

# **Taking it on the Chin**

Violence Against British  
Door Supervisors

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## **Author's Introduction**

This report presents the findings of research conducted during 2008 into door supervisors and the level of workplace violence they face. The report is a shortened version of a dissertation submitted as part of an MSc degree in Security and Risk Management with the University of Leicester.

Data were obtained directly from door supervisors to establish, for the first time, the quantity of threats and assaults they receive, and to establish their opinions and acceptance of the violence they face. Additionally, this report highlights some of the wider issues that are relevant to the research subject. The stance of this research is that due to Security Industry Authority (SIA) licensing, door supervisors are now vetted, trained, qualified and licensed professionals who should be given due regard for this status.

Of the wider issues revealed during the research, two key findings emerged. First, it shows that door supervisors suffer substantially more violence at work than any previously researched employment group. Second, that SIA licensing requirements may actually be contributing to an increase in violence in the night time economy.

The men and women who are featured in this report are predominantly referred to as 'door supervisors', 'door staff' or 'door stewards'. On occasion they are also referred to as 'bouncers'. Although to some door staff, the title 'bouncer' can have negative connotations, during this report, no special meaning is inferred by these differing titles and they are used without prejudice or form of ranking.

## **About the Report**

Throughout the report, the academic Harvard 'author-date' system of referencing is used. Where the report refers to the work of another author, a reference will be made to them (in brackets) in the text. These 'in-text' references relate to full 'end-text' references listed on pages 27-28.

The word 'victimisation' is used during this report; a word commonly associated with discrimination or harassment. Where it is used in this report it is given in its criminological definition, i.e. someone suffers a 'victimisation' when they become a victim of a crime.

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## **About the Author**

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# Chapter 1: Research in This Field

## Introduction

This chapter will review previous relevant research in order to establish the context in which violence against door supervisors takes place. It will also state the aims and objectives of the research that underpins these findings.

## The Night-Time Economy

The night-time economy consists primarily of bars, pubs, night clubs and fast food outlets, usually clustered around town centres (Finney, 2004) and is an increasingly important part of the social, economic and cultural fabric of many British towns and cities. The policy debate surrounding the night-time economy has become more heated since the inception of the Licensing Act 2003. The Act came fully into effect in 2005 and saw the extension of licensing hours. It was argued by the government that by removing fixed closing times, people would be less likely to 'binge drink' by rushing to finish their drinks before closing time, instead spreading consumption out through the night. However, it has since been argued that the extension of opening hours appeared to, at best, only redistribute criminal or disorderly events over a greater period of time (Hadfield, 2006).

## Violence in the Night-Time Economy

Violence in the night-time economy predominantly involves young males, both as victims and offenders, with bottles and glasses being the most frequently used sharp weapons (Finney, 2004). However, only a fraction of these incidents are reported to the police or to the company headquarters of licensed premises (Poyner & Warne, 1988). There are several possible reasons for low rates of reporting. First, people can eschew involvement with the police as an active choice (Stanko, 2003). Second, employees might not want to draw unwanted police attention to their premises, as doing so might threaten their licenses (Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister & Winlow, 2003). Third, there can be the perception that violence is just part of doing business in the night-time economy. Therefore, sometimes the only incidents that get recorded are those that attract police attention, result in serious damage or injury, or prompt victims to claim compensation (Poyner & Warne, 1988, Finney, 2004). However, data suggest strongly that the violence rate in the night-time economy is significantly higher than anywhere else in everyday life (Winlow & Hall, 2006).

Research in hospital A&E departments showed that 24% of all facial injuries were caused by assault; 90% of facial injuries in bars and around 45% of facial injuries in the street were associated with alcohol consumption. Eight per cent of the overall assaults involved the use of bottles or glass (Hutchinson, Magennis, Shepherd and Brown 1991, cited in Hobbs *et al*, 2003).

The most recent relevant analysis of information obtained from the British Crime Survey showed that between 1996 and 1999, a fifth of all violent incidents took place around pubs, bars or clubs, and a third of non-robbery related violence committed by strangers took place in or around a bar, pub or club. Eighty per cent of violent incidents in these areas were committed by people under the influence of alcohol. During the same period, persons under the influence of alcohol committed 53% of assaults on strangers, and almost a half of alcohol related assaults between strangers involved more than one offender (Budd, 2003).

The 'Tackling Anti-Social Street Crime' (TASC) project (Maguire & Nettleton, 2003) was a multi-agency project conducted in Cardiff using information from the police, A&E reporting, CCTV logs and interviews and police analyst information to obtain a picture of crime in Cardiff's night-time economy. The TASC project was conducted prior to the launch of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and revealed some unnerving data about the city's door staff and their involvement in crime. Of the 700 door staff, 'quite high numbers' had recent convictions for assault.

Over a 30 month period, 61 door staff were arrested. Their arrests accounted for one in ten of the incidents of violence or disorder in which door staff were recorded as having some involvement. Of 392 incidents inside licensed premises, allegations of assault were made against door staff in 273 of them. However, the report agreed that allegations against door supervisors did not necessarily mean that the force they used constituted a criminal offence or was unprovoked. The study also found that door supervisors were involved in 16% of all alcohol related violent incidents, although it conceded that, 'to what extent such incidents were avoidable or actually instigated can not be determined by the data'. During the research period, there were 101 allegations by door staff of assault against them.

