

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules r 27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B

URN Statement of: **Peter Eccleston**

Age if under 18: 0'18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation: Police Officer - PC 15913

This statement (consisting of 8 pages 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 anything in it, which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

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Date: 27/09/2022

Check box if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on last page)

1. I am Police Constable 15913 Peter Eccleston of the Greater Manchester Police stationed at Bury Police Station, Dunster Road, Bury. My specific role is that of the Divisional Licensing Officer. I have been delegated to act on behalf of the Chief Constable relating to all matters as defined under the Licensing act 2003 (hearings) Regulations 2005.
2. Following an incident of serious crime and disorder associated with Hidden Bar, Unit B 24 Silver Street, Bury in the early hours of Saturday 10th September 2022 I have had a conversation with Bury Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent Hill on Monday 12th September 2022 where I explained the severity and level of violence used in the disturbance and I requested an expedited review to be considered. This was authorised by Chief Superintendent Hill under Section 53A of the Licensing Act 2003. Following this authorisation I requested a review of the premises license which I have included as Exhibits A & B respectively.
3. Further to seeking authorisation, I along with PS Vernon attended Hidden Bar at 13:45hours and spoke to Mr Sarnoe with regards the incident on Saturday 10th September. Given the seriousness of the incident, the level of violence used and seriousness of injury, we informed Mr Sarnoe that I would be submitting an application to have the premises license reviewed. At this point Mr Sarnoe became annoyed and frustrated claiming the incident had occurred outside Hidden Bar and that we had been waiting for something like this to happen so that we could take him to review. Whilst at Hidden Bar I took the opportunity to take photographs of his door security staff book and incident book from the 10th September 2022. I have included these as Exhibit C and D respectively.
4. The circumstances of the serious crime and serious disorder are that, approximately 03:54 hours on the morning of Saturday 10th September 2022, police were called to an incident of crime and disorder. The call was made to police by Ambulance control after they had received numerous reports of a stabbing outside Hidden Bar. Greater Manchester Police log reference number which relates is: 000567-10/09/2022. A copy of the log can be found at Exhibit E.
5. On police arrival, the disturbance had ceased, and officers were faced with a male adult who had received a puncture wound to his inner left thigh, the subsequent crime scene and numerous individuals who were still loitering outside the premises.

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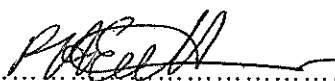
6. Officers who were on scene at the time, tended to the victim and conducted their initial enquiries which included securing a copy of Hidden Bars CCTV footage from outside the premises, which was provided by Mr Sarnoe. I have included this footage as Exhibit F.
7. Having reviewed the CCTV footage, there is prolonged serious disorder which continued for 14 minutes between the times of 03:31 and 03:45 hours that morning during which time numerous customers from the premises are involved in fighting, receiving / throwing punched and being knocked to the ground. There were several flashpoints during this 14-minute period of serious crime and disorder resulting in numerous people receiving visible injuries, the most serious being a puncture wound to the upper inner left thigh of one customer for which he was taken to hospital where he received medical attention for those injuries.
8. During the 14 minutes of serious disorder there are some pertinent points within the footage which requires further attention and what I have been able to ascertain from the investigating officers so far is that at approximately 03:00 hours on the morning of the 10th September 2022, the male victim who receives the puncture wound to his inner upper left thigh, attends Hidden Bar after 03:00 hours in company with his son and partner. They are initially stopped by door security staff and initially refused entry. After loitering at the door for approximately 30 minutes they are then seen on the CCTV footage being allowed entry. Moments later they are seen exiting the premises despite the last entry time of 03:00 hours as per the premises license conditions. As they exit the premises, son's girlfriend is approached by another male customer who takes hold of her, resulting in son intervening at which point the situation escalates to serious physical violence and several customers are seen rushing out of Hidden Bar and become involved in the disorder between 03:31 and 03:33 hours. During this period of time the father and son are overpowered and are subjected to a sustained attack resulting in them both being knocked to the floor where the attack continues.
9. The second flashpoint occurred at 03:37 hours. From the CCTV footage, customers are seen still loitering around the premises. The father returns from the junction of Silver Street and proceeds to punch another male customer who was involved in the initial flashpoint. The son becomes involved and again the situation escalates rapidly resulting in father on the floor. Although I cannot say for certain that it is at this point where father receives the puncture wound to his leg, it is worth noting that prior to it escalating and immediately after no blood can be seen on the footwear of the father (victim). It is only after he has been stood, loitering outside for several minutes that blood can be seen running down the inside of his left white trainer and blood begins to pool on the floor.
10. A third flashpoint occurs at 03:44 hours. From the footage most of the violence occurs out of view of camera and only comes into view as one of the young males can be seen falling to floor almost at the feet of the father (victim).
11. At 03:45 hours a young male can be seen approaching the main entrance/exit to Hidden Bar and it is quite clear that he has been involved in the disorder due to his face and arm being covered in blood.
12. At 03:50 hours, it is quite visible that father's (victim's) health is beginning to deteriorate, and he can be seen slumped over one of the bins outside the Hidden Bar before gradually falling to floor. At this point bar staff from Hidden Bar can be seen tending to the fathers' injuries prior to police and paramedics arrival.
13. At 03:57 hours, Mr Sarnoe is seen leaving the office via the external door and looking at the injured father lying on the ground. At 03:57 hours, Mr Sarnoe is then seen speaking to a staff member, pointing at the pool of blood on the floor and at which point the same member disappears for a short time only to return with a bucket of water who in

