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On the Verge of Violence: How Bar Staff Manage Trouble Customers

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ABSTRACT

ON THE VERGE OF VIOLENCE: HOW BAR STAFF MANAGE TROUBLE CUSTOMERS

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How do bouncers and bartenders utilize interpersonal management scripts to handle routinely encountered trouble customers? My study addresses this question and shows how bar staff remedy trouble behaviors without use of force, as well as demonstrates that bartenders play just as pivotal a role in managing those behaviors as bouncers. The data from in-depth interviewing was analyzed through a framework of trouble sociology and the dramaturgical perspective. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and coded into thematic categories based on frameworks and emergent themes. From the data, bar staff identified three major types of trouble customers (entitled, inebriated, creepy) and described four major types of scripted responses (hospitality, guilting, authoritative, avoidance) they employ to handle them. The results of my study represent an attempt to merge the literature of trouble with a literature of scripts and explores the contextual use of such scripts by bouncers and bartenders. Additionally, my findings provide greater nuance and detail for a more holistic understanding of the use of interpersonal management processes.

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ON THE VERGE OF VIOLENCE: HOW BAR STAFF MANAGE TROUBLE CUSTOMERS

BY

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Jeffrey L. Kidder

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To the members of my committee, especially Dr. Kidder, I wish to extend a sincere thank you. Without your input and guidance this study would have been nothing more than fleeting aspiration, so thank you for keeping me focused and on the right track.

DEDICATION

This piece is dedicated to my beloved friends and family, especially my parents. Thank you so much for your love and support throughout this process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
Smiling and Serving in Leisure Spaces: The Role of Wait Staff and Bartenders.....	3
Screening and Controlling Leisure Spaces: The Role of Bouncers.....	5
Defining Trouble and Remediating Trouble Situations.....	8
3. THEORY.....	15
4. METHODS.....	16
5. TYPES OF TROUBLE CUSTOMERS.....	19
Entitled Trouble Customers.....	20
Inebriated Trouble Customers.....	23
Creepy Trouble Customers.....	30
6. INTERPERSONAL MANAGEMENT SCRIPTS.....	34
Hospitality Scripts.....	34
Guilting Scripts.....	40
Authoritative Scripts.....	42
Avoidance Scripts.....	45
7. CONCLUSION.....	48
REFERENCES.....	51
APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE	55

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Bars, taverns and nightclubs hold a shared association with notions of fun, excitement and leisure (Cavan 1967; Gottlieb 1957; Grazian 2009; Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister, and Winlow 2005; May 2001; May 2014; Oldenburg 1999; Sanders 2005). Sociological literature has demonstrated that contrary to popular beliefs of these venues as generators of “hedonistic” and “deviant” behavior, these centers of entertainment are socially controlled and organized in a manner that seeks to maintain order between their participants (Anderson 1978; Demichele and Tewksbury 2004; Hobbs et al. 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005; Lewis 2006; May 2014; Monaghan 2002; Nusbaumer and Reiling 2002). The social organization of bars and nightclubs guides patterns and rituals of patron behavior (Cavan 1967; Gottlieb 1957), and it is bar staff who are tasked with maintaining this order. When trouble arises, it falls upon bar staff to make remedial actions to find a resolution to the emerging disruption (Emerson and Messinger 1977). Bar staff, like doormen and bouncers, have been considered the primary enforcers of social order within these spaces; owners and managers rely upon these workers to impose regulations on behavior, handle volatile patrons, and quell violence in the absence of police (Demichele and Tewksbury 2004; Hobbs et al. 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005; May 2014; Monaghan 2002; Monaghan 2003; Pridemore and Grubestic 2013; Sanders 2005).

While previous literature has shown how bouncers and doormen come to restore order in troubled instances, generally through intimidating displays and swift employment of physical force (Monaghan 2002; Monaghan 2003; Hobbs et al. 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005), much less research has given attention to the interpersonal management scripts they use to cool volatile patrons and prevent outbreaks of violence *before* they occur. Further, while wait staff and beverage servers have been shown to possess emotionally-charged interpersonal management skills for the purpose of controlling patron interactions (Hall 1993; Hearn and Stoll 1975; May 2001; Spradley and Mann 1975; Tibbals 2007; Thoits 1996), service staff like bartenders have not been considered pertinent enforcers of behavior management, which is an oversight. In this study I show that bouncers and bartenders use sequences of remedial behaviors, interpersonal management scripts, to handle routinely encountered trouble customers. I draw upon in-depth interview data collected from 20 Midwestern bar staff (10 bouncers, 10 bartenders) and take into consideration their perceptions of and experiences with identifying or managing problematic patrons at work. From these accounts I describe three common types of trouble customers and four primary management scripts that bar staff employ to reestablish social order.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Smiling and Serving in Leisure Spaces: The Role of Wait Staff and Bartenders

A considerable amount of sociological literature has turned its attention towards the role of servers like wait staff in leisure spaces. Early scholars like Spradley and Mann (1975) explored the gendered nature of interactions between female cocktail waitresses and male patrons from the perspective of those waitresses. Additionally, Hearn and Stoll (1975) add greater nuance to the sociological understanding of wait staff in their exploration of continuance commitment to service jobs. Continuance commitment describes how upon initial entry most cocktail waitresses felt a sense of hope and excitement for their new job, yet the actual reality of that job, responsibilities to home and family, and the subservient nature of the job keep them entrapped in these environments even when they become generally dissatisfied with them (Hearn and Stoll 1975).

Zooming in on this role identity of being a servant, scholars like Hall (1993) and Tibbals (2007) have added to our understanding of how wait staff combat these feelings of subservience within the context of different venue organizations. Hall's (1993) research highlights how wait staff across all observed organizations framed abuses of power from customers towards staff as a

form of trouble. Resistance to this imbalance of power took the form of differing scripts unique to particular organizations. For example, in the high-class Elegant Nouveau restaurant, wait staff had greater restrictions on their resistance from management and had to work around whims of customers, occasionally employing overt scripts of friendliness to counteract customer “superiority” (Hall 1993). Tibbals (2007) extends this understanding of how wait staff resist servility and standardization from customers and organizations respectively through gendered behavior and presentations they employ. Staff in the Family Restaurant, a locally owned pizza place, used normative, scripted displays of gender to gain control over the power imbalance between customers and servers when customers attempt to devalue their work (2007). On the other hand, staff in the Concept Restaurant, a chain establishment, used these scripted normative displays to counteract devaluing workplace policies that restricted the self-presentation of workers (2007).

Turning the attention away from wait staff and towards the service role of bartenders, most of the sociological understanding of their role relates to their drinking behaviors; how practices of overserving influence greater levels of intoxication among patrons; and, what effect these levels of intoxication have on the severity and frequency of violence in bars and nightclubs. Earlier work from Nusbaumer and Reiling (2002) suggests that bartenders seek these occupations due to enjoyment of the social setting and mixing drinks, as well as permissiveness of regulations for drinking on the job (Nusbaumer and Reiling 2002). Additionally, their research reveals that the two most significantly associated variables with overserving include management practices and the personal drinking habits of bartenders. Unfortunately, intoxication of patrons has been found to be highly correlated with rowdiness and permissiveness, as well as being both a key predictor of frequency and severity of aggression in bars and nightclubs (Graham et al. 2006).

It is worth noting that there are very few sociological accounts of bartenders demonstrating an ability to exert a controlling or restricting force over patron behavior beyond limiting their access to alcohol, and those accounts are usually not focal points of the work. Anderson's (1978) work highlights the importance of Jelly's bar and liquor store for the black men who frequent it as a means of attaining status when overarching society denies them access to that status, but glosses over the impact that bar staff have in constructing those status distinctions that ultimately have real consequences for entry to some patrons. For example Jelly, the bartender and owner, attributed to "wineheads" at his venue the qualities of a "nobody," and at times would even bar individuals he deemed wineheads from entering the venue. May (2001), like Anderson, also highlights the use of drinking spaces used by blacks for preserving and cultivating personal status among ties that matter, however in the context of Trena's Tavern this status is achieved through cooperation and the exchange of practical information which helps black men to save face during negative interracial experiences. In May's (2001) work, the account of the regular bartender Monique shows how bartenders can be important facilitators of social engagement, mediators of inter-patron communication, and shapers of unique venue atmospheres. For example, Monique's willingness to engage in sex talk, a form of "fun and games" that pushes flirtatious boundaries, helps to shape a cultural expectation of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior for patrons (2001).

Screening and Controlling Leisure Spaces: The Role of Bouncers

In addition to thinking about the ways in which bartenders have been examined in previous literature, it is equally useful to consider the bouncers who are tasked with enforcing behavioral restrictions and the more general role they play as agents of semiformal social control or venue

gatekeepers. Researchers have long been interested in the role of bouncers in urban nightlife and the urban nighttime economy. A good portion of this literature focuses on understanding how the emergence of a post-industrial urban nightlife characterized by consumerism came to be regulated by a private and economically driven quasi police force, which was generated out of private business owners' collective interest in protecting their assets in the absence of an adequately sized state police force (Hobbs et al. 2001; Hobbs et al. 2005; Monaghan 2003; Sanders 2005). Scholars like Hobbs et al. (2002), Lewis (2006) and Sanders (2005) have discussed how bouncers establish the boundaries of acceptable behavior in liminal zones of ambiguity like nightclubs, showing that limits of patron and staff behaviors are commercially sanctioned and justified via economic motives, as opposed to traditionally legal sanctions.