Although this study painted a negative image of door staff, it must be reiterated that this study was conducted before the SIA was formed and prior to the consequent licensing requirements placed upon door supervisors. If the TASC study was to be replicated now, it is assumed that it would portray door supervisors far less negatively.

The perception among front-line police officers is that they do not have the resources to make an impact on the violence that occurs in the night-time economy (Winlow & Hall, 2006). Consequently door staff have a vital role in controlling disorder and can have a significant influence on preventing violence occurring in and around pubs and night clubs (Finney, 2004).

### Workplace Violence

So far, this report has looked at violence in the context of the night-time economy. For door supervisors, the bars and clubs which constitute the night-time economy are their workplaces. The UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines workplace violence as 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work' (HSE, 1996). The HSE definition includes colleague-on-colleague assault.

Chappell & Di Martino (2000) claim that for workers such as police officers and people employed in the private security industry, exposure to violence is almost routine. They cite 'sharp-end' police officers, such as those involved in anti-drugs operations, as being most at risk, along with security personnel in the cash-in-transit sector. Conversely to Chappell & Di Martino's research, this report argues that sharp-end police officers are generally properly prepared, equipped and staffed to deal with anticipated violent encounters and, unlike door staff, can normally call upon greater resources if needed. The risk to cash-in-transit security officers is that of infrequent attacks spread across the entire sector but involving potentially high levels of violence. Door staff, conversely, have to reactively wait for violence to occur and have to deal with the constant daily threat of aggressive or violent interaction with the public they seek to control. As will be shown, this violence can be extreme.

### Research into Workplace Violence

Currently, very few workplace violence statistics are available. No government agency, private firm or research study can say with any certainty how much workplace violence there is (Licu & Fisher, 2006). Upson's (2004) analysis of the British Crime Survey 2002 excluded

colleague-on-colleague assault and purported that only 0.9% of workers had suffered from physical attack and a further 0.9% had suffered threats in the research year. Of these incidents of violence at work, 42% resulted in injury. Upson estimates that 28% of people assaulted or threatened were multiple victims experiencing three or more incidents of violence at work, while 19% experienced two incidents; although sample size meant that it was not possible to estimate the level of repeat victimisation among different occupations.

Upson (2004) states that respondents in the protective service occupations such as the police, fire, and prison services, were most at risk from workplace violence, with 14% having suffered physical or threatened violence in the previous year. However, there may be a statistical reason why this finding is misleading. The employment categories used in the British Crime Survey are the Standard Occupational Category (SOC) codes from the National Office of Statistics (2000). There is no SOC code for 'door supervisor'. There is an SOC code for 'security guards and related occupations'. The British Crime Survey groups these codes together in different occupational categories to 'allow analysis of occupational differences in risk' (Upson, 2004: 8). The 'security guards and related occupations' code is not grouped together in the protective services category but is grouped together in the 'elementary administration and service occupations' category along with road sweepers and school crossing attendants.

Workplace violence cannot be accepted as a cost of doing business (Kenny, 2002). The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 state that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of 'the risks to the health and safety of his employees, to which they are exposed whilst they are at work', and make appropriate arrangements regarding their 'effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures' (HM Government, 1992). While several authors identify measures for reducing workplace violence, Gill, *et al* (2002) conclude that more research is needed so that specific interventions can be developed.

### Door Supervisors and the SIA

The Private Security Industry Act 2001 (HM Government, 2001) provided for the creation of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and the subsequent regulation of certain sectors of the security industry in the UK, including door supervision. It presented a framework for controls, including the licensing of all individuals engaged in specified security activities. By April 2005, licensing of door supervisors had been rolled out across England and Wales, with Scotland following suit by November 2007.

To obtain an SIA licence, prospective door supervisors are now required to prove their identity, undergo a criminal records check and obtain an SIA-approved training qualification. While evidence of a significant criminal past will permanently bar the applicant from obtaining an SIA licence, other offences will bar the applicant from obtaining a licence for two or five years depending on whether these are deemed 'significant or 'serious'. The applicant must also undergo training and achieve an SIA-approved qualification. As of the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008, 94,725 people held a door supervisors' licence (The Security Industry Authority, 2008).

The SIA can revoke or withdraw a door supervisor's licence for several reasons. One of these is if the licence holder receives a conviction, caution or warning for a 'relevant offence' (The Security Industry Authority, 2007). It can also suspend a licence if a serious offence has allegedly taken place and the licence holder has been charged but bailed. As of the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008, 3,399 door supervisors had had their licences revoked (The Security Industry Authority, 2008). Individuals with revoked or suspended licences are not able to work as door supervisors.

## The Context and Role of the Door Supervisor

'Bouncers: Violence and Governance in the Night-Time Economy' (Hobbs *et al*, 2003) was written prior to the implementation of the SIA. However, it provides an excellent appraisal of door supervision, and argues that door work, at its core, is the visible embodiment of social authority in the night-time economy.

Door staff keep order in licensed premises. They have the vital roles of deciding who is admitted to the night-time economy and policing disorder among those who successfully gain access. They do this in an environment that has a cocktail of violent potential, and drug and alcohol abuse (Winlow, 2001). They filter clientele at the door for business and security reasons, and this very use of discretion in determining who enters the venue can appear arbitrary and personal.

There are of course female door supervisors. Although Hobbs *et al* (2003) found the general consensus from female door staff was that apart from the gender-specific requirements of the job, such as the monitoring of female toilets, women on the door are faced with the same level of violence as their male colleagues.