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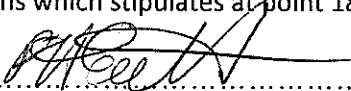
turn throws said water onto the crime scene in what appears to be an attempt to swill away the blood from the crime scene. At 03:58 hours, the same staff member returns with a second bucket of water however as police arrive she is prevented from throwing the second bucket by the door security team.

14. From the start of the disorder at 03:31 hours and police receiving the call from Ambulance control at 03:54 hours, this was the only call which had been logged on the police computer system.
15. As a result of this incident, three crimes have been recorded the details of which are as follows:
 - a. CRI/06NN/0016329/22 – crime report for assault relating to Section 18 Offences Against the Person Act 1861. This offences is whereby someone has unlawfully and maliciously by any means whatsoever, wound or cause any grievous bodily harm to any person with intent to do some grievous bodily harm to any person.
 - b. CRI/06NN/0016331/22 – crime report for assault relating to Section 20 Offences Against the Person Act 1861. This offence is whereby someone unlawfully and maliciously wound or inflict any grievous bodily harm upon any other person, either with or without any weapon or instrument.
 - c. CRI/06NN/0016332/22 – crime report relating to an offence of Violent Disorder, Section 2 of the Public Order Act 1986. This offence is whereby 3 or more persons who are present together use or threaten unlawful violence and the conduct of them (taken together) is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his personal safety, each of the persons using or threatening unlawful violence.
16. Further to this incident, there are other incidents and information which is associated to Hidden Bar which gives cause for concern and demonstrate how there is a significant disregard towards the premises license conditions and the four licensing objectives.
17. On Saturday 3rd September 2022 several police officers visited Hidden Bar whilst conducted a licensed premises check as per the Bury Divisional nigh time economy operation: Operation Lynx. During the visit, a cocaine wipe was used by one of the officers which displayed a positive result indicating that there were traces of cocaine on the bar surface. I was notified of this incident via email from the on-duty Inspector at the time; Inspector Ward 18176 who was also out on patrol with officers that evening. I have printed a copy of the email (irrelevant information redacted) which I have added as Exhibit G.
18. On Friday 2nd September 2022 at 13:00 hours, I attended a meeting with Mr Sarnoe following reports that he had been obstructive towards officers when carrying out licensed premises checks at Hidden Bar. I had arranged for PC Nadeem to accompany me at the meeting as a witness.
19. On speaking to Mr Sarnoe, he felt that he was being targeted due to the amount of premises license checks which were being carried out at Hidden Bar on a weekly basis predominately at weekends. I tried to explain that due to information still being received and previous intelligence regarding underage drinking in his premises, I had responsibility as the licensing officer to make sure young people were not at risk of harm and the necessary and appropriated Identification checks were being carried out. I also explained that due to OP Lioness (Violence Against Women) there was another team of officers checking licensed premises in the town centre with the main objective of vulnerable people in the night-time economy. As such I explained that I understand why he may have felt as though he was being targeted however there was a justified reason for the visits which were being carried out. Not satisfied with my explanation, Mr Sarnoe accused me of targeting his premises due to the colour of his skin.