For example, the state of Illinois currently has a program known as PERC (Permanent Employee Registration Card), which in many cases is a certification that applicants are required to have when applying to work as security for private firms or companies. Despite this requirement of security jobs, bouncers and doormen in the state are not required to be PERC holders by every venue and this leads to a lack of legal standardization on the employees hired or the training they receive. British towns and cities have also struggled with standardization and control of bouncer policy and behaviors through local licensing schemes (Hobbs et al. 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005; Monaghan 2002). However, as Hobbs et al. (2005) writes, licensing schemes are paradoxical to their economic and occupational goals and thus are not as directly impactful but more symbolic: "For bouncers derive an economic rent from the ability to assert commercial order through their 'physical bodies', while maintaining an ambivalent...stance towards both the function and process of the public law...the transformation of deeply embedded attitudes and expectations [of the occupation] lies somewhat beyond the remit of occupational licensing" (p. 172).

Other works focus on developing the “bouncer culture,” which arises out of a nighttime economy that necessitates its cultivation to properly fill the role of quasi police force in the ambiguous social space of bars and clubs. Researchers like Demichele and Tewksbury (2004) describe in their ethnographic study of the strip club how bouncers rely on threats of violence achieved through physical presentations and aggressive vocalizations to mitigate conflict, as well as recounting violent incidents to promote and solidify masculine reputations (also see Calvey 2008). Similarly, Hobbs et al. (2002) describes “door culture” as a uniform set of bouncer strategies to assist personal and economic perseverance, with the primary goal of controlling what is often perceived by bouncers to be both a hostile and chaotic work environment (also see Monaghan 2003). These strategies include “talking the talk,” or the use of aggressive language to assert authority; cultivating a “bodily capital” that centers in the creation of an authoritative, intimidating appearance and demeanor; and, if all else fails, the employment of physical force to dominate and control their site (Hobbs et al. 2002).

Regarding “door culture,” one of the more crucial points of space in any venue where management both requires the gatekeeping and social-control abilities of bouncers is at the entrance (Hobbs et al. 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005; May 2014; Monaghan 2002; Monaghan 2003; Monk-Turner et al. 2011). It is here that bouncers screen potential customers for entry, referring to two sets of established restrictions to guide their process of granting or denying access: legal restrictions and private establishment restrictions (Demichele and Tewksbury 2004; Grazian 2009; May 2014; Monk-Turner et al. 2011). Scholars such as Monk-Turner et al. (2011) have examined how well bouncers adhere to and enforce alcohol laws in the state of Virginia, specifically examining their adherence to mandatory identification check policies of all customers entering

establishments. Her study also confirms findings about bouncer culture and the manufacturing of authoritative appearance cited by Hobbs et al. (2002) and Monaghan (2002).

Homing in on overt sexuality, authors like Grazian (2009) have also confirmed how the social production of gender differences on a larger cultural scale shapes the experience of public leisure and ritual practices, particularly for women, but additionally notes how masculine and heterosexual male patrons engage in ritual practices of “girl hunting” (the aggressive pursuit of women deemed “fair game” for sexual advances). Repetitive mechanisms of conformity like girl hunting solidify normative standards of hegemonic masculine values and the identity provided through adherence to those values. In the same way Chafetz demonstrates how the micro-definitional power of men to shape interactions and define situations for women is reproduced in micro-level interactions in the workplace (Chafetz 1988; Graham et al. 2013; Grazian 2009). For example, one micro-level interaction that helps to legitimize the actions of bouncers are lore stories, or the recounting of violent incidents bouncers were involved in by bouncers and other staff to reinforces masculine reputations as well as compound the association between masculinity, violence, and the level of semiformal control that is afforded to bouncers (Calvey 2008; Demichele and Tewksbury 2004). Coupled with a *perception* of hedonistic normlessness of urban leisure spaces, these processes create a proper brew for the aggressive behaviors of men in bars and nightclubs and, consequentially, the legitimization of force and aggressive practices of bouncers (Monaghan 2003; Hobbs et al. 2005).

Defining Trouble and Remediating Trouble Situations

Trouble and conflict arise in bars most often when male patrons challenge the masculine

identities of customers and staff alike. Monaghan (2002) writes that conflict of this nature can arise when “instructing ‘leaky’ or ‘grotesque’ bodies to leave, stopping arguments and fights between customers, escorting (potentially) violent customers from the premises, keeping access points clear and instructing customers to leave the premise after last orders” (p. 425). But how exactly do staff come to recognize, for example, “leaky” bodies or arguments between customers as potential trouble? Further, what sorts of real consequences can result from the remedies which they employ?

One framework we can turn to in order to understand better how staff come to identify trouble is Emerson and Messinger’s (1977; 1983) sociology of trouble: in this context, “trouble” is described to be the recognition, however vague, of something being “wrong” and requiring remedial action. In addition, what constitutes trouble is not a static definition but rather a product of cyclic processes of identifying trouble, applying remedies to solve that trouble, and consequentially the trouble is ignored, subsides, or becomes amplified (1977). One form of trouble that one might expect bar staff encounter is that of relational troubles. These are troubles where remedies are directed towards another who shares a relationship with the person experiencing problems (1977). When troubles are addressed in this manner, the first remedial attempts usually involve one person attempting to exert influence over another’s behavior (1977). The limiting condition here is that neither party cuts off the relationship surrounding the trouble: this is easier in public spaces where tactics such as denial of entry are viable options for management, but not so much when exit from such relationships is made difficult or prevented (1977).

In the bar, third party intervention to trouble would most likely be police, however due to the structure of the urban nighttime economy it is more likely that bar staff like bouncers are left to remedy troubles of the bar with whatever devices they have (Hobbs et al. 2001; Hobbs et al.

2005; Monaghan 2003; Sanders 2005). This becomes problematic when considering their primary techniques of control are exerting authoritative identities and employing physical force, remedies which have the potential to continue escalating troubles (Emerson and Messinger 1977; Hobbs et al. 2002). Researchers like Pridemore and Grubestic (2013) posit that informal and semiformal social control agents like bouncers could potentially explain why they found no significant association between bar outlets and aggressive assault incidents in their study: despite this claim, other scholars have shown that particular bar staff behaviors can also affect the severity of aggression in bars (Graham et al. 2006). For example, Graham et al. (2006) finds that in a permissive bar environment where staff allow minor levels of rowdiness and who exhibit “poor control of minor incidents”, the severity of aggression in that venue is predicted to increase at a greater rate than non-permissive environments (p. 1578). Another pertinent finding from this study is that a higher staff-patron ratio and better coordinated staff was positively related with more severe aggression (2006). As the authors suggest, one explanation for finding that more staff creates more aggression is that staff in themselves are inciters of aggression on some occasions (Demichele and Tewksbury 2004; Graham et al. 2006; Hobbs et al 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005).

In addition, Graham et al. (2006) explain that better coordinated staff are positively related to severity of aggression due to the authoritative identity they exude when in such a cohesive state. Essentially, their authoritarian presentation increases tension between themselves and patrons, creating conflict that requires more severe levels of aggression to manage problematic patrons (Graham et al. 2006; Hobbs et al. 2002; Monaghan 2002). Further, as these are spaces which predominately cater to young males, it is not uncommon for the clash between masculine identities of male bouncers and patrons to increase this severity even more (Graham et al. 2013; Hobbs et al. 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005). For example, Graham et al. (2013) find that not only did aggression

motives of asserting social identity have the strongest association with severity of aggression for men and women in bars, but also that male aggression was more likely to involve identity motives than female aggression. As they write, “This finding further reinforces previous research suggesting the crucial role of identity concerns in the escalation of male-on-male aggression in bars” (p. 227). In this way, challenges to the legitimate authority of bouncer, private behavior regulations, or other masculine identities of staff and customers can also brew considerable trouble.

Remedying Trouble through Emotion Management and Service Scripts

Beyond authoritative displays and physical force, service workers like bar staff use emotion management techniques and service scripts as remedial behaviors to troubles that arise in the workplace. Literature pertaining to service work occupations has focused on exploring personal and interpersonal emotion management strategies and how the employment of these strategies impacts workers. Hochschild’s (1983) landmark ethnography on flight attendants not only provided conceptual terminology and a framework for characterizing the management of feeling in service work, but also sparked greater interest in the research community seeking to more fully understand the effects of this social process (Hall 1993; Rafaeli and Sutton 1991; Thoits 1996; Whalen and Zimmerman 1998; Wharton 1993). In an organization where this management occurs for the purpose of obtaining a wage, the process is known as emotional labor (Hochschild 1983).

Researchers like May (2001) have demonstrated various ways in which bartenders might evoke these personal management processes. For example, recall Monique’s adherence to the cultural rules of sex talk that permeate Trena’s Tavern: because of this situational rule, bartenders would contort their outward display of emotions to be cheery and flirtatious in order to play along

with the talk even if they themselves did not always genuinely experience these emotions (Hochschild 1983; May 2001; Tibbals 2007). Similar to bartenders, it can be also surmised that bouncers are also engaged in a similar, yet distinct process of emotion display management. Mentioned previously, Hobbs et al. (2002) notes how door culture requires bouncers to adhere to and cultivate a standard of bodily capital which creates authoritarian appearances for these workers. We can also understand this process from an emotional labor perspective: bouncers that are aware of the display and feeling rules required of their occupation contort their outward facial expressions to appear cold or stern, as well as adjust their internal feelings to attempt to conjure up intimidating personas and demeanors (Hobbs et al. 2002; Hochschild 1983).

Beyond the personal management of felt and displayed emotion as remedial behavior, another concern of emotion management research has been interpersonal emotion management: this includes the myriad of strategies which workers in particular occupations use to achieve contextual organizational and interactional goals. One example of workers attempting to achieve organizational goals comes from Rafaeli and Sutton (1991), who found that bill collectors would actively attempt to alter the emotional state of debtors in order to recover lost revenue for their employers. Other authors, like Whalen and Zimmerman (1998), add further nuance to the picture, demonstrating how some emotional displays from callers to 9-1-1 call-takers are socially constructed through interaction as hysteria. This emotional label is given to callers as a means to denote organizational failure, as their behavior is perceived to be directly impeding the organizational goal of call-takers to collect accurate information quickly and relay it to emergency service providers. When callers became hysterical, call-takers were described as commonly employing strategies such as directives (“please stay calm”), as well as reassurances (“help is coming”) to regain control of the call. Further, those who use these strategies are not applying

them as general-purpose fixes to achieve organizational goals, but rather employ targeted emotion work specific to context and interactional situation to reach those goals. For example, in one study rescue volunteers apply interpersonal emotion management strategies differently for distressed victims and sobbing family members because the desired outcomes for interacting with each are contextually situated: for victims, the goal is a streamlined rescue, while for family members the goal is to mitigate awkwardness (Lois 2001).