## The Door Supervisor's Role in Dealing with Violence

Violence is constantly hovering in the background of much of the social interaction forced upon door staff. In dealing with trouble, the door supervisor must establish inter-personal control but unlike the police, must do so without the backing of state power. Hobbs *et al* (2003) reiterate this by stating that the door supervisor is like any other citizen subject to the law, although they operate according to a highly ambiguous cocktail of extra-legal maxims, occupational codes and personal discretions, underpinned by an interpretation of what is good and what is bad for business.

Once the limits of negotiation by door staff have been reached, if violence has already commenced, or if the customer needs to be removed from the premises, physical force is required (Hadfield, 2006). Consequently, the likelihood of door supervisors being the victims of violence is integral to the job, with casualties being an undeniable fact (Hobbs *et al*, 2003).

In using force and dealing with violence, the nebulous term 'reasonable force' is always subjective and tied to the perceived situation (Hobbs *et al*, 2003). Informants in Hadfield's research (2006) bemoaned the perceived attitude of the police and the courts that door staff were 'fair game' to assailants and yet would face heavy sanctions if they acted in self-defence. Other research has revealed hostility towards door staff by the police (Wakefield, 2006).

## The Aims and Objectives of this Research

The target sample for this research was men and women who are employed as door supervisors in Britain. The primary aim was to gain data on the quantity of workplace violence experienced by this sample, with the objective of making it possible to provide comparative analysis between them and workers in other employment categories. The secondary aim was to obtain data about door supervisors' attitudes towards their work and the violence they face.

## The Questionnaire

The questionnaire established some situational factors about the respondent and their work, along with questions that ascertained the amount of violence they experience. The questionnaire assured the respondent of anonymity, although there was the option to provide a telephone number for a follow up interview. Previous research has highlighted reasons why the researcher should expect a low response rate from door supervisors (Winlow, *et al*, 2001), and this was a challenge that had to be overcome.

Consideration was given to Chappell & Di Martino's (2000) observation that in the recording of workplace violence, there is often no differentiation between acts of aggression and acts of violence, with them being perceived as the same thing when they clearly are not. Therefore the questions relating to violence were framed using the following loose police definitions for violent offences: assault (non physical), battery (physical), assault occasioning actual bodily harm, and assault occasioning grievous bodily harm.

## **Chapter 2: The Quantity of Threats and Assaults Against Door Supervisors**

### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the survey's quantitative findings, which determine how many threats and assaults door supervisors suffer. Factors that govern rates of victimisation will be explored and frequency rates of serious assault, including the use of weapons and firearms, will be provided.

A total of 324 surveys were returned. However, these were closely scrutinised and 58 surveys were rejected. This was primarily due to incomplete data or where limited survey information had been provided, meaning that comparative analysis could not be made. A small number were removed due to their data being extremely questionable compared to other responses. Although a large percentage was removed overall, the remaining 266 surveys (the sample) are deemed as having a great deal of validity. The sample comprised of 91.4% males and 8.6% females.

### The Amount of Threats and Assaults Suffered by Door Supervisors.

Using the methodology of the British Crime Survey, respondents were asked about the frequency of assault they suffered over the previous year. Information was sought on different types of assault, and it was anticipated that asking about only the previous year might not reveal the true extent of serious assaults. Therefore respondents were asked about threats and minor assaults in the previous year, and serious assaults over their entire career.

Over the previous year, only six (2.25%) respondents had not been threatened with violence. Threats of violence were made against 97.5% of respondents, with 95.4% of the sample experiencing repeat victimisation of two or more threats. Ninety two per cent suffered multiple victimisations of three or more threats of violence. Sixty two per cent of respondents had received 50 or more threats during this period, while 27.4% received 100 or more threats. Eight point six per cent suffered 200 or more. Three per cent experienced over 300 threats of violence.

Over the same period, 81% of respondents received a minor physical assault (an assault that did not result in injury). Seventy three per cent of the sample were repeat victims of two or more assaults and 60.5% of the sample experienced multiple victimisations of three or more assaults; 30.5% of respondents received ten or more minor assaults, while 17.5% suffered 50 or more.

During this time frame, 65.8% of respondents suffered assaults that resulted in minor injury. Forty four per cent of the sample were repeat victims of two or more injury related assaults, while 30.5% of the sample were multiple victims of three assaults or more. Seven and a half per cent received ten or more assaults, and two respondents (0.75%) claimed to have suffered injury related assaults more than 50 times.

The scale of threats and assaults against door supervisors that this research has revealed is frankly staggering. It should also be remembered that the findings discussed so far are just the minor threats and assaults experienced by door staff. The more serious violence is yet to be analysed. It is appropriate to refer back to Upson's (2004) analysis of the British Crime Survey, which revealed that respondents in the protective service occupations such as the police, fire, and prison service, had been revealed as suffering the highest level of workplace

violence, with 14% experiencing physical or threatened violence in the previous year. By comparison, 81% of door supervisors received a physical assault during the previous year, while 97.75% were threatened with violence.

It is important to note that Upson’s work did not analyse repeat victimisation specifically among protective service occupational group. His analysis was conducted generally across all employment categories. Repeat and multiple victimisation rates among Upson’s sample related to fractions of a per cent of the overall sample. This compares dramatically to the rates of repeat and multiple victimisation endured by door staff.

Door supervisors clearly suffer a level of violence that is significantly higher than any other previously researched employment category or profession. Furthermore, they experience substantially higher levels of repeat and multiple victimisation. These findings should not go unnoticed and obviously have ramifications worthy of discussion later in this report.