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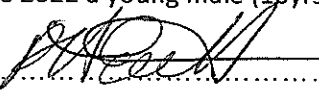
- 20. I categorically refuted those claims and reinforced the reasons for the visits. I suggested that if he stopped young people under the age of 18 years old entering his premises, then the visits would decrease.
- 21. On Friday 5th August 2022 at around 22:00hrs, PC Redmond attended Hidden Bar, to conduct a license premises check for vulnerable females under the National Violence Against Women operation (VAWG), which for Greater Manchester Police was called Op Lioness. On attending the premises, the officer states that the door security supervisors had concerns about letting him and other officer in the premises to conduct the check as they had been told to check with management of the premises first. As such the officer waited at the entrance and he was approached by a young male who stated he was the manager. After a couple of minutes, the officer was approached by a black male who was pacing around and looked agitated. This male introduced himself as the owner of the premises and came across aggressive and obstructive towards officer and threatening towards his staff. The officer specifically noted that the owner shouted at his door staff and manager and threatened them with being fired if they allowed police to enter the premises. I have included PC Redmond statement as Exhibit H
- 22. At 00:07hrs on Sunday 31st July 2022, PC's 17518 Brown and 05775 Hussain have conducted a premises license check. A record of the visit has been provided at the time which I have included as Exhibit I. From the record, officers have noted that management did not want police inside the premises. Both officers have provided a statement outlining the details of this encounter which I have included as Exhibit J and K respectively.
- 23. On Friday 29th July 2022 at approximately 20:15 hours, another license premises check was carried out at Hidden Bar by PC's 18730 Howcroft and 17484 Kemp. They attended the premises after information was relayed over their personal radio's that a group of around 10 young males had entered Hidden Bar, none of which appeared to have had their identification checked on entry. This information was relayed by another officer who at the time was situated in Bradley Fold CCTV room and was monitoring the town centre as part of Operation Lioness.
- 24. Upon the officers entering the premises there was a group of young males sat to the right-hand side of the premises close to the bar. Officers asked the group to produce identification for proof of age, none of which were able to do so. As such they were asked to leave by the manager at the time Kaide Goodridge which they duly did without any objections. Body worn video was taken of the encounter which I can produce as Exhibit L. From the Body Worn Video footage it would appear that none of the group have alcohol in their possession, despite this it shows there is a lack of effective management for a licensed premises considering this group is sat next to the bar and management/bar staff are going about their duties.
- 25. On Friday 22nd July 2022, I was on duty from 16:00hrs having deviated my shift to work alongside Bury Council Licensing Officers Laura Jones and Alex O'Farrell so that checks could be carried out at various licensed premises during the evening. At 21:25 hours, we visited Hidden Bar. We spoke to the bar manager Dylan Lealand and the door security team member. Whilst speaking to them, a customer had already approached the door wanting to gain entry and initially, the door security supervisor had accepted a student identification card and accompanying letter as proof of age. At this point I interjected and refused the customer entry based on the fact that the identification was inadequate. I also pointed out that the only acceptable identification is photographic identification which includes the official holographic 'PASS' mark or other official documentation such as a UK driving license or passport. It was quite obvious from this experience that identification such as the student identification was regularly accepted at the premises and no one from the premises that was present at the time seemed to know any different. This was another example of the mismanagement of the premises and a disregard for the premises license conditions which stipulates at point 18 under the licensing objective of Protection of Children from Harm '...Only a

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passport or photo-card driving license or a proof of age card bearing the official PASS accreditation should be accepted as proof of age.'