In addition to emotion management practices, social scripts like those used by service workers can also be remedial actions to alleviate troubles. According to Schank and Abelson (1977), scripts describe “predetermined, stereotyped sequences of actions that define a well-know situation” (p.41). Some forms of these stereotyped sequences include cultural scenarios where guides for social roles are collectively derived, interpersonal sequences that combine both collective and individual behaviors in a given context, and internal sequences where behaviors and desires are incorporated into a self-concept (Simon and Gagnon 1986). Scripts consist of both cognitive elements and behavioral elements: the former for inferences related to ones understanding of a social experience and the latter being activated performances (Abelson 1976).

The concept of scripts has been used to merge an array of emotion and impression management literature. As Hall (1993) describes, “the concept of scripts focuses the vast array of impression management techniques used in emotional labor in a way that is more specific and contextual than concepts of status and role” (p. 457). For example, “service” given by workers like wait staff (Tibbals 2007), cocktail waitresses (Spradley and Mann 1975), and airline stewardesses (Hochschild 1983) is an involved process of using emotional, bodily, and personality displays to craft pleasant experiences (Hall 1993).

In the same way we can think about how a literature of trouble intertwines with scripts by understanding how bar staff use emotional, personal, and bodily displays to craft drinking experiences. Bouncers do not adjust themselves to display intimidating demeanors because they seek to deliver a “pleasant” drinking experience: rather, they seek to craft an “orderly” drinking experience by being cognizant of trouble arising and employing remedial actions like intimidation to remove that trouble and restore order (Emerson and Messinger 1977; Hobbs et al. 2001; Hobbs et al. 2005; Monaghan 2003). That said, there is little to no literature that specifically explores the use of scripts by bartenders and bouncers, and I am unaware of any attempt to merge a literature of trouble with a literature of scripts.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY

A primary framework that underpins this study is Goffman's (1956) dramaturgical perspective. In this perspective, the social world is a stage and we are its actors. Through our performances we actively attempt to manage the impressions of our identities and the roles we take on for an audience on the "front stage." As individuals are able to take on multiple roles for multiple audiences, Goffman's perspective implies that identity is not a static, definitive aspect of individuals. Rather, one's identity is subject to constant development in light of new contexts, audiences and interactions. Similarly, trouble is not a static definition but becomes developed through social interactions and remedial action (Emerson and Messinger 1977). In this way, bar staff in my study come to develop their definitions of trouble customers through repeated attempts to manage their behavior. Repeated attempts that prove successful further add to the development of the bar staff identity, leading to the development of routinized role behaviors and formulation of scripts in my study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

The data for this study comes from semi-structured in-depth interviews with 10 male bouncers and 10 bartenders, five male and five female, working in various venues such as nightclubs, pubs, and “townie” bars across the Midwestern United States. Interviews for this study were collected from February to May of 2020. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 52 years of age, with the median age of participants being 28 years. Participants also ranged in years of experience, from as little as three months to as long as 30 years. All participants self-identified as white, and two identified as Hispanic. Participants were evenly split along lines of class, with 10 participants being from working class homes and 10 participants being from middle class homes. Class was determined through level of parental education: homes with at least one parent who held a bachelor’s or greater were considered middle class, and any education level below that were considered working class. I gave all the participants in this study pseudonyms to preserve their confidentiality.

Participants were contacted to be in this study primarily through digital communication, but also through informal conversation with on-duty bar staff prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. I utilized a snowball recruitment method, which was useful for not only being able to tap into my

social network but also allowed me to get into contact with readily available and actively working bar staff (Lofland et al. 2005; Weiss 1994). I initially reached out to individuals in my social network who I believed would be key informants for the study. These individuals were able to provide me a wealth of information and referrals to other bar staff (Weiss 1994).

Potential interviewees were asked if they would like to participate in a study about the occupational challenges of working in bar environments and how bar staff impose social order. My interest in understanding these challenges and processes stem from my own personal experience working in bars, as well as casually discussing volatile experiences with bar staff who also happened to be a part of my personal social network. Budding social researchers are encouraged to “start where they are”, meaning that they should start an inquiry from past or present biography and interests (Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland 2005). My history with bar occupations and present social ties in this context helped to grant me a “physical or psychological access” to my desired social actors who could provide me with the needed information to answer my research question (2005: 10). My past experience working as a barback also provides me with a degree of concern and curiosity that motivates my desire to understand how they restore order and regulate behavior in drinking venues. Coupling this motivation with my access, I find myself situated at a juncture described by Lofland et al. (2005) as “the starting point for meaningful naturalistic inquiry” when it comes to this topic (p. 10).

I followed up with interested individuals via email or phone call to schedule a date and time for interviewing. Although 11 of the 20 interviews were conducted in person, nine interviews had to be conducted via phone due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Prior to lockdown in-person interviews were conducted at the participant’s place of work. I purposefully attempted to interview bar staff in their place of work to get a sense of the type of venue they work in, as well as to make

them feel comfortable. Minor ethnographic notes were taken about the venues in which participants worked, but this is not the focus of my analysis. Participants were also given a consent form prior to interviewing containing key information about the study and their rights as a participant. Through these interviews, I sought to get bar staff to describe in detail specific trouble patrons which they had to manage to restore order. In order to achieve this goal, I asked participants questions such as “what does a trouble customer look like to you?”; “are there different types of trouble customers, and if so how can you tell?”; as well as had them describe distinct incidents where they were directly involved in the handling of a trouble patron and how they handled them. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and coded by myself for this project. While coding I looked for the ways in which people talked about trouble customers, the way they talked about interpersonal management techniques, and emergent themes. The average length of interviews was 35 minutes, with a range from 14 to 80 minutes.

As with other samples collected this way, there is the issue of data generalizability that must be addressed: it is difficult to try and claim the contextual findings from this study would be representative of a larger population (Weiss 1994). However, my study offers to provide greater depth and nuance to the understanding of interpersonal management processes. While specific types of management processes that bouncers and bartenders employ are localized to them alone, the mechanisms of scripts and behavior regulation have been shown to permeate across multiple occupations. Understanding the use of scripts to alleviate trouble in the context of nightclubs, pubs, and townie bars takes us one step closer to a more holistic knowledge of that process (1994).

CHAPTER 5

TYPES OF TROUBLE CUSTOMERS

Across all interviews, participants identified and described various forms of trouble customers they had encountered in their work experiences. Some participants were quick to explain to me when I asked what a trouble customer looked like that it could be anyone. “Oh yeah, there’s a wide range,” said Lara, a 25-year-old bartender who has worked behind the counter on and off for the last three years. “It’s not one cookie cutter fit for a trouble or troubled person that we would see.” Rob, a bouncer with over 20 years of experience, shared similar sentiments: “It can be any customer, there is no stereotype I guess you could say. Someone could just be having a bad day, you know.” Some participants were even hesitant to use the label of trouble to describe individuals causing disruptions in the bar. Rose, a 52-year-old bartender with thirty years of experience, said:

I hate to call it trouble, but it just...people getting out of line...they’re not conscious about how they’re acting, what they’re saying or what they’re doing. It’s so various you know. You can’t peg one, just like you can’t make any two days alike in that business.

Interestingly, when asking participants if they thought there were different types of trouble customers, they could readily identify numerous, specific forms of trouble patrons. For example,

Lara states:

There's people that have their mental health issues aggravated by alcohol and...it accentuates their problems and they're more likely to cause problems whether it be fighting, or outbursts or things like that in the bar. And then the people who wanna order a multitude of shots and then just keep going and then get angry when you wanna cut them off because they've had six shots of tequila in a row[...]frat boys interacting with their girlfriends[...]

Similarly, Rose was able to identify at least a couple forms, such as the “annoying regular that knows everything, done everything once, and one step above you no matter what you talk them about,” as well as the “overindulging husband that gets out of line with servers, or customers.”

While only a few participants displayed this discrepancy between not wanting to apply a direct trouble label to patrons but being able to identify trouble behaviors, all participants were able to describe at least one form of trouble customer. Though my participants discuss all different kinds of trouble customers, for the purpose of this study I focus on three distinct types. I call them “entitled,” “inebriated,” and “creepy” trouble customers. I focus on these types because they are the most common forms of trouble customers described by my respondents. Further, being the most frequently experienced types I also believe them to be the most fully understood trouble customer types. Through repeated remedial attempts made via employment of interpersonal management scripts, successful or otherwise, bar staff in this study come to progressively elaborate, analyze, and typify these trouble customers (Balint 1957; Emerson and Messinger 1977).

Entitled Trouble Customers

The typology of the entitled trouble customer was framed by participants as one characterized by an emphasized selfishness. “I guess I would call it ‘the entitled one’, they are the ones that come in and just think that they’re more important than everyone else” said George, a 37-year-old bouncer with 17 years of experience. Scott, another bouncer with 14 years of experience, describes them as “hyper-entitled people where they need to have exactly what they want when they want it, and if they don’t get it they’re gonna let you know.” One bartender of two years, Andrew, shared these sentiments, “You can see an arrogance about them. You gotta be able to read them as they’re coming in.”