Factors that Determine Different Rates of Violence

It is not possible to fully analyse all of the factors that resulted in respondents suffering differing incidence rates of threats and violence. However, some findings are worthy of note. To provide a base figure for comparison, the quantity of assaults and threats were divided by the number of respondents to give a mean average quantity of threats and assault per person over the year. This base quantity for the entire sample was: 60.2 threats of violence per person, ten minor assaults (no resultant injury) per person, and 3.1 assaults (causing minor injury) per person.

The following tables show the difference in incidence rates between venues and locations in which the respondents worked. The figures stated are the average incidence rate per person. Respondents were asked if they worked ‘only in bars’, ‘mainly in bars but also in clubs’, or ‘only in clubs’ etc. Analysis using ‘only in’ responses provided more polarised results. However, they also resulted in smaller samples where statistical fluctuations could be misleading. Even with these more generalised responses, clear comparison can be made between incidence rates.

Figure 1: Assault Incidence Rate by Venue Type

	Whole sample average over the year	Work mainly or only in bars and pubs	Work mainly or only in night clubs	Work mainly or only in other venues*
Threats of violence	60.2	56.9	71	16
Assault (no injury)	10	8.2	12.9	3.2
Assault (minor injury)	3.1	2	4.6	0.9

\*Venues such as sporting events. Note small sample of 24 respondents.

Figure 2: Assault Incidence Rate by Geographical Location

	Whole sample average over the year	Work mainly or only in towns	Work mainly or only in cities
Threats of violence	60.2	49	68.7
Assault (no injury)	10	8.6	11.1
Assault (minor injury)	3.1	2.9	3.3

Although the raw survey data clearly show there are respondents who work in town bars who suffer a higher incidence rate than certain individuals who work in city night clubs, door supervisors who work in city night clubs are generally more at risk than their counterparts who work in town bars.

The incidence rate of assault among different team sizes is a point that is of interest to door supervisors. There is currently lobbying of Parliament to stop the practice of having only one door supervisor working in a venue - a 'one man door'. It is unfortunate that the sample of respondents who worked on their own was small – 11 (4.2%) respondents. Also, their responses differed greatly between individuals; between zero and 450 threats of violence, and between zero and 25 assaults that resulted in injury. Similarly, the sample of respondents who worked in a team of 20 or more was small – six (2.25%) respondents. This latter group have been included in the 'team of 10 - 20' bracket for analysis in the table below. It can be seen that team size does not appear to be a factor in incidence rate due to there being no real correlation between different team sizes. As with Figure 1 and 2, comparison is made with a whole sample mean average base rate.

Figure 3: Assault Incidence Rate by Team Size

	Whole sample	Worked on own*	Team of 2- 4	Team of 5- 9	Team of more than 10
Threats of violence	60.2	41	59.3	59.3	63
Assault (no injury)	10	7.3	8	11.5	11
Assault (minor injury)	3.1	2.2	2.1	4.9	2.5

\*Note small sample of 11.

As is to be expected, the more days door supervisors work, the greater the risk they face. The 73% of the sample who worked nine days or more per month suffered an incidence rate that was slightly higher than the whole sample rate; those who worked eight days or less per month suffered an incidence rate that was just over half of the whole sample rate.

When comparing female to male respondents, there was no real difference in threats against the different sexes. The male-only sample suffered a marginally higher incidence rate than the full sample. There was a noticeable difference in physical assault between the sexes: females had a much lower incidence rate. Among the female-only sample there were 97 assaults that resulted in no injury (52 against one woman) which averages at 4.1 per female. Removing that female reduced the average to two assaults per female. The minor injury assault rate was 0.17 per female. The comparatively small female sample needs to be acknowledged in drawing conclusions from these data.

The Amount of Serious Assaults Suffered by Door Supervisors

As previously discussed, it was thought that if the respondents could only report in this survey the assaults against them in the previous year, the incidence rate of serious assault might not be revealed due to the expectation that these incidents would be low in numbers. This was not a correct assumption.

The respondents' careers ranged from between one to more than 30 years. They were asked about three types of serious occurrence over their entire careers. These serious occurrences were:

- A physical assault that resulted in an injury that required (or should have) hospital treatment: henceforth referred to as a 'serious assault'.
- Being physically attacked with a weapon, such as a bottle or knife.
- A firearms incident, such as having one pointed at them or being shot at.

As to be expected, the more years the respondent served, generally the more serious assaults, weapon-related assaults and firearms incidents they suffered. To obtain a good overview of the type of injury door supervisors receive, the Appendix to this report gives the results to the question, 'What is the worst injury to date you have received in relation to your work as a door supervisor?' It is worthwhile reading for anyone considering a career as a door supervisor. What can be provided here is a break down of incidence rate to determine the average frequency of these more serious incidents.

Across the entire sample, 57.1% of respondents had suffered a serious assault, with 40% being repeat victims of two serious assaults and 30% of the sample experiencing multiple victimisations or three or more serious assaults. Of the respondents experiencing serious assault, 7.1% of respondents accounted for 53.2% of all 798 serious assaults.

More than two thirds (69.5%) of respondents had been assaulted with a weapon, with 49% being repeat victims and 34% experiencing multiple victimisation. Nine point seven per cent of respondents accounted for 63.7% of all 748 weapon related assaults, showing that some individuals face a significantly higher risk of weapon related assault than others.