26. At the time of the visit, Mr Sarnoe was not present however we returned at 23:20hrs where I was able to discuss the earlier visit and the concerns with regards to what identification was being accepted. I reiterated what identification was acceptable as per the license conditions. I also mentioned the need for a dress code as customers were still being allowed access wearing tracksuits.
27. On Monday 11th July 2022 at 13:00 hours Sgt Vernon and I, attended Hidden Bar to discuss an incident which had been called into the police that weekend. We met Mr Sarnoe at the premises and took advantage of being able to review the CCTV footage from both evenings on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th July. Some of the footage was shocking to say the least and despite only having the briefest of time to review the footage, it became apparent that those entering the premises looked young in age and there were very little identification checks being carried out and searches of patrons were non-existent. The footage also showed males congregating in the back street outside the main entrance some of which were inhaling nitrous oxide from balloons in plain sight of door staff and then being allowed back into the premises one of which still had the balloon hanging out of his mouth. We pointed out our concerns at which point Mr Sarnoe gave assurances that he would rectify those issues which were pointed out to him.
28. On Friday 8th July 2022 at 23:38 hours, Greater Manchester Police received an emergency call via the 999-system stating that there was a 16year old male who had been spiked and was still in the bar. Log reference 003800-08072022 refers to the incident and can be associated to Hidden Bar however the male had collapsed outside. Gradually the log was updated as more information become available and within those updates, they name the young male and his age (15years). One of the updates from an officer at the scene, states that the young male is talking. Having spoken to the males' friends and family members who were also present, information has come to light that he has drank a lot and family members do not suspect spiking. At this point ambulance was also on scene and has medically assessing him. The young male was taken to hospital for further observation. The log has been printed and included as Exhibit M (redacted due to personal information)
29. Unfortunately, the young male who had collapsed on the Friday evening was just out of view of the external camera at Hidden Bar therefore we were unaware at the time of the meeting who exactly we were looking for on the internal cameras at the time of the meeting with Mr Sarnoe on the 11th July 2022.
30. On Sunday 26th June 2022 at 00:53 hours, Greater Manchester Police received a report of a missing person on Log reference 000189-26062022. The call had been made by a member of staff from one of the children care home within the Bury District. They were reporting a vulnerable 17-year-old male who had not returned home. Following this report enquiries were made by police and staff at the care home to try and locate the male with not much success initially however at 02:20 hours that same day he was seen leaving Hidden Bar by a police patrol and subsequently taken home. The log has been provided and can be found at Exhibit N (redated due to personal information).
31. On the 14th June 2022, Sgt Vernon and I arranged another meeting with Mr Sarnoe following a robbery in Bury Town Centre whereby an off duty police officer was threatened and assaulted by two young males on the 8th June 2022. These two young males had stolen the victim's mobile phone and police warrant card. A couple of days later on the 11th June 2022 a young male (16yrs old) attempted to enter another premises within Bury Town Centre and was

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searched at the door however door security staff found the young male to be in possession of a police warrant card (one stolen) and quickly recognised that the warrant card didn't match who was stood in front of them. Consequently, the door security team confiscated the stolen warrant card and contacted police at 01:35hours that same day.