Occasionally referred to by participants as “Karens” and “Chads”, these individuals seem to openly express to bar staff the desire for “greater” service than they are currently receiving. A major hallmark of the entitled trouble customer is the interpreted attitudinal orientation they have towards staff, one where they view themselves as superior and staff as servile. “The angry older customers who are the Karens and the Chads,” Lara states, “that’s what we call them. They think they literally own the bar...pay your paycheck, and are in charge of everything and just want the world for no tip. Like it’s just, that’s really annoying.” Leon, a 51-year-old bartender with 11 years of experience shared a similar sentiment, “They just look down on you and they’ll call you stupid and act like you don’t exist.”

While the orientation of a customer and staff relationship framed as abuse of power is nothing new (Hall 1993), what is interesting is the way that staff categorize this form of trouble as more of an annoyance than a serious issue. Scott describes:

Yeah I'm gonna say it out loud which I know I shouldn't, but you might get a Karen and a Karen is going to ruin your night, but at the same time she technically didn't do anything wrong. You're gonna have that in the time they're here, but at the same time that's not considered a "problem" table that's a "Karen" and they come with the industry. And so just in case you ever need to know, the opposite of a Karen is a Chad (laughs).

Of the three types, the entitled trouble customer seems to be the least threatening to staff.

They can easily escalate into an issue disruptive to order however, especially on a packed night. Scott continues:

If you're busy and it's a busy dinner service, you don't have time for that person and that person becomes a problem. It's not necessarily a threat but at the same time if they yell at you and they disrespect you as being a servers...I will visit that table immediately and figure out what's going on with that table.

Lara provided a similar account of how an entitled customer ascends to become trouble:

He was drinking 22 dollar double Patrón drinks and paying 22 dollars a drink and thought that he was the shit and owned the bar. It was a full bar, I had a very busy weekend. So he thought he would treat everyone around him like shit and thought that he could wave money in my face and snap at me and tap and hit on the bar. And, I was alone with a full bar 3 people deep, waiting for backup and he, I walked down towards his end of the bar while I was helping a giant group that came in before he came back up to order. And he said "Are you ever fucking coming back to my side of the bar?"

Beyond blatant disrespect and raised voices, one way bar staff come to identify entitled trouble is through customer presentations of and orientations towards wealth. Rob stated that, "You can sense an arrogance around them the more you handle people like that who come around. Whether it's money or popularity I don't know, but you can just tell." Scott described to me how they "talk to you with [their] large watch showing in your direction so [they] can show off [their] money, those are normally Chads." George states, "It's always with the entitled ones how much money they have, how much money they're

spending, and ya know, who you think you are and they always like to throw out that like ‘I managed 5 restaurants’ or ‘I own this and that’ and stuff.” These presentations of wealth are not just relegated to displays or vocalizations but even manifest in their spending habits at the bar, such as the “22 dollar Patrón drink”. Curiously, though their spending in the bar may be quite high their tip outs are quite low: as Lara describes in one incident, “I have a guy who comes in every so often and he’s a terrible person and he always wants a shaken long island, he does not tip anytime. He laid 50 cents on the counter and asked if I had a cherry[...]I didn’t have any cherries in stock so he picked up his tip and left.” This evidence reinforces the perceptive orientation that these customers have towards staff as servile.

Further, the behaviors that entitled trouble customers exhibit can become more exaggerated and problematic under the influence of alcohol. George recounts a time when a wedding party exhibited this behavior:

Big one for that is uh, wedding parties and things like that. They’ll have their reception and their reception will end at 10 or 11 and they’re all plenty drunk and things like that. They’ll try and come into the bar afterwards. And they don’t think they need IDs or don’t understand why they can’t drink the beer they brought in from the party bus, and they don’t understand why they’re being refused at the door because they’re too drunk to come in and they’re the ones that are like ‘we just spent thousands of dollars to get married’... so that’s another one that comes out, the drunk entitlement is probably the most trying as far as trying to talk to them. Because you try to reason with them and they are clearly not having anything you say they wanna talk to the manager, the owner, and they’re just trying to say every little that you are just discriminating against them...they’re kinda just, an HR nightmare.

Coupled with intoxication, the problematic behaviors of the entitled customer can rise to a rank of “nightmare” in terms of difficulty in dealing with them. However, this difficulty in management is not exclusive to the “inebriated-entitled” customer. As I will show,

inebriated customers further complicate the process of alleviating troubles with the added challenge of being more difficult for bar staff to detect.

Inebriated Trouble Customers

Expectedly, the most encountered and discussed trouble customer type was that of the inebriated trouble customer. “I think an unruly customer is somebody who doesn’t know how to control their behavior when they’re under the influence of anything,” said Archie, a bouncer, “I mean, there’s a certain kind of standard you have to hold yourself to...and unruly people are too drunk to understand what they’re doing.” These are customers whose intoxication has reached a point where their social inhibitions on “inappropriate” behaviors are shed, and they become disruptive or even dangerous to staff and other customers. Important to note is that inebriated trouble types are not mutually exclusive: like in George’s account, entitled trouble customers can also exhibit qualities that might identify them as inebriated trouble as well. In addition, these trouble customers come in different varieties, such as aggressive or the flirtatious drunk. “Whether they are male or female, when people get drunk you know, there’s a handful of people that have a type...they just wanna love or just wanna get aggressive” stated Caleb, a 22-year-old bouncer.

What sorts of behaviors queue staff into the possibility of inebriated trouble? One characteristic of these customers is their volume of voice. As Caleb describes:

Oh there’s some loud boys out there, and girls, but there’s you know, the group that gets loud. You know, they uh, they start screaming for no reason you know. They’ll

be sitting at a table with their buddies and two seconds later they're trying to chug a pitcher of beer yellin' like "No there's no way that's true!" and it's like, hey man you mind being quiet? Mind quieting down? I know we're a bar but you don't need to be screaming at your friend two inches away from you.

In the same vein, excessive and belligerent use of profanities can also queue staff into inebriated trouble: as Logan, a bouncer of ten months, explains, "I've had to kick out people for talking or using inappropriate language. That's pretty common too, if someone's getting kinda belligerent they'll start saying things they're not usually saying or super out of character. Uh any type of derogatory terms we don't deal with that and don't accept that here."

The loss of control over bodily facilities is another major hallmark of inebriated trouble customers. Participants in this study were well aware of these behaviors, partially due to mandated server training and the possibility of incurring major fines and penalties for overserving. In this way, a good deal of accountability is placed upon bar staff to pick out and get out the overly inebriated. As Harry, a 26-year-old bouncer, details, "For somebody that's say inexperienced from drinking, or they overindulge, or they're a little too sloppy, if they stay here it's a liability for you. But they're not being violent." The "sloppy" individual can be just as prone to produce trouble as the "violent" one. "I served one lady a glass of wine she didn't even finish. And, I didn't know she had previously been drinking all day. She was literally falling asleep in her seat" said Alicia, a 27-year-old and bartender for 5 years. Leon also states, "I did have a guy that came into [Midwest townie bar]. He had a couple drinks and he brought his dog in, which is a rule we were okay with until this happened. He literally fell off the bar stool with the dog, it was a puppy." In the

most extreme cases this loss of control can even extend to consciousness, such as in this instance detailed by Gene, a bouncer of three years:

This group of people come up and one of the girls is like not walking straight and seems really really drunk, and I question their friends if she's okay or not. And they're like "no she's fine" and she was in some like pretty ridiculous high heels, maybe she just can't walk in those heels[...]a little later that evening I saw the girl dancing with a guy she hadn't come with, and he was like holding her and she was like slumped almost in his arms. And they were just kinda like dancing. And I was like well fuck...a little while later, they find her on the dance floor like just passed out basically. Which tells me this guy just dropped her and left and [management] were like, you need to get her out. So I had to go over there and attempt to wake her up and she was not really coming too very well. So I had to carry her basically out of the bar.

A more revolting identifiable loss of bodily control is regurgitation. "The most common is people that throw up," states Caleb, "that sucks (laughs)." Behaviors like this are typically met with very low tolerance. Archie, a 21-year-old bouncer with a year and a half of experience describes:

If you puke you're done. Like that's it, you're gone, you're too, if you're too drunk that you puke that's it. You can't be in the bar anymore and I don't know how many times we had to pick up puke because people are just stupid and don't know how to pace themselves.

On top of the liability and dangers that comes from exposing groups of people to bodily fluids, it is equally disturbing to both staff and other patrons alike. In some cases, these trouble behaviors can be so disruptive the only course of remedial action is to shut the bar down. Zac, a bartender for 22 years at a townie bar, describes one such incident:

I've had a dude shit in this bar, straight milkshake style, down his fuckin leg. I had to clear the bar out on a Saturday night cause this dude shit the bar and I can't have people in the bar with shit, feces on the fucking floor. He was just so inebriated... this night he normally drinks draft beer, he's all fuckin grabbin people's drinks. I'm like dude, that's not yours, put it down. "Nah its mine!" No dude, it's not, you need

to leave. “Aw lemme go to the bathroom” blah blah blah. Well in this whole time he said that he fuckin shit, right over there in the fuckin corner. So I didn’t notice it before I went outside for a smoke, and I came in and was like what the fuck is that smell? I came over and I’m like oh my god, so I grabbed the club that I had and banged on the bathroom door and said hey dude, you need to get the fuck out of the bar right now, I said who fuckin shits in the fuckin bar? And he comes out and he’s all “oh let me help you clean it” I said nah, you get the fuck out right now. If you come back in again you’re done, barred, banned. Come back again and I’m calling the cops.

Zac’s incident highlights how the behaviors of inebriated trouble customers can become extreme disturbances that have a ripple-like impact upon staff, patrons, and sometimes the entire establishment.

One of the more directly dangerous indicators of inebriated trouble customers is that of aggressive behaviors. The association between inebriation and aggression is not unexplored territory (Graham et al. 2013), but what was intriguing was the way in which bar staff framed the nature of this relationship as elusive or spontaneous. Alicia states:

You kinda have to watch out for those people who drink quite a bit. You know, they may walk in and seem fine, and only have one drink with you but you kinda have to keep in mind that they may have been at other facilities...they may seem as if they are sober, and could flip around and become highly erratic in an instant.