Around one in four (26.3%) of respondents had been involved in firearms incidents with 11.6% suffering repeat victimisation, and 5% experiencing multiple victimisation. Two respondents gave questionably high incidence rates - although their other responses appeared comparably normal: 15 firearms incidents (in six years) and 30 (in the 16-20 year bracket). Neither left contact details to have this high rate verified.

Overall, the frequency of serious incidents equated to a serious assault every two and a half years, a weapon related assault every 20 months and a firearms incident every 12 years. With the two highest firearms results removed, this rate drops to a firearms incident every 16 years. While these incidents show that being attacked with a weapon does not always result in a serious injury, the Appendix shows that some of the worst injuries are caused by weapons and firearms.

## Chapter 3: The Attitude of Door Staff to Their Work and to the Risk They Face

### Introduction

The data presented in this chapter are extrapolated from the section of the questionnaire that was marked 'optional'. Respondents were able to answer limited questions. An average of 230 respondents from the sample provided answers to each question. What can now be examined are door supervisors' concerns about their work, the factors that influence why they work as a door supervisor, and how they cope with the risk they face. These findings will be presented by providing the quantitative results of questions and then expanding on some of the issues using respondents' written replies.

### Door Supervisors' Views on Their Work

Question ten asked: 'What level of concern do you have about the following aspects of working as a door supervisor?' Respondents could tick only one of the following: strongly concerned, concerned, or not concerned. The percentages provided in Figure 4 relate to the percentage of respondents who chose the stated option as a response to the question.

Figure 4: Concerns About Working as a Door Supervisor

	Strongly Concerned	Concerned	Not Concerned
a. Getting injured and missing work	41%	48%	11%
b. Receiving a permanent injury	56%	34%	10%
c. Having your SIA licence revoked for any reason	54%	32%	14%
d. Police arresting you for thinking you have used too much force	55%	35%	10%
e. 'Loss of face' from dealing with an incident badly in the eyes of your colleagues	22%	37%	41%

It might be assumed that working in a job which results in such a high level of assaults could give door supervisors a relaxed attitude towards the potential for injury. This is proven not to be the case, with only a small percentage of respondents not being concerned about receiving injuries. Receiving an injury that would lead to time off work is obviously a concern, with slightly more respondents being concerned, rather than strongly concerned. Receiving a permanent injury is more of a concern. This, I would argue, is for two reasons. First, the acknowledgement of the life-changing potential a permanent injury can cause; second, the acceptance by door staff of the high probability of receiving an injury of this nature.

The concerns that did inspire a lot of comment were in response to 'having your licence revoked for any reason' and 'police arresting you for using too much force'. These factors are obviously a considerable concern to the majority of door staff. This fear of legal action would have been present prior to SIA licensing but to a lesser degree because a door supervisor could still work with a criminal conviction. This is no longer the case.

Some expressed clearly their fear of arrest: '[My] main concern is the legal aspect of a police officer thinking excessive force was used and [police] using door supervisors as easy targets to get results' (Beanie). 'The police are sometimes anti-door steward and over-zealous

in taking action against door stewards on the word of drunken idiots who perpetrate trouble' (Drekster). Other respondents noted the apparent ease with which they can lose their SIA licence.

[My concern is] drunken members of the public and other idiots will claim assault when none has taken place. The licence can be suspended by the SIA whilst they investigate, meaning no work, meaning no money. One assault charge or caution can result in no licence (Anon).

The fear of arrest has a direct result: 'I am concerned that I may put myself at risk of being physically injured due to fear of taking physical action that could result in loss of SIA licence' (Mark). 'Door Staff are regularly getting injured because they are limiting the amount of force used to a minimum because they are so worried about getting arrested. This is then leading to them receiving injuries' (Little Woman).

The fear of licence revocation and arrest is not just something that leads to door supervisors getting injured, and something that door supervisors alone should be concerned about. It should also be a concern to denizens of the night-time economy and those who have a vested interest in the policing of it. These fears can cause a potential reluctance among door supervisors to get involved in violent incidents and to provide for people's safety. This is a key issue. It was consequently examined in depth during interviews and the full ramifications of this situation will be discussed in the next chapter.

The addition in the questionnaire of the concern, 'loss of face from dealing with an incident badly in the eyes of your colleagues', was inspired in part by Goffman's (1967, cited in Hobbs *et al*, 2003) claim that in the environment where bouncers move, pride, honour and respect remain bound up with concepts of 'maintaining face'. It was expected that a large majority would claim that this was not a concern, whether it was or not. Although 41% stated that it was not a concern, it still is evidently a concern to the majority of door staff. Despite previous research findings showing that door supervisors are a difficult social group to gain data from, their willingness to admit concern over losing face demonstrates that they can be relied upon to provide honest responses to research questions, when undoubtedly they would not give the same response to their own peer group. In addition to the sociological factors, there are also practical reasons for loss of face being an issue, as this response shows: 'Dealing with incidents badly can get you a bad reputation and can stop you getting good venues / teams' (Anon).

A major issue emerging from the responses was that 'inappropriate' door staff are now being employed due to licensing requirements.

The main thing that concerns me is the standard of door supervisors we have coming into the industry [as] it seems to be dropping because of all the hoops people have to jump through and the cost of the SIA badge (Cat).

This is very much a post-SIA problem and, as with the fear of licence revocation, can have serious repercussions. This problem is discussed in the next chapter.

Question 11 asked: 'To what degree do the factors below influence why you work as a door supervisor?' As with the previous question, the percentages provided in the following table relate to the percentage of respondents who chose the stated option as a response to the question.