- 32. log reference 000305-11062022 (Exhibit O) relates to this call. Information was passed by the informant, that the male in possession of the warrant card had left on foot and had gone into Hidden Bar. Officers attended and spoke to the informant along with other witnesses at which point a description of the male involved was passed. Following obtaining this information, officers attended Hidden Bar and completed a search of the premises during which time a number of individuals were spoken to including a male who loosely matched the description passed by witnesses. Not completely satisfied they had spoken to the right individual, officers have returned and spoken to the original informant and following a review of the premises CCTV footage and staff pointing out who had been in possession of the warrant card, officers returned to Hidden Bar realising that the male who they thought loosely matched the description provided was in fact the same male. Unfortunately, by the time officers returned to Hidden Bar, the male had left. Officer had found a blue and white puffer jacket which had been discarded in the premises as per the original description given by staff at Venue.
- 33. Following further enquiries and a further review of CCTV footage, a suspect was identified by investigating officers and an arrest was made a couple of days later. This male suspect is 16 years of age and on interview he claimed that he had found the warrant card and had attempted to gain entry to Venue. Although there is no admittance to being in Hidden Bar within his prepared statement, witnesses had seen this male enter Hidden Bar. and given that he is 16years old and had been spotted inside Hidden Bar in the early hours of the 11th June it begs the question as to how he was allowed inside in the early hours of the morning and obviously demonstrates that identification checks by door security staff as well as bar staff including management is inadequate and leaves a lot to be desired with regards the management of the premises.
- 34. At the time of our meeting with Mr Sarnoe on the 14th June 2022 we were not privy to the full facts of the investigation as outlined above however given previous information and incidents involving young people at the premises, as well as the increase of violent crime within Bury Town Centre involving juveniles, we discussed the possibility of Mr Sarnoe bringing one member of the door security team on early at opening time to try and dissuade young people from in and around Hidden Bar. Mr Sarnoe agreed with what was being discussed and the following weekend had a member of the door security team on duty from the point of opening at 20:00 hours.
- 35. At 00:09 hours on Saturday 11th June 2022, PC 's 17518 Brown and 05775 Hussain was present once again during a license premises check at Hidden Bar. From the VLP log which was provided at the time, officers have noted that the owner was argumentative and hostile to police entering the premises without giving him prior warning. This log has been included as Exhibit P. The officers statements have been included as exhibit I and J respectively.
- 36. On the 12th May 2022, I wrote a letter to Mr Sarnoe following a meeting I and Sgt Vernon attended with Mr Sarnoe earlier that day. The contents of that letter can be found at Exhibit Q and it outlines the steps Mr Sarnoe agreed to take to try and rectify concerns we had raised with him. Those concerns were raised with regards to intelligence the police had received (see below) which indicated persons under the age of 18 years had or were attending and drinking alcohol in the premises. It also related to CCTV footage we had personally seen as a result of an incident which was linked to Hidden Bar. Mr Sarnoe agreed to do the following and in the main completed:

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- a. Dismissal of current door supervision company and appointment of new SIA (ACS) registered company of your choosing.
 - b. Age verification – challenge 25
 - c. Increase random searches of patrons to prevent crime and disorder. A ratio of 1 in 5.
 - d. Adopt a dress code policy for example no wearing of tracksuits, face coverings or caps will be adopted on Friday and Saturday evenings as well as Sundays of bank holiday weekends.
37. The incident in question was in relation to a residential property where the victim's car was stolen with keys by means of a burglary in the late hours of Sunday 8th May or early hours of Monday 9th May 2022. Investigating officers have been able to track the vehicle through Bury Town Centre CCTV where at 01:38hrs the vehicle pulls up outside Hidden Bar. Following this, the vehicle is involved in a police pursuit and ends in Middleton, Rochdale where it crashes and the occupants of said vehicle are arrested.
38. Where Hidden Bar is linked to this incident, is visible on the CCTV from that evening which was provided by Mr Sarnoe to the investigating officers. This is still an ongoing investigation however I have been provided with a copy of Hidden Bars door CCTV footage which I have included Exhibit R. Upon the arrival of the stolen vehicle outside the main entrance/exit to Hidden Bar, several young males approach the vehicle and engage in conversation with the occupants. Three of the young males enter the vehicle and they drive away down the back street. Considering the licensing objectives, concerns are raised when all four of those arrested in the stolen vehicle are under the age of 18 with the youngest being 15 years old at the time.
39. Upon further review of this footage (Exhibit R), it shows numerous individuals, young in appearance entering Hidden Bar wearing tracksuits and balaclavas. At times, it shows individuals wandering back and forth in and out of the club holding what appears to be glasses containing drink with no identifications checks or searches being carried out. There are several pertinent points during the footage which are concerning and I have listed them below:
- a. **22:00 – 22:12hrs:** young males outside Hidden Bar. They enter the premises unopposed wearing inappropriate clothing. All three are wearing tracksuits and one is even wearing a balaclava type face covering. There is no door supervision on duty at the main entrance/exit and no identification checks or searches carried out.
 - b. **22:19:17hrs:** door staff arrive at the premises who shakes the hand of the same young males as above and walks into the premises to start shift.
 - c. **22:19:30 – 22:20:30hrs:** young males using the entrance security fencing as a gym and perform pullups whilst outside the premises.
 - d. **22:20:55:** same young males enter the premises once again unopposed.
 - e. **22:21:45:** door security member exits premises and stands on the door. Please note that at the time he is not wearing his SIA badge and straight away is not paying attention to what is going on inside or outside the premises and continuously looks at his mobile phone.
 - f. **22:29:19:** door security member temporarily leaves the door and can be seen walking to car to collect SIA badge. On returning he doesn't lift his head up and is back on his mobile phone.
 - g. **22:56:12 – 22:56:40hrs:** small group of young males and females arrive at Hidden Bar. No searches or identification checks are performed.
 - h. **23:25:00 – 23:30:00hrs:** during this 5-minute period you can clearly see from the footage that at least 3 young males, one wearing red tracksuit bottoms, another wearing a blue top and the remaining one wearing a full black tracksuit arrive at Hidden Bar, carrying a drink in what appears to be a glass container and enter the