Rebecca, a bartender of three years, shares the sentiment, “Sometimes they’ll sit back and chill. Then you got the guy who comes in happy go lucky, thinking they’re having a good time, but then once that switch turns over and they’ve had too many it becomes troublesome.” Staff also noted that some aggressive outbursts result from misinterpretations of the behaviors of others. Scott exemplified this:

Sometimes people will just make a mountain out of a molehill. If you look over you know, four stools down and check how much of that drink somebody has left, that might actually look like you’re rolling your eyes at someone that has been drinking rather than just checking on a drink to sort of assess your work. So there’s little tiny things like that, that can really set people off.

In a similar incident, Alicia demonstrates that misinterpretations can occur even amongst well-known companions:

You kinda just have to keep an eye out for people who are messing around, poking fun at each other, that can turn really quick into a bar fight. Because sometimes you joke around and it takes, ya know, one little thing said or misinterpreted in a different way and then BAM, barfight...one time, a couple of the guys were just messing around having this regular conversation. They weren't really poking fun, but calling each other dumbass, asshole, things like that. Just regular conversation. But the one guy turned around and hit this guy's balls, just joking around, and it just...cause that little scenario, just a little wack in the nuts and he flipped out.

The elusive nature of the erratic or aggressive inebriated customer begs bigger questions: for one, what are the barriers to accurate detection of the inebriated trouble customer? Like Alicia notes, this line can be made more difficult to detect when considering that patrons could have drunk at other venues before arriving. George also describes how “pregaming”, consuming alcohol or other substances prior to going to the venue, have also contributed to difficulty of detection:

Like I said, that's something that has really picked up within the last ten years is the pregame people. They just really, uh, mix a bunch of everything together: drugs, alcohol, and all that stuff. Then they come out and party and uh, they're unfortunately a ticking time bomb, you have no idea what they're on when they come in because they look fine. And, it could go off twenty, thirty minutes later and they're your problem cause they're in your establishment.

Max, a bouncer of three years, shared this sentiment, “One of the things that's come up in the last ten years is you have no idea how people are partying before they come to your establishment. A lot of the younger generation, they really like to pregame at home and unfortunately they're not just doing alcohol they're doing uppers and downers.”

Another question that arises is at what point does a typical drunk patron become trouble to staff? Some participants drew distinct lines between those who are responsibly drunk and troublemakers. For example, as Harry describes:

So somebody that was drunk but not overserved...if somebody is there to have fun, liquor is a social lubricant, to go out dancing whether it's by themselves or with a group of friends you know. It's not, drunk isn't the problem, we sell alcohol, it's going to happen. A troublemaker, somebody that gets too belligerent or too aggressive is different. They are causing harm upon the business, themselves, or to another customer.

Another bouncer, Caleb, also described a definitive breaking point:

Being drunk or trouble is often misconstrued by a lot of the staff at my restaurant, due to the fact that I think that people don't realize like you're giving them alcohol. What does alcohol do? It gets people drunk. There's nothing wrong with being drunk, you know what I'm saying? There's nothing wrong with coming out, having drinks, getting drunk, having a good time. There's a problem when you come out, you get drunk, you start touching people, you start getting loud and aggressive, you start yelling, you start swearing, you start you know, that's when the people are trouble. And I often get told "oh keep an eye on this guy, he's pretty drunk" and it's like okay, but at the same time he's sitting at a table with his friends laughing and having a good time.

Other staff were looser with these lines like Lara, who stated, "It's definitely case by case, because of like underlying mental issues and underlying experiences that the individual has had." Andrew expressed a similar sentiment:

I feel like it's very much dependent on the customers themselves because there's a line, like. Some people absolutely know when to cut themselves off and it's not a problem and they can be drunk but they can also be cordial. And then you get the other people who are the same level of drunk as person A, but become a problem just because they don't know when to stop so maybe they push it one drink further and then they become a problem.

Seemingly, one common thread through these excerpts is a perception that the responsibility to not cross into the realm of trouble is on the patrons: *their* failure to constrain belligerent behaviors is what elevates them to erratic, aggressive, inebriated trouble for staff.

While participants seemed to acknowledge that inebriation can brew volatility in patrons, they also noted that it was not necessarily the intent of the inebriated trouble customer to cause harms. As Mia, a 24-year-old bartender of three and a half years, describes:

Usually a lot of times with people, I would say that a lot of times, alcohol does add a lot of complexity. Because people when they usually come to a bar they wanna have a good time, you know? They don't usually come in with an agenda or an idea to cause trouble. And usually when alcohol is implemented into a situation I would say that people become more agitated...it takes their effects and changes how they're gonna react to a situation. So if someone was sober and someone said a comment to them, they may just like blow it off. But if you're drunk and someone says a comment to you, you may interact differently emotion wise.

Other staff expressed how personal issues of patrons outside of the bar can brew unintentional inebriated trouble customers. As Scott stated:

A lot of times a lot of the fights and a lot of the problems that actually happen are people who just wanna get things off their chest. They went out to go have a drink just to unload, just to take a load off from the day, from the week, from the year, and so as they get a couple all they wanna do is talk and be heard as you know. They'll sometimes let you in, as you're standing there as a bouncer or you know, listening to somebody scream and yell and "this motherfucker this" and "this motherfucker that" they'll sometimes be like "yeah my best friend fucking died on Saturday and fuck you guys" and its oh, okay, that's what's going on. Literally you're just venting, you're trying to get everything out because internally you're hurting.

In both instances, staff are considerate and receptive of the emotional states of their patrons while recognizing the somewhat accidental nature of inebriated trouble. As I show with the creepy trouble customer, however, not all trouble created is unintentional.

Creepy Trouble Customers

The creepy trouble customer is unique in that participants who discussed these customers described them practically the same: older male customers who make unwanted advances towards women or harass female customers and staff. As Lara states:

There's the guys who are burgeoning on sexual predators. It's uh, an atmosphere with a lot of girls dressed very skimpily sometimes. So then you have to worry about this guy is constantly going around touching girl's asses and like (chuckles), monitoring that.

Scott also said, "One of the biggest things is sometimes you get creepy 40 somethings, just because our staff is 19-25 and you know, lots of times very attractive young ladies." Mia shares the sentiment, "I would say that older men that have been drinking sometimes like sexually harass customers, or sexually harass bartenders." Similarly, Archie describes them as "somebody who like, is either one being creepy or two being drunk and being creepy." These statements also reinforce the idea that trouble customer categories are not always mutually exclusive.

Beyond the association with older males, another identifying mark of the creepy trouble customer is their use of probing or outright inappropriate questions. As Mia details in one encounter:

I had like a person come in one time and he just beelined it to the back of the bar, I was washing dishes. He sat down, ordered a coke, didn't want a menu, he was just sat at the bar and he asked me "Aw, what's your name?" and I said my name. And then he's like "Oh how long have you worked here? Do you usually work these hours?" And then he was like "What time do you get off? Do you live around here? What are you doing after here?" in that order, like exactly in that order. And when I would ask him a question back he wouldn't answer it he would defer it to the next question, and I knew like you had to worry about that...like genuinely asking what time do you get off, it's kinda alarming because now that's sending a red flag, oh is he waiting for me to get out?

Logan also described a similar incident:

We had a customer that would come in and he would say things like 'Do you have daddy issues?' to women. Or like instead of like a genuine 'you look good in that outfit' it would be like more of a creepy one, looking them up and down like 'you look *really* good in that outfit.'

The most blatantly identifying and problematic behavior for creepy trouble customers is the invasion of someone's personal space. As Evan, a 28-year-old bartender of five years describes, "We had a dude a couple months ago. There was this guy that was just going around and sitting with people, harassing people and making them uncomfortable." Inappropriate and undesired touching of staff and other patrons constitutes another form of invasive behavior. "There's people that just get handsy," said Caleb, "I've had to kick out a couple people for attempt at sexual harassment or you know, touching waitresses." These invasions can also cross into even more dangerous, exploitative and predatory territory. Andrew discussed with me one particular creepy customer that had exhibited such behavior:

I was bartending and this girl came up to me and ordered a drink, and said that guy over there is trying to take pictures up our skirts, he left the flash on. I went immediately over to the head bouncer for the night...and I told them and pointed out the man. They immediately removed him.

Tolerance by staff for the trouble behavior of the creepy trouble customer is very low. This is apparent especially in Scott's perspective, "If anybody ever grabs you by the arm you let me know immediately and they're gone. I don't care if they're in front of their children, you're gone, you don't grab a server. Period." Andrew, referring to his previous anecdote, states, "Unfortunately in situations like that the bouncers tend to ask fewer questions and try to focus on removing the person. It's less of a discussion and more being kicked out of the club and having to leave." For most staff, there is little question as to whether the behaviors of creepy trouble customers toe the line of trouble or not.

It is worth mentioning that some participants, specifically bouncers at nightclubs, discussed how there is a degree of difficulty with picking out a trouble customer like this. "I think that's the hardest thing to spot, because people don't always come forward about it" notes Archie, "It's really hard to keep track of 300 people with you know, two bouncers on the floor. It's really hard to have your eyes everywhere at the same time. And one of the problems at the place that I worked at is that we were severely understaffed because people don't get paid right." Unfortunately, the consequences of letting a creepy trouble customer slide through the crowd can be disastrous and damaging to a potential victim. Max describes one such account:

It was a club night where it was like one in, one out. Line out the door, like we don't know everybody whose coming in and out, we're just checking numbers and making sure that your of age and that you have a ticket. And uhm, so...this woman was wasted. And we saw this guy escorting her out, and you can see the video of the dude escorting her out. We're like "Oh yeah, lemme get the door for you, you're taking care of her" at least that's what we thought. No, he drugged her, took her home, and raped her. That's what happened. But we were just so used to some girl getting white girl wasted and he's just, he was being a gentleman! He knew how to make people think he was a gentleman...it's just unfortunate we can't stop this.