Figure 5: Factors Influencing Working as a Door Supervisor

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. You like the social aspect of the job	38.2%	47.1%	11.7%	2.1%	0.9%
b. You feel like you are helping people	42%	41%	14.2%	0.9%	0.9%
c. You like the excitement of the risk involved	15.7%	27.8%	31.7%	17.8%	7%
d. You do it for financial reasons	43%	32.6%	16%	5.8%	2.6%

The social aspect of the job is obviously a key factor. This can be summed up with: 'I enjoy the variety of people I meet whilst working the doors' (Taboo). And, 'I love the venues I go to and enjoy meeting different cultures' (Val).

The response that was not expected was that 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with, 'you feel like you are helping people'. Less than 2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. From reviewing relevant literature, this was not deemed a strong determining factor. This assumption has been proven wrong. Respondents' comments backed this finding: 'The main reason I work as a door supervisor is to help provide a safer environment for the individuals that are out to genuinely enjoy themselves' ('M'). '[I work as a door supervisor] to assist in making my home town a safer place for the night-time economy' (Nigel).

The excitement of the risk involved with door work is obviously a factor for some door staff, albeit not to such a clear degree as some of the other factors. Nearly 45% agreed or strongly agreed that the excitement of the risk is a factor and a third claimed to be neutral on the subject. This neutral result is higher than with the other influencing factors. At 25%, it also has a higher number of those who disagree or strongly disagree with it being a factor. There may be psychological, rather than sociological, reasons for a higher number stating they are neutral on this subject. Door supervisors generally came across during the research as having a professional approach to their work; a stance that is reinforced by such high numbers stating they enjoyed the fact they were helping people. As a would-be respondent, personally I would find it potentially difficult to stress my professional approach to my work, and at the same time admit to enjoying the potential risk of getting involved in violence with strangers. There is the possibility that respondents were mindful of their professional portrayal and therefore opted for neutrality, rather than agreeing with enjoying the risk element.

From the research's statistical results, the financial reward from door work is clearly shown as a determining factor. In some cases this is the primary reason: 'I don't do the job for glory or excitement. I don't like fighting but I can if I have to. I just do it for the money and nothing else' (Bear). 'It fills a gap between other work. I need to earn money' (Bren). 'The main reason is the financial aspect... the majority of door supervisors do it as an additional job' (Beanie).

There seemed to be differing views on whether the financial reward was worth the risk: '[It is a] poorly paid job for the risks you take' (Andy). This contrasts with: 'It pays well for a part time job if you have the correct attributes and values' (Pukanargu).

It became clearly apparent from the comments in this section of the survey that a fundamental factor that draws people to door supervision, and then keeps them in this line of work, had been omitted from the questionnaire: camaraderie. Some respondents used the word camaraderie, while others likened it to being in a family: 'You get to meet a great bunch of

blokes who watch your back, day in, day out, and [you] end up being part of a big family' (Anon).  
 'It's a good job where you become like family with the team you work with' (Ollie).

I've been doing the job for years. Now and again I stop but get drawn back into it again. It's like an addiction. One big element missing in this questionnaire is the great feeling of being part of a close team that works together well and enjoys the team's company. It's a major part of it for me (Malc).

Camaraderie is an aspect that could be explored further during interviews and is discussed in more depth during the next chapter.

### Door Supervisors' Attitudes Towards the Violence They Face

Question 12 asked: 'Door staff face a level of risk that would be unacceptable to most professions. To what degree do the different factors below play a part in how you personally are able to deal with this risk?'

Figure 6: How Door Supervisors Cope or Deal With The Risk They Face.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Am Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. You have the physical build to deal violent incidents.	18.2%	51.1%	19.4%	9%	2.2%
b. You have the mental ability to cope with the risk.	59%	38%	2.6%	0	0.4%*
c. You have the physical training (martial arts etc) to deal with violent incidents.	12.5%	33%	31.5%	18.4%	4.6%
d. You have the 'classroom' training (conflict management etc) to deal with the risk.	21.5%	32%	23.4%	12.1%	11%
e. You have a background in dealing with violent incidents.	22.5%	38.8%	22.8%	11.2%	4.7%
f. You accept physical violence against you as being 'just part of the job'.	19%	39.2%	10.3%	17.2%	14.3%

\*One person

The majority of door supervisors agree that they have the physical build to deal with violent incidents and this substantiates what most visitors to pubs and clubs observe. It was expected that there would be many comments about size not being an issue. However, the following comment is the only one provided that stated size didn't matter, and even this includes a mention of a physical requirement:

It's not all about how big you are as I'm not [big] built. It's how you deal with and talk to people... but there are times when diplomacy can only get you so far and people decide to take the piss! So they need a gentle nudge in the right direction (Beanie).

There was overwhelming agreement that 'mental ability' was required to deal with the risk of violence. This indicates that door supervisors perceive they have the mental toughness to cope with the threat of violence; a view that is supported by the following comment:

I'd rather I have to deal with it, than customers or other bystanders who don't have the training or attitude I do to cope with it. I know I'm strong enough to handle physically or mentally anything that can be put to me. With other people there is no guarantee of that. That's why they work in offices (Door Bird Supremo).

