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Three Shot at Stooges, City Says Enough

Far East Side bar with troubling history of gun violence and assaults being shut down

COLUMBUS, OH—A notorious bar that has prompted dozens of police runs since 2015 is being boarded up this afternoon after City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. secured an emergency restraining order against a business considered to be a magnet for criminal behavior that “substantially interferes with the public decency, sobriety, peace, and good order” of the city during an *ex parte* hearing in the Franklin County Environmental Court earlier today.

The aptly named Stooges, located at [2932 Noe Bixby Road](#), has been the scene of rampant shootings, robberies, assaults on women, fights with pool sticks, fights involving as many as 20 people at a time, drug dealing, and underage alcohol sales. A man was found dead in the parking lot of the premises in 2016.

“We were alarmed by so many things at this establishment, including a disturbing pattern of gun violence,” said Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.

According to court documents, Columbus Police were dispatched to the premises on May 5, 2015 on a report of a man with a gun. Upon arrival, officers observed a man throw an object under an SUV in the parking lot and later determined the object to be a loaded firearm that previously had been reported stolen.

Later that same month, police responded to a report of a victim being slapped in the face by her ex-boyfriend while inside Stooges.

On October 9, 2015, an individual reported being robbed while in the Stooges parking lot.

On January 3, 2016, police were dispatched to Stooges on a report of a man with a gun. Upon arrival, officers observed a man running from the premises. Officer detained him and subsequently determined he had two active warrants for his arrest.

On February 1, 2016, police responded to a report of an unresponsive man in a car in the Stooges parking lot. Officers and medics determined the man to be deceased.

Later that same month, police were dispatched to the premises on a report of an assault and criminal damaging.

On March 13, 2016, police responded to a shooting that occurred in the parking lot of the premises. Responding officers found a victim with a gunshot wound.

April 2016 proved to be a particularly busy month at Stooges as police responded to the premises on reports of:

- a man with a gun
- persons selling narcotics
- patrons fighting with pool sticks inside the bar
- another fight
- another occasion of a person with a gun
- approximately ten gunshots being fired

The criminal conduct continued in May 2016, as police responded to reports of:

- shots being fired at the premises
- people fighting in the parking lot
- approximately seven gunshots being fired in the parking lot
- a female victim being struck in the head with a glass while inside the premises

On June 23, 2016 a female victim reported being assaulted and called racial slurs by a male suspect.

In July 2016, police responded to reports of:

- three to four persons fighting, including one who was knocked unconscious
- patrons running out of the premises after someone had been shot in the bar
- more shots fired at the premises
- men with guns fighting in the parking lot

In August 2016, police responded to a report of persons with guns inside the premises and on another occasion, men with guns fighting in the parking lot.

On September 5, 2016, police responded to a report of a fight inside the premises.

In October 2016, police:

- received a report of “extensive narcotics use” inside the premises
- responded to a report of a large fight in the parking lot
- discovered illegal narcotics and drug paraphernalia inside Stooges during an administrative inspection. One of the co-owners, Richard Heilbrunn, was present at the time and identified himself as “the person in charge” of the premises

On November 13, 2016, police responded to a report of a woman being assaulted at the premises.

On December 22, 2016, police responded to a report of a victim being assaulted and having his car stolen by his assailants.

In January 2017, police responded to reports of:

- an assault
- a fight involving a person with a gun at the premises
- gunshots being fired at the premises.

On February 4, 2017, police responded to a report of approximately twenty people in a fight in the parking lot. Later that month, police responded to another report of a fight.

On April 10, 2017, police responded to a call of a shooting and found a victim who stated he had been shot at Stooges.

On May 19, 2017 police were dispatched to the premises on report of gunshots fired.

On June 3, 2017, Vice Squad detectives conducting a covert investigation purchased cocaine inside the premises and had a witness describe “open narcotics transactions” occurring inside Stooges.

On September 3, 2017 between the hours of 2:30 and 3:30 a.m. officers responded to a shooting at the premises and found three victims suffering gunshot wounds.

“Columbus Police have repeatedly responded to reports of violence, specifically gun violence, at Stooges in recent years,” said Assistant City Attorney Steve Dunbar. “Today’s court order provides a measure of relief to those who have been forced to endure this violence.”

A follow-up hearing for a preliminary and permanent injunction against the owners of Stooges is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on September 18, 2017.

If the property is ultimately declared to be a statutorily defined public nuisance, state law grants the court authority to order the premises shut down for up to one year. The owners also would be permanently enjoined from “conducting, maintaining, using, occupying, or in any way permitting” a public nuisance anywhere else in Franklin County, Ohio.

In order to secure closure of the business, Dunbar, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the Far East area of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the owners are guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that they, as owners of the premises, “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

Copies of the city’s [complaint](#) and the [court’s order](#) are available online.