Like, we can't stop everyone. Cause this dude did everything right to make you think that he was safe.

In this incident both crowd size and relative unfamiliarity with patrons made the detection of the trouble customer difficult. However, this behavior of employing a façade further reinforces the notion that of the three trouble types, the creepy trouble customer is deliberate in their disturbances.

CHAPTER 6

INTERPERSONAL MANAGEMENT SCRIPTS

Repeated remedial attempts that take the form of interpersonal management scripts allow bar staff to categorize and typify trouble customers. But what remedial pathways exist to manage trouble customers? This study identifies four scripts that participants utilize in the management of trouble: hospitality scripts, guiltning scripts, authoritative scripts and avoidance scripts. Even though other scripts were expressed and alluded to, these four are the most frequently and ubiquitously described across the sample. Like trouble customer types, scripts used by bar staff were also not mutually exclusive. As will be seen, the qualities of distinct scripts, how staff employ those scripts and who they employ them upon helps to answer the specific question of what actual actions do bar staff take to manage trouble behavior.

Hospitality Scripts

The hospitality script is comprised of routinized staff behavior where bar staff express overt friendly, generous, and caring demeanors towards customers in order to quell potential disturbances before they arise. Some participants like Rob framed the use of these

behaviors as “killing with kindness.” Lara also shares and expands upon this orientation, stating “Well you know you just have to, kill ‘em with kindness. Console them a little bit. You have to be understanding, get down to their level, but don’t give in. Because then, like if you give an inch they’ll take a mile.” Rose additionally notes, “Whether knowing them or not, you try to get them to a level of ‘Hey, look at me, talk to me, is this really worth that? What can I do for you to relax this situation?’” While the use of overt scripts of friendliness by service staff to handle trouble customers is not a new observation (Hall 1993; Tibbals 2007), what this does show is that bar staff like bartenders and bouncers can and do use similar tactics for their trouble customers.

So what does “killing with kindness” look like? Sometimes these scripted behaviors can start as soon as first contact with patrons is made, in essence a pre-emptive form of control. As Max describes, “I try to be off the bat super welcoming and like, ‘Hi welcome! Come on in!’ And I feel like that’s where some bars mess it up because people don’t feel welcome when they first walk in, they feel watched.” Bouncer Caleb expands on why he thinks this preemptive behavior is critical:

My first step is always to walk over there and you know, establish a relationship because you know, people don’t care about people they don’t know. You know, so if someone knows, or if they have any type of connection or relationship with me they’re more willing to listen later on. That’s also one of the reasons why I greet everyone ‘Hey how’s it goin’, how’s it goin’?’ When people see that they’ll realize you know, ‘oh this guy’s cool, this guy’s nice, this guy’s friendly.’ And then when I’m like hey how's it goin’, how's your night you know...I don’t just walk away. It’s ‘Hey, what’s goin’ on?’ Give ‘em the 10-15 seconds it takes to listen to their answer, respond accordingly.

Zac shares the sentiment of both men, stating “You have to become welcoming, you have to deal with this stuff. All the Sam Malone and *Cheers* stuff is completely true, sometimes you have to take that bar towel and throw it over your shoulder and start a chat.”

Other times, hospitality scripts take the form of expressions of concern for well-being of customers. This concern can be based around the perceived emotional state of the customer. As Alicia describes:

There's been times I can tell if someone's sad or upset, sometimes that can turn into anger. I'm like, 'Hey you wanna go talk for a second? Y'know, lets step outside and I'll have someone cover the bar for me.' And uhm, take a few seconds and y'know see if I can simmer them down.

Concern-driven behaviors used to stop potential troubles sometimes manifested as offerings or acts of generosity. As Zac details:

I buy you a drink, I'll buy you a shot, just stupid things you know? But to them it's like "Oh, a fuckin free drink" and it seems to work. Just the simplest little, be nice to them or acknowledge them like 'Hey man, I know you're struggling tonight or whatever your problem is, lemme get you a drink or lemme buy that last drink for ya whatever.' And then they're all cool you know?

Rob also employed a similar hospitality script, stating "If it's something stupid or minor, I'll take them to the side of the bar and buy them a drink. And it usually just distracts them."

Sometimes the core of the concern revolves around considerations of intoxication levels. In these instances, concern-driven behavior took the form of limiting patron access to alcohol. Jack, a bartender of four years, describes a form of this behavior known as slow-rolling:

Before they get their next shot like give 'em a glass of water and say 'Hey I'm not gonna give you a shot right now, I want you to sit for a little while. You know, you can have a beer, whatever, I'm just gonna pace you out.' It's too much too soon. Uhm so slow rolling customers is what we like to call it, we like to slow roll people if we feel like they are drinking a lot fast and right away.

Another form of limiting access is the cut-off, where staff either completely sever a patron's access to alcohol or outright remove them. However, staff note that there is a nuance in the way you must employ the cut-off. As Max describes:

If you're cutting somebody off you learn to never say "You're cut off" but treat them like a little kid. You talk to them like, "I can't serve you anymore tonight" but don't say get out of here, and never call them drunk. Just say you've had a little too much tonight, I think it's time to call it a night. Or I think you've had a fun one, you never say you're drunk or you're cut off cause that just makes people feel like they're being attacked and judged.

Andrew shares this sentiment, stating, "My practice is always to just help someone. Like hey, you've kinda had a lot to drink, I'm happy to get you a water but I think you need to take a break...I wouldn't necessarily kick them out if I was cutting them off, I would just think they wouldn't need any more alcohol."

Max and Andrew's statements allude to the notion of hospitality scripts as routine response to inebriated trouble customers. Typically these responses are shaped by the perceived severity of inebriated trouble: in cases where staff perceive the potential for severe trouble, hospitality is used as a means to eject the troublemaking party from the venue prior to that trouble. Like in Max's example, the reframing of ejection can prevent inebriated customers from becoming hostile and erratic. Sometimes these types of gentle suggestions and conversations are used to lure trouble parties outside the venue, where they can be barred from entering and causing disturbance. Andrew further elaborates on this tactic:

I've found that in most situations where you can get someone to leave on their own, you really have to ask them to talk about it with you outside. So the first tactic would be to ask them to step outside and talk about the issue and once they're outside of the club there is no concern about them re-entering, because there is no way to re-enter other than going through the bouncers. So rather than really do anything inside the club and deescalate it once it's physical, we just try to get people to leave the premises and usually it's fairly easy to get them to just try and go to another bar, we would just tell them they were welcome to come back another night just not tonight.

On the other hand, in cases where staff perceive the severity of inebriated trouble to be lower they may attempt to quell the trouble without removal. One unique use of a hospitality script like this can be seen in an incident Caleb experienced:

I walked over and I said “hey man here’s a cup of water” and he of course being, starting to get to those stages of drunk was like “What do I need a cup of water for?” and I was like “Well, I watched you chug a pitcher of beer man, I’d want some water after that too.” That is one of my tactics, connecting with somebody and being like “oh dude, I want that so you should want that.” I use that a lot, trying to relate with them, make that relationship bond of like oh, I’m not calling you a pussy, I’m not saying you’re a bitch, I’m saying that’s what I would want and I’m trying to help you out, you know?

Another unique hospitality script is exhibiting behaviors to entertain and distract the potential inebriated trouble customer. An account from Zac, who keeps a collection of silly looking wigs behind his bar, exemplifies the tactic of humor to deter aggression:

I might put my arm around them and fuck with them for a minute, you know, just stupid things to calm a dude down. I’ll go put my wigs on a motherfucker starts laughing. It’s easy, breaks ice you know. Just, little things[...]people getting pissed, like somebody was looking at them or just something stupid, just cause they’re all drunk. I come out with the wigs and it takes their mind off of what they were thinking. Now they’re concentrating on me going (scrunches up face) because I’ve changed 3 fuckin wigs in 15 minutes. Now they don’t remember being mad at the dude for looking at his girlfriend, just stupid things like that and it works.

It is worth noting that participants in this study seem to exhibit some differences in hospitality script usage based upon the occupational role they filled. Bartenders tended to orientate their perception of role around an identity of service and commitment to the customer. As Rose describes:

No matter who you’re working for, if it’s for yourself or another or someone else, you’re there as a bartender, as a server, whatever. You wanna make [customers] feel important and special and they are! When they’re in your establishment, and they should be!

This expression of genuine concern was not unique to Rose. As Rebecca shares:

I think as a bartender you're able to touch people's lives, or just be there for people on a daily basis. You never know like what anyone's going through on any given day and could be a stranger and you know they just need a hug, and I've had people just tell me like "I thank you, I thank you for being there and listening" and just to be able to I don't know, be real with people and care.

This orientation towards patrons could in part explain why the majority of participants who employed hospitality scripts were bartenders. On the other hand, bouncers who have a role identity revolving around authoritarian presentations might be expected to employ less hospitable behaviors to control patrons (Hobbs et al. 2002). Despite this notion, some bouncers in this study used hospitality scripts, even citing that more bouncers should respond in these ways. "That's where I feel like a lot of bars and bouncers get it wrong," said Max, "they just come in and try to flex their dick really hard right off the bat and look super intimidating."

Beyond inebriated trouble customers, participants also employed hospitality scripts as remedies to entitled trouble customers. Being a disruptive but not necessarily ejection-worthy trouble, many staff utilize overt friendliness to respond to their behaviors. This finding is not new (Hall 1993). However, what is interesting is that some staff hold the perception that entitled trouble customers are merely attention seekers, and that through hospitable behaviors those attention seekers can be satisfied. As Scott details:

They'll sometimes actually just want to talk to you because they want attention and if you don't give them enough attention they'll make it so that they get the attention. They'll tell you that their potato is burnt when you know very well it's the same potato that's been coming out the entire time, because the oven is preset at 350 and put it in for exactly this amount of time. Like, you know very well it's not burnt but they will tell you their potato is burnt just to get more face time. It happens, it truly does, just like the person who had a bad day and goes to sit at the bar and be like 'Hey, you forgot my drink.' No, no I didn't forget your drink because it's still in your hand, but at the same time what can I do for ya? It's sometimes people just need more attention.