Hobbs *et al* (2003) state that violence in the night-time economy produces threats and personal challenges that are far removed from the idealised scenarios manufactured in classroom training. With regards to the two different types of training door supervisors can obtain to equip themselves for their work, the range of results are far more evenly spread than other answers. A third of respondents agreed to physical and classroom training being a factor in their preparedness. Surprisingly, twice as many respondents strongly agreed with classroom training being a factor rather than physical training. There were relatively equal numbers being in disagreement over these two factors. The resultant comments reinforced these mixed views. They also highlighted an aspect that was not covered in the survey and which was consequently explored in greater depth during the interviews: experience. 'Nothing you learn in a classroom will set you up to deal with real situations. You learn on the door from more experienced door men' (Neil).

I do believe classroom lessons are an essential part of any training but the on-the-job physical training also has to be essential... the company should train staff and not just stick them on a door and let them learn from other useless employees (Rennie).

I have done much self-defence and fitness training over the years. If it were not for this, I would have been a lot worse off physically than I have been. Classroom training cannot possibly simulate the adrenalin rush and fear that is present when dealing with real aggressors in violent situations (Drekster).

The majority of respondents agreed that they had a 'background in dealing with violent incidents'. This question was inserted as a direct result of the findings of Hobbs *et al* (2003), Winlow (2001) and Winlow *et al*, (2003), relating to the background of the majority of door staff. No comments were provided that explained what this background might be so this subject was covered in more depth during the interviews.

Despite the acceptance of violence by door staff being a key focus of this research, its acceptance presents a paradox that makes it difficult to measure or fully explain. The data clearly show that the majority of respondents agree that they accept violence against them as 'part of the job'. However, the views provided in the questionnaire and during interviews generally do not substantiate this. Respondents' views indicate that the nuance in the use of the word 'accept' makes it fundamentally flawed for use in this context. It transpires that door staff 'acknowledge' that violence is an occupational hazard but they do not 'accept' it: 'I accept that physical violence is part of the job but do not accept that we should take it on the chin' (Little Woman). 'Although violence is part of the job - it shouldn't be' (Anon). 'Violence is not just part of the job. It is unacceptable in any profession. I accept the risk is there, but don't accept it is part of the job' (Paul). However, there are others who do just appear to accept it: 'It's part of the job. The culture in city centres is any person is fair game for a kicking, even the door staff' (Bren).

## Chapter 4: Violence Against Door Supervisors - Interview Data

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to use information gathered in interviews with door staff to expand upon some of the highlighted issues. What are explored are the skill-sets, physiological composition, and attributes door supervisors themselves deem important in their profession.

Ten interviews were conducted. Two of the interviewees had less than three years' experience. The rest could easily be classed as experienced, with three of them having worked in this role for more than 20 years. One interviewee was female. Throughout this chapter, where quoted, they will be referred to by the name they provided on the survey, or by their respondent number if they provided identifiable information. Unfortunately, two interviewees had the same name: Steve.

### Violence: The Acceptance of it and Attitude Towards it

Although most of the interviewees expressed the view that they should not have to accept violence against them, they paradoxically all seemed to have accepted violence as a condition of door work. This confirms the earlier findings. The aspect of acceptance that differed from one interviewee to another was how they personally rationalised or dealt with the risk they face. One interviewee showed plain acceptance: 'I understand there's a risk to the job and it doesn't affect me. There isn't any psychological impact. Shit happens and you just get on with it' (Pete). Several interviewees mentioned that confidence in their ability and experience meant they were better able to cope with the risk: 'Once you've accepted it, you're ready for it. Experience then reduces the scariness of it' (Steve #1). 'It's a mental approach that comes with confidence in being able to deal with it... verbally and the physical side' (Steve #2). 'I've dealt with that much of it now I don't even consider the negative aspects any more. I just look forward to it as a night out' (Louis). It would certainly appear that with experience comes a greater 'acceptance' and consequent tolerance of the risk of violence.

Although most of the interviewees stated that they were the same person in and out of work, three made comments that would suggest they have a coping mechanism in adopting a 'work' persona: 'You just have to disconnect at work. You'd go mad if you were constantly thinking someone was going to hurt you' (Shaun). 'For me, it's when I put my tie on. That's me at work. I'm tougher. I change back when I'm finished' (Jax). Paul further highlighted this transition between work and home persona by stating: 'It's a professional crossover'. He went on to say that on occasion he finds it difficult to re-adopt his home persona and that work can affect his home life. It should be highlighted that this is a man who has over 20 years of experience as a door supervisor: 'I can be home at three. But it can sometimes be four before I can go upstairs and get in bed with my wife. I just sit in the kitchen having a think about what's happened that night'. Another interviewee also highlighted the effect his work had on him at home: 'The abuse and aggression does get to me at times. I can feel aggressive when I'm at home and I'm not normally like that' (Bren).

### Reasons for Working as a Door Supervisor

When asked about their reasons for working as a door supervisor, the financial reward was expressed by three of the interviewees. Only two mentioned the excitement of it and one of them, with three years experience, qualified it with: 'I do like the excitement and the adrenaline rush but the novelty is wearing off pretty quickly' (Shaun). As already highlighted, this view

would seem to develop with more experience: 'I used to like the action and adventure but this has faded. Now I just do it for the money' (Pete). The one reason they all mentioned for doing door work, and the subsequent enjoyment of it, was camaraderie.

