face masks in absence of social distancing. At the tables around the room was parties packed into tight spaces. In particular on one of the large tablets was 10 plus people as people were coming and going. Door staff had no counting system to monitor how many people were coming in and out. Door staff seemed to be having a jolly and not really listening to what Police had to say. As they had the defence of how are they meant to manage this meant people. To which Police stated that it was their responsibility to stop this matter getting out of hand in the first place.

It was just a shambles and due to Artur staff continually serving drunk who were so drunk that they began fighting hence the initial Police contact and made no attempt to disperse or call Police. There was a large majority of customers who were very drunk and some of which were abusive to Police as officers were enforcing Covid legislation. While at scene multiple people had to be dealt with due to their level of drunkenness. Firstly there was a very drunk female who struggled to stand and approached Police explaining that she had lost her bag in the Devonshire. The female was directed to the door staff where door staff have turned her back to Police. The female had been allowed to get so drunk and miles away from home due to her living in a rural area. No care was taken to assist this female who was stranded in Bexhill. And due to her drunken state Police had concerns she would come to harm therefore a unit had to be removed from dealing with 999 calls and proactively preventing crime to take her home to ensure her safety which the Devonshire management had no care about.

As officers dispersed crowds a female who again was with a large group of friends were all in a drunken state. One female

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in particular was becoming abusive to members of the public and then to Police telling officers to "FUCK OFF". The female has then had to be arrested for drunk and disorderly due to her poor behaviour and drunken state as a direct result of drinking in the Devonshire. And as details were gathered the female turned out to be 17 years of age. Again another direct failing of the Devonshire bar stopping minors drinking in the bar.

On return to the location to finalize some business with management, then one of the original males who attracted Police attention was walking in the road in his drunken state. The male was borderline incoherent due to his drunken state. Although he was no longer violent his behaviour was still of a disorderly conduct. Therefore the male was ticketed and removed from the area. Again later that night the male has then caused a domestic argument draining further police resources.

While at scene Artur was raving that he was going to make some changes including making clear social distancing bubbles in areas to prevent people filling the pub. However did not manage to identify their door staffs own failing. Artur struggled to understand his responsibility of a licensee holder.

In my experience and opinion the Devonshire has always been known to cause issues however this particular night cause major concerns for the safety of customers due to them being allowed to get more intoxicated to a point they are capable of looking after themselves, then neglected ensuring the safety of their customers. The Covid risk to the public could have caused a spike whereby a high number of cases could have happened with no ability to trace the customers.

Artur had no ability to control his staff of venue and took no responsibility for the unfolding event putting the blame down to his customers, despite him making a large amount of money at the expense of safety and public health. All of these issues could have been prevented by not serving customers who were already intoxicated, having proper social distancing measures in place to manage customers and numbers and doing basic bag searches/ Identification checks to ensure all customers were of age.

These actions of the Devonshire management alone drained significant resources including four double crewed Police units (eight officers) and one Police sergeant. This caused no resilience should any 999 calls come in across East Sussex.