As mentioned previously, entitled trouble customers increase in severity somewhat relative to how busy an establishment is. In this sense, one might imagine that using hospitality scripts as a way to manage them is only available when venues are less crowded.

Guilting Scripts

The guilting script, like hospitality scripts, are a series of routinized staff behavior employed to control trouble customers. These types of scripts are usually vocalizations directed at particular trouble patrons, specifically entitled or inebriated types, with the purpose of attempting to get the troublemaker to identify with the position of the staff, understand their perspective, and recognize that the behavior they are exhibiting is disruptive to either staff or other customers. Caleb explains why making this connection and getting someone to “walk in your shoes” is beneficial for controlling trouble behaviors:

Along those lines too is like trying to make people understand how you feel is very beneficial to deescalating situations. Due to the fact like, if I told you like “Hey man don’t do that cause like I have to do this” most people aren’t gonna care. But you’re like “Hey man, you know how much it sucks to clean up throw up? Like have you ever had to?” and try to make them feel like wow, I have to clean up throw up? Then they’re more likely to be like “wow dude, maybe I should slow down so I don’t throw up because I wouldn’t want to clean it up.”

In this example, Caleb shows that it also isn’t merely enough to suggest that the patron is making your life more difficult. Rather, staff must explicitly outline to customers how their trouble behavior will directly impact them if they are to see success with guilting scripts.

In a similar incident, Lara employs a mix of hospitality and guilting scripts to handle an entitled trouble customer mentioned previously:

He thought he would treat everyone around him like shit and thought that he could wave money in my face and snap at me and tap and hit on the bar...I walked down towards his end of the bar while I was helping a giant group that came in before he came back up to order. And he said “Are you ever fucking coming back to my side of the bar?” And I said “I appreciate your patience, I hope you can see that I’m completely alone. That whole group came in together, I can’t just stop serving them because you’re ready to order.” So then he looks down, I’m not sure if he realized what, what an asshole he was being so he took a second to take a step back and then he went “Oh, well I mean like, you’re doing a good job, I would hire you for sure if you ever want a job in Illinois.” And I’m like “Thank you” and had to go back to the other end of the bar.

Like Caleb, Lara’s use of guilting script is used to draw the troublemaker’s attention towards the specifics of how they are making staff jobs difficult; unlike Caleb, Lara sprinkles overt friendliness throughout her address to the customer, perhaps as a means of softening the blow of the callout.

Guilting scripts were also used by participants when handling inebriated trouble customers. Acknowledging the liability that they are responsible for their customers’ safety, bar staff might use that liability to their advantage and leverage the risk of job loss to prevent inebriated trouble. “Look, this is my job,” stated rose, recounting one incident with a drunken regular, “I don’t wanna get this bar shut down, do you want this bar to be shut down, ya know? Because of that I’m cutting you off.” Bouncer Max also discussed a similar form of guilt script, stating:

There’s been times when people have been drunk...drunks try to come in and I’m like “I can’t let you in, you’ve had like...you’ve had a night” and they’ll be like “What? No... I’ll be okay.” I just always tell them that I could lose my job if I let them in. Do you really want me to lose my job? A lot of the times that gets people. “Oh, you’re just doing your job, I don’t want you to get in trouble because you have bills to pay.”

By getting a potential inebriated trouble customer to empathize with the fact that their behavior could directly be the cause of another’s unemployment Max is able to prevent trouble before it even starts.

Further, like for entitled customer types, some staff also employed mixed hospitality-guiling scripts on inebriated customers. Logan stated:

I would say that 8/10 times, when you point out they've had too much, if you're respectful and you're calm people will get embarrassed. They're like "Oh, I hit that point? I'm becoming an issue? I'm sorry." I say "You're not banned, you're just...come back tomorrow" you know what I mean?"

Logan details how a hospitable demeanor tied to the call out can make the inebriated trouble customer more likely to cooperate.

Authoritative Scripts

But what happens when more "gentle" scripts of hospitality and guiling aren't enough to rectify the behavior of trouble customers? One answer staff turn to is the stern employment of the authoritative script. Participants who described authoritative scripts in their interviews denoted them as assertive verbal and physical behaviors where bar staff invoke site-specific authority associated with their identity as employees of the establishment. These scripts are used when staff need to abruptly cease disruptive conduct via barking orders or even forcible ejections from the venue. In most cases, authoritative scripts are a last resort for bar staff. For example, when discussing with Caleb what his least favorite part of being a bouncer was, he stated:

Kicking people out. Like physically kicking people out, I uh, I don't like doing it. I don't think it's fun. And I do it because at the point that I have to kick somebody out physically is like the very last point, where it's like dude, I've talked to you, I've cut you off, I've told you you've gotta be quiet multiple times...I told you that you had to leave and you're choosing not to leave. I don't like kicking people out, mainly for that reason that I'm ending their fun. And you know, I'm getting rid of business per se. Nothing good comes out of kicking people out of bars.

Caleb's statement here is a testament to the cyclic nature of alleviating interpersonal troubles (Emerson and Messinger 1977). When repeated attempts at controlling trouble behaviors prove ineffective, such as in this example where Caleb cites previous failure of a hospitality script, bar staff step up their responses to be firmer and more forceful. This forceful demeanor is recognized by some staff as vital for trouble behavior correction. Mia states, "If you use like a firm stance and use like a bigger voice. It's all about the body language and how you approach a situation. Like no one wants to mess with someone whose firm and authoritative than if you're like iffy and timid about it."

Other staff suggest that while being stern and authoritative can be helpful when other methods fail, bar staff should not jump to enact authoritative scripts in every scenario. As Archie details:

I mean being stern does help, but in other situations like when people are just being silly and goofy and you just gotta ask them to calm down that works too. I don't know how many girls I've had to get off of tables and be like "Hey, please don't do that." And they're just like oh, and they just get embarrassed and they stop, and I don't have to kick anybody out. You have to pick and choose your battles with how you address situations, because in some situations you need to be stern and angry cause that's the only thing that will work. In other situations, I mean there's no reason to be upset cause they're just being goofy. And...as long as everybody is having fun and nobody is getting hurt that's kinda the whole thing.

In this instance, Archie perceives that the use of authoritative behaviors can serve to exacerbate troubles instead of quelling them. This reinforces the importance of being able to assess trouble customers "correctly" and use the proper interpersonal management tools that best fit that trouble circumstance.

Inebriated trouble customers are the most numerous recipients of authoritative scripts. When the disruption they cause within the bar is deemed more severe than hospitality can handle but not severe enough to warrant

outright expulsion, participants seemed to rely on barking directives and vocalizing curt commands. One account from Mia shows how when used as a response to some inebriated trouble behaviors, authoritative scripts can abruptly cut short trouble:

For instance, if no one needs to be kicked out but they're just like goofing around, like if someone's standing on chairs at the bar type thing I'll tell them "Sit down!" and they usually are like "Oh shit, yeah my bad, I'll sit down." Or like if they're yelling at their friend across the room. Or upstairs on the roof we have lights that are string and one drunk guy felt the need to like go like this (motions as if she were grabbing on to a draping rope and yanking it around). I see him bouncing the lights, obviously I don't want them to fall off and electrocute someone, so I go on the opposite side of the bar. I yell, point and go "Hey you! Touch my light one more time!" and he looked at me and he sat down immediately.

As one can imagine, there are instances where the inebriated customer becomes so erratic or inconsolable that even sharp directives are not enough. In these cases, especially when inebriated customers exhibit aggressive emotions, the staff is faced with little choice but to use physical force to expel them from the venue. Bartender Zac framed the use of such force as relative necessity when no other option suffices:

It's like when Kacey works...she's not gonna go to the book about what the [training] says she's gonna do. She's gonna do what she does, what she needs to do, which is "Hey motherfucker!" you know? And people are gonna listen to her too, cause she's loud. It's the same when I'm the bartender: my rules, my way.

Creepy trouble customers are also confronted and almost exclusively handled with authoritative scripts. Recall that creepy customer types are usually met with very little tolerance for their behaviors: in this way it is not surprising that staff address and handle them curtly. The primary form of authoritative script used on these trouble customers across the sample seemed to be expulsion, typically without any prior attempt to "correct" their trouble behavior. That being said, there is a lack of specificity with how staff involved in these incidents describe the actions they took to remove creepy

customers. More data is needed to better understand how this type of trouble customer is influenced by the use of authoritative scripts.

Avoidance Scripts

If the authoritative script is the last resort for a bar staff almost out of options, the avoidance script is the resignation: to give up and to let go. Avoidance scripts are characterized by passing the responsibility of dealing with a trouble customer onto another. Most commonly, this responsibility is passed onto owners or management but can also be deferred to third parties such as the police. As Lara explains, “There’s some that you just can’t deal with. They’ll just come up with an excuse for every single thing you say and those ones you have to be like ‘Look. If you’d like to talk to the owner feel free, but this is clearly not progressing to a positive place for either of us.’”

Lara exemplifies that this avoidance of trouble is usually directed towards someone the bar staff perceives as more experienced and apt to manage the trouble customer than themselves. However, when trouble patrons reach a point that they are being offloaded upon management it's likely that they will also defer the trouble to another party. One account from Rebecca demonstrates this process while discussing an inebriated trouble customer who came from the hospital to the pub:

I was like what are you doing? I don’t wanna cut people off like immediately but I’m like this guy’s probably on some sort of medication and probably should not be drinking. So I served him a drink, and then I think he had a couple drinks and he started getting a little bit out of control. I notified my boss and he came out. And my boss told em we were not gonna serve ’em anymore. So the guy, I remember, got pissed, stood up, slammed his chair back, and called my boss some swear words. And got pissed, said he was gonna call the cops, and that this wasn’t fair, blah blah blah. And so my boss ended up calling the police and...I think they ended

up showing up and the guy left. The cops didn't have to force them out. Just kinda escorted 'em in a non-violent way.

