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‘Stooges’ Returns, Antics Ensure

Infamous bar shut down by the city in 2017 began operating again as an illegal after-hours club in February, immediately increasing crime in the area

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that a business with a [disturbing history of violence and crime](#) was boarded up for the second time in less than two years after a judge granted the city’s request for an emergency restraining order. The bar, formerly known as *Stooges*, was declared a public nuisance in late 2017 and was ordered closed until September 2018. The City Attorney’s office also entered into an agreed court order at the time to further prohibit the sale, possession, storing, or consumption of alcohol at the premises.

New owners took possession of the property, located at [2932 Noe Bixby Road](#) on the city’s far east side, on November 20, 2018 and rebranded the business as *Magnum Private Lounge*. Debuting as a new after-hours club in February 2019, the operation immediately increased crime in the surrounding area and ran afoul of the injunction placed on the premises. The City Attorney’s office petitioned the court this morning that the club’s continued operation posed an “imminent threat to the life, health, and safety” of the community, noting that even the security guards wore ski masks while working there.

“This property has a disturbing history of violence and crime, including rampant shootings, robberies, assaults on women, fights involving as many as 20 people at a time, drug dealing, illegal alcohol sales, and a man found dead in the parking lot in 2016,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “It was only a matter of time before something else tragic happened there.”

According to court documents, Columbus Police officers were flagged down at approximately 3:41 a.m. on February 9, 2019 due to a report of shots fired inside the premises. Officers entered and “observed several individuals assaulting one another.” The officers had to deploy mace to disperse the crowd and stop the melee.

At approximately 4:43 a.m. the following day, officers recovered a loaded handgun and 15 ecstasy pills from a patron exiting the premises. The individual was a convicted felon and was arrested for possession of a weapon under disability and other criminal charges.

On March 16, 2019 at approximately 4:30 a.m., police encountered “several fights spilling into the parking lot” from inside the premises. Officers also advised an individual identifying himself as the manager of the after-hours club that alcohol was prohibited from the premises and continued violation of the law could result in the business being shut down again.

On March 17, 2019 at approximately 5:33 a.m., responding officers recovered another loaded firearm from a patron exiting the premises. The individual was arrested and charged with

possession of a weapon under disability.

On April 6, 2019 at approximately 4:29 a.m., officers were dispatched to the premises for shots fired in the parking lot. Officers interviewed witnesses who described fearing for their lives and ducking for cover inside the club after hearing the gunshots ring out. Officers also encountered security guards of the club wearing ski masks and “appearing to be searching for something on the grounds” of the premises.

“We would like to thank the community and the Columbus Police Division for their diligence on this case,” said Assistant City Attorney Tiara Ross. “We’re grateful the judge granted our request for a temporary restraining order and look forward to a full hearing next week.”

State law grants the court authority to order the premises shut down for up to one year. The new owners and club manager also face being permanently enjoined from “conducting, maintaining, using, occupying, or in any way permitting” a public nuisance anywhere else in Franklin County.

In order to secure closure of the business, Ross, who is the Zone Initiative attorney assigned to Columbus’ far east side, will seek to prove that the owners and manager are guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing they “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

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