

## Witness Statement

Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27. 2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B

## APPENDIX B4

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## Statement of:

Age if under 18 (if over insert "over 18"):

Occupation:

This statement (consisting of .....3..... Pages(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.

I can confirm that the Victim Personal Statement (VPS) has been explained and offered to me  /  tick box

I do /I do not\* wish to make a VPS at this time

I understand that I can make a VPS at any time before a sentencing hearing  /  tick box

\*delete as applicable

Signature:

Date: 04 January 2023

This statement is in relation to an incident whereby I attended LOUNGE 72, STEVENAGE HIGH STREET on SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2022 for an event.

The people I will mention in this statement are unknown to me and I have never met them before. I will be referring to a lady who I know to be the manager of LOUNGE 72. I would describe her as a white female, approximately 5ft6, medium build, approximately 40 years old and had long blonde hair with long hair extensions. She was wearing black shorts and a black sweatshirt with the Lounge 72 logo on it. I will refer to her as MANAGER throughout. MANAGER presented as such throughout, ordering people what to do, wearing the lounge 72 sweatshirt and coordinating the event, being behind the bar.

I will also be referring to 3 males, who I would describe black males, around 6ft of muscular build and were topless, wearing black trousers and black balaclavas on. I cannot differentiate between them for the event, therefore I will refer to them as STRIPPER throughout.

I will also refer to 2 bar maids who were at the event. One was medium build, early 20s with black braided hair, wearing all black clothing. I will refer to her as BAR MAID ONE. The other one was mixed race female, wearing all black. I will refer to her as BAR MAID TWO.

I was at the event, with a group of my friends. There were approximately 50 girls who attended the venue and by the time you left at the end of the event, I would approximate there was close to 100 girls in attendance.

The event itself occurred at LOUNGE 72, STEVENAGE HIGH STREET. My friend asked me to go along to the event with her as she won tickets. This was advertised as a 'chocolate men's brunch'.

On SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2022, at 1pm myself and my two friends arrived at LOUNGE 72 for the event and we were the first ones through the door. We walked into the club and I was

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Signature Witnessed by: PC 1547 HUNTER

**Witness Statement**

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confused because there were no table and chairs set up. I walked straight over to bar because LOUNGE 72 were offering free drinks for the first hour. I ordered my drink and spoke MANAGER who was behind the bar. She immediately asked me and my friends 'HAVE YOU SEEN THE MEN YET?'. She was referring to STRIPPERS. I said 'NO', to which she replied 'YOU'RE IN FOR A TREAT'. I then questioned why there was no stage or tables and chairs set up and she said something to the effect of 'THEY ARE JUST GOING TO MINGLE WITH THE GIRLS. MANAGER also said that STRIPPERS had asked her if there were any restrictions or limited as to what they could do, and MANAGER told them 'THERE WERE NO HOLDS BARRED', meaning they could do what they want.

At around 1:30pm more girls started to arrive and STRIPPERS also arrived. STRIPPERS were dancing with the girls on the dancefloor. STRIPPERS were giving oil to the girls and letting them rub it on STRIPPERS skin. At this stage, the events were relatively tame. I went outside into the smoking area outside for a vape and I looked back inside the venue at the bar and I saw one STRIPPER with his penis out. He was stood right up next to the bar and around 6ft away from MANAGER. I immediately felt shocked because I have never seen anything like it in my life. STRIPPER went off to dance and I then re-entered the venue after approximately 5 minutes. I immediately went over to the bar where MANAGER and BAR MAID ONE and BAR MAID TWO were stood. I said to them 'JESUS DID YOU SEE THE SIZE OF THAT THING'. I was referring to STRIPPERS penis and we all laughed about this and what we had just seen. Both MANAGER and BAR MAID ONE and TWO were laughing along and making comments about the size of his penis.

At several points throughout the brunch MANAGER had her phone out, videoing STRIPPERS dancing with girls, whilst they had their penis' out. She was laughing and joking with the dancers and customers throughout the night about what was going on.

The Garden area can clearly be seen from the bar where MANAGER was stood throughout the event. MANAGER was taking videos from both within the venue and in the Garden area. At one stage, MANAGER was out in the garden area, up close filming one of the STRIPPERS had his penis in his hands and was swinging it around. She was smiling and laughing throughout. This was an occurrence throughout the evening where MANAGER was both inside the venue and out in the garden area, filming the STRIPPERS.

At one stage, MANAGER encouraged BAR MAID TWO to dance with one of the STRIPPERS.

I cannot recall what time I had this conversation but at one stage I said to one of the STRIPPERS that I was not drinking any alcohol as I was driving and said to him, 'I DON'T WANT YOU TO PICK ME UP OR TOUCH ME'. STRIPPER said, 'THAT'S FINE'. He was respectful and then had a long conversation with me about my family and children.

There were conversations throughout the night that one of STRIPPERS had sex with one of the girls out the back of the venue.

It continued like this until around 4pm. It was put over the microphone. I cannot remember who it was but a male voice said something along the lines of 'THE MANAGER HAS INVITED US BACK FOR A MONTHLY THING. FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH'. Stating that they would put a advertisement out for Novembers tickets.

Signature: .....

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I've been to many strip shows before an this event was like nothing I had ever seen before. I was angry when I saw the article in the comet as it felt like MANAGER was trying to pass all the blame onto STRIPPERS, when they were doing a job she had asked them to do. MANAGER was fully aware of all of what was going on and was happy and joking with them and guests the entire time. She was filming and I feel like if she was that outraged, she wouldn't have rebooked them after seeing what she did. I feel like MANAGER should take responsibility for the event that she hosted.

**Signature:** .....

**Signature Witnessed by:** PC 1547 HUNTER