Indeed, many other accounts of avoidance involve the deferring of trouble customers to police as well. As Caleb states, "We got him outside, and the manager called the police because this man was very large and studly, very intimidating for me and another grown ass man. We got him outside and police came, made him go home." Rose said, "Try to approach them and handle that situation. If they're not gonna concede then you pick up your phone, call 911. It's in the hands of law enforcement at that point." Here Rose further reinforces the notion that staff do attempt remedial action (sometimes several actions) ways before the consideration of employing avoidance behaviors.

While most avoidance behaviors usually resulted in contacting police, one interesting perspective highlighted by Mia was this sort of paradoxical conflict with police involvement in management of trouble customers. She states:

I would say that police officers don't want us to physically handle a situation, they don't want us to kinda touch them at all anymore. They don't want us to grab people and pull them apart...they just want us to immediately call them. Like if there's a situation even fighting wise, they're like "We don't want you to touch them, we're right there. Call us, call us." And it's like sometimes it takes them a while to get here, but if people are causing trouble why do we need to do that?

In this account, police are framed as wanting bar staff to defer to them as often as possible when handling trouble customers. Conversely, Mia's perspective expresses that certainly not all trouble customers are worth calling police for, and that even some volatile behaviors are still within the purview of staff management.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the use of avoidance scripts seemed in some accounts to be altered by the type of venue in which staff worked. For example, in a

nightclub setting there is a “chain” of staff through which trouble customers can be passed down. As Andrew describes:

So....there's a very strong chain of command, so the bouncers and the barbacks handle problems too, but the barbacks are primarily concerned with stocking and things of that nature. But when a bartender has an issue with a customer, in most situations in any nightclub I've been a part of I just have to notify on staff that is not a bartender and in each situation they've taken care of it fairly immediately, within a minute. And it happens that the patron is usually removed from the premises.

While there is a plethora of staff to which nightclub workers can “pass on” trouble customers to handle internally, these types of options seem to not be readily available in other venues. For example, Rose and Zac who are both townie bartenders oftentimes fill several different roles. As Zac describes:

It's your establishment [on shift], it's not your bar, but it's your establishment. The owners aren't here, they're watching the cameras...but it's like your bar when you're here. After my coworker gets done cleaning I'm here by myself till close. I'm the bouncer, I'm the bartender, and that's it.

With less specialized staff to rely on to remedy trouble, the only option of avoidance script townie staff can turn to seems to be deferring customers to police. However, more data is needed to further explore the relationship between venues and script variance between venues.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Drawing upon 20 interviews with bar staff, this study examined the processes through which staff come to both identify and manage trouble customers. Participants identified behaviors attributed to entitled, inebriated, and creepy trouble customers as problematic. They respond to these behaviors and trouble types through remedial action that takes the form of interpersonal management scripts. These scripts, which are not mutually exclusive, include hospitality, guilt, authoritative and avoidance scripts. Using these scripts when the first vague instances of trouble are noticed, bar staff come to handle the problematic behaviors of customers before they escalate into dangerous and violent territory.

The findings of this study are important for several reasons, one of which being that not all trouble in venues is remedied through force. Previous qualitative research outlines how bouncers and doormen restore order through intimidating displays and physical force (Monaghan 2002; Monaghan 2003; Hobbs et al. 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005). The findings of this study add nuance to this literature, showing that bouncers utilize more than tactics of aggression and physical force to remove or control problem patrons. In addition, this study also shows that bartenders can play just as pivotal a role in behavior management as bouncers and even other service workers (Hall 1993; Hearn and Stoll 1975; Spradley and Mann 1975; Tibbals 2007; Thoits 1996). Further, the results of this study represent an

attempt to merge the literature of trouble with a literature of scripts and explores the use of such scripts by bouncers and bartenders. By understanding the use of scripts to alleviate trouble in the context of drinking venues, this study bring us closer to a more holistic understanding of interpersonal management processes.

Future research can also consider a few avenues to expand upon the findings of this study. One avenue considers that some staff accounts alluded to the notion that the boundaries of what is considered trouble behavior, especially inebriated trouble behavior, are effectively stretched for regulars and other patrons which staff have social ties with. As Max states, “There’s definitely drunkies that come in that are regulars but staff get them wasted as much as they want and they’re still nice, they don’t disrespect people, they tip super well, so we let them.” This research would optimally examine how personal ties affect the process of trouble identification by staff.

Another avenue would consider that some trouble customer types and scripted responses are very gendered in their construction. The most obvious example here is in the identification of the creepy trouble customer: in each account where they were mentioned, the trouble customer in question was an older male. Additionally participants, specifically male participants, sometimes framed the use of hospitality script behaviors as more effective when used to control inebriated trouble customers that are women. As Andrew describes:

My practice is always to just help someone, like, “Hey, you’ve kinda had a lot to drink. I’m happy to get you a water but I think you need to take a break.” I usually did that with heavily inebriated people, and the vast majority of females I would act with in that manner would ask for a water or a soda or some sort, whereas a higher majority of the male patrons that I would interact with would become upset about being cut off.

Research along these lines would be expected to explore the impact of gender upon identification of trouble customers and how remedial actions are shaped by such an influence.

Lastly, I would suggest future research consider implications regarding the effect of venue types on both identification of trouble customers and the management scripts employed there. One example that alludes to the influence of venue on these processes is the identification of the creepy trouble customer. As some participants describe, identifying a creepy customer can be very difficult in a nightclub as opposed to a townie bar where that type of behavior stands out much more prominently. As Archie details in one discussion about creepy customers, “I think that’s the hardest thing to spot and people don’t come forward about it. It’s really hard to keep track of 300 people...to have your eyes everywhere at the same time.” Further, while some accounts from participants working in different venues alluded to nuanced differences in how management scripts were employed, more data is needed to effectively explore the relationship between venue and management processes.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

“I am interested in learning about how bar staff manage trouble customers and near-violence in bars and nightclubs. As a (bartender/bouncer), I want to hear your perspective on this topic.”

Consent form issued here

“Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be strictly confidential, and that I will not release any information that can be linked to you. I will eliminate uniquely identifying information, including your name, from any recorded interviews. The interviews will then be stored and downloaded into a password-protected file.”

1. To start, how long have you been a (bouncer/bartender)?
 - a. Have you worked this job in more than one venue?
2. Why did you become a (bouncer/bartender)?
 - a. [If still a bouncer/bartender]: for what reasons do you continue to work as a (bouncer/bartender)?
 - b. [If no longer a bouncer/bartender]: for what reasons did you decide to stop working as a (bouncer/bartender)?
3. What is the best thing about being a (bouncer/bartender)?
 - a. What is the worst thing about being a (bouncer/bartender)?
4. In your perspective, what does a trouble customer look like?
 - a. Are there different types of trouble customers?
 - i. What do you call them?
 - ii. How do you know if someone is an [insert type(s)] of trouble customer?
 1. [If needing clarification]: What sorts of things does [trouble customer type] say or do that helps you determine their label?

- b. Is there a difference between drunk and trouble customers?
 - i. Why/Why not?
- 5. How often do you deal with trouble customers on your job?
 - a. Do you deal with more or less trouble customers than when you started your job?
- 6. Do workplace policies or practices help you to determine what customers are trouble?
 - a. Why or why not?
- 7. Do workplace policies or practices help you to determine what situations are near-violent?
 - a. Why or why not?
- 8. Part of what I want to do with this study is to develop a more detailed image of tension, conflict and resolution in (bars/nightclubs). That being said, I would like you to take a moment and reflect on a specific incident where you had to deal with a trouble patron. Take as much time as you need to recall the memory in your mind, and when you have gathered your thoughts can you describe this incident for me in detail?
 - a. [If needing more contextual data]: where in the (bar/nightclub) did this occur?
 - i. When during your shift did this occur?
 - b. Were you the only staff involved in this incident?
 - i. [If no other present staff]: do you normally handle trouble patrons by yourself?
 - ii. [If other staff was present]: why did this other staff get involved?
 - 1. How did this person assist you?
 - 2. Was their assistance effective?
 - c. What sorts of emotions were you experiencing during this situation?

- i. Why do you think so?
- d. How specifically did you calm the trouble patron in this incident?
 - i. How did you learn this method of handling trouble customers?
 - 1. How do you know this method is effective at handling trouble customers?
 - 2. How do you think this method changes the emotions of the trouble customer?

9. Again, I would like you to take a moment and reflect on a specific incident, but this time I want you to focus on an incident where you had to handle a near-violent situation. Take as much time as you need to recall the memory in your mind, and when you have gathered your thoughts can you describe this incident for me in detail?

- a. [If needing more contextual data]: where in the (bar/nightclub) did this occur?
 - i. When during your shift did this occur?
- b. Were you the only staff involved in this incident?
 - i. [If no other present staff]: do you normally handle near violent situations by yourself?
 - ii. [If other staff was present]: why did this other staff get involved?
 - 1. How did this person assist you?
 - 2. Was their assistance effective?
- c. What sorts of emotions were you experiencing during this situation?
 - i. Why do you think so?
- d. How specifically did you prevent this incident from escalating into violence?
 - i. How did you learn this method of handling near-violence?

1. How do you know this method is effective?
2. How do you think this method impacts the emotions of people involved in the near-violent situation?

10. We are just about done here, and to wrap it up I have a few background questions.

First, how old are you?

11. What race or ethnicity do you identify as?
12. What gender do you identify as?
13. What is the highest level of education you have received?
14. What is the highest level of education your parents have received?