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premises with said glass, unopposed without any identification checks or searches being carried out. There is also another male wearing a blue top and black tracksuit bottoms who walks out of Hidden Bar carrying a drink in what looks like a glass container and proceeds outside the fenced off area, down the back street only to return a short time later, carrying the same glass container and is allowed straight back into the premises without being stopped or searched. At this point I would like to draw your attention to points 5, 6 and 11 of the Premises License under the Licensing Objective of preventing crime and disorder where it states, "No drink shall be removed from the premises in an unsealed container", "No person in possession of a drink in a sealed and unsealed container shall be allowed to enter the premises except for the purpose of delivery or from moving from one part of the premises to another" and "Customers are to be prevented from leaving the premises with glasses or open bottles. Empty bottles must be placed into locked bin so as to prevent them from being used as weapons". It is quite obviously from the footage that there is a blatant breach of the premises license conditions on this occasion.

- i. **23:33:40 – 23:53:34hrs:** during this period several individuals are seen leaving the premises unopposed with what appears to be a drink in a glass container. The young male wearing the tracksuit bottoms is seen leaving and re-entering the premises with a balaclava. None of the customers are stopped, searched or even prevented from entering the premises by management or the door security team.
 - j. **00:10:24 – 00:11:16hrs:** young males can be seen performing chin ups on the door security barriers unopposed by management or the door security team. The young male in the red tracksuit bottoms is again wearing a balaclava
 - k. **00:15:55 – 00:16:15hrs:** young male in red tracksuit bottoms is seen walking out of Hidden Bar wearing what appears to be a clown printed balaclava.
 - l. **01:00:26 – 01:03:22hrs:** male in red tracksuit is seen leaving the premises with a drink in what appears to be a glass container. Again, the management or door security team do very little to prevent or stop this from occurring.
40. On the 4th and 8th May 2022 Greater Manchester Police received information in the way of two intelligence logs whereby both claimed that alcohol was being consumed by individuals under the age of 18 inside Hidden Bar. Further to this intelligence, I have been in attendance at Bury divisional bi-weekly missing from home meetings at Bury Police Station. At these meeting, the police and other relevant agencies including children services and the safeguarding team, review those individuals who are causing the most demand on police resources to try and problem solve with the aim of reducing the amount of calls. During these meeting, information had come to light that one particular young male (different to the above) who was 17yrs old and in the care system had disclosed to his social worker that he had previously been out in Bury Town Centre drinking alcohol in Hidden Bar with friends.
41. Although Mr Sarnoe has been working with myself and Bury Council Licensing Team and when asked, has put measures in place as advised, incidents are still occurring at the premises which gives concerns in relation to the management of the premises which is undermining the licensing objectives and posing a risk to public safety therefore I am respectfully request a revocation of the premises license.

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