It was evident from some interviewees that the bonds they form are strong: 'The camaraderie from working on a tight team is really enjoyable. I don't like taking the night off because I'd feel really bad if something happened to the team and I wasn't there to do my bit for them' (Paul). 'Comradeship and the fun that comes with it... It gives you a good feeling of membership to a small tight group. Dealing with it [violence] gives you a bond' (Steve #1). Two of the interviewees volunteered that they were ex-military and highlighted the similarity between the bond formed with fellow soldiers and that between fellow doormen, although one of them added, 'When you've fought back with someone, it does make you close... It's not quite the same as army camaraderie though as you're not forced to live together for prolonged periods' (160).

Six of the interviewees also expressed the satisfaction they gain from working as a door supervisor as a reason for doing it. This was either in terms of assisting the customers, the police, and the public at large, or the ability to help develop younger door staff: 'I like to think that I'm making the pubs and clubs safer and enjoyable. I always think of how I'd like other door staff to look after my daughter's safety when she's out' (Jax). 'Now I get enjoyment from helping some of the younger lads... and helping build bridges with the local police' (Jonno).

### The Concerns Door Staff Have About Their Work

It has already been shown that a large percentage of door staff are concerned about losing their SIA licence and about being arrested for being deemed to have used too much force. Approximately equal numbers in the survey claimed that getting injured was a concern. Interviewees were asked which was their primary concern. Only two stated that their primary concern was getting injured. One was equally concerned with getting arrested and getting injured. The remaining seven stated their primary concern was the legal implications of using too much force: 'Sometimes you've got to fight back and you get arrested if you do' (Bren). 'There's a general lack of support from the police in dealing with incidents... but they're very quick to react to complaints against door staff and arrest them' (Louis). 'It's okay for us to get hurt but it's not okay for us to defend ourselves' (Paul).

The rationale for the legal aspect being a primary concern was best summed up by Steve #1: 'A broken arm can heal in six weeks and can be insured against. Whereas getting arrested and losing your licence can have implications that can last a lifetime'. This fear of losing an SIA licence is a negative attribute to SIA licensing. It should be a concern to those who have an interest in reducing levels of violence in the night-time economy for two reasons. First, although the assumption is that door supervisors and the police are working together as part of the 'wider police family', four interviewees mentioned how the wider police family is not working: 'The wider police family is a myth. Alright there is a wider police family but it's a dysfunctional one. Mum isn't talking to Dad' (Shaun). Although there were positive comments about the police, seven of the interviewees, without being asked, stated they thought there was a lack of cooperation with the police, or that the police and courts were working against them. One of the interviewees volunteered that he was a former police officer: 'When I was in the police and used force, there was a general backing from the law as you were seen as noble and trustworthy. This isn't the case with door staff and you get no support' (58). 'Judges also believe that all bouncers are violent nutters and will happily convict them' (Shaun). One explanation for this is given by Steve #1: 'It's down to a regulation mindset. [SIA] regulation makes police feel as though they have their part in regulating and controlling us and it gives police an 'us against them' approach.' This is a key point to note.

The second and more alarming implication of door staff fearing the loss of their licence is that they may potentially avoid getting involved in violent incidents, with the result that the night-time economy becomes a more dangerous place: 'The night out is more risky because door staff are less likely to get involved [in incidents]' (Paul). This outcome is best highlighted with this explanation:

We used to police the taxi rank outside the club because it was a real trouble spot. Several of the door staff had received serious injuries going to help people... stamped on, put into comas, all sorts. Then there were several incidents where the police couldn't assist and the door staff had to use force... it's hard to use minimum force when you've got eighty people trying to fight you. Door staff ended up getting arrested on several incidents. Now we don't go out there... we just let them crack on (Louis).

In addition, this situation can also be seen as creating greater risk to door supervisors: 'I've had one friend killed on the door and another nearly died after an attack recently. Door staff find themselves in more unnecessary violent situations due to the legal constraints put on them. It makes it more risky' (Jonno). This status quo is further exacerbated by the general public becoming more aware of SIA licensing requirements, and the potential influence they can have on removing a door supervisor's licence. Six of the interviewees raised this as a problem.

Violence against us is on the up. This generation knows about licensing and are willing to push things as far as possible because they know they're not going to get hit by the bouncer and they just threaten to take your licence – "you can't touch me, I'll have your licence" (Bren).

### The Preferred Attributes and Background of a Door Supervisor

Interviewees were asked what skills and attributes door supervisors require to perform their job and to be able to deal with the risks they face. Despite some differing priorities, nine of the respondents mentioned communication skills as being among the top skills required. This was coupled with manners and was associated with older door staff. Life skills, maturity and confidence, along with a good physical bearing or demeanour featured highly: 'Being big isn't important but physical presence is. Bearing is important... to send out the right message. The 'don't mess' sort of look' (Jonno), or 'a look of subtle aggression as it prevents fights' (Pete).

There was an acceptance that physical size and strength are important: 'There's a definite crossover between when communication skills are needed and when force is needed. Then size and strength is needed' (Dougy). However, this view was only volunteered by two interviewees without first being asked about it. In an extra dimension to pure physical strength and / or ability, half of the interviewees stated that door supervisors also required the attribute called either heart, balls or backbone, and it appeared to be favoured over size and strength. It is explained succinctly by Paul: 'It doesn't matter how many black belts you've got. If you haven't got the balls to back it up, it won't matter a fuck'.

Leading on from this comment, what was of interest and produced greatly differing views was which of the attributes previously highlighted could be learnt, which had to be natural, and which were more important. Some stated that communication skills had to be natural: 'Having good comm's [sic] skills and being personable can't be learnt' (Jax). Others disagreed: 'Manners can be learnt. You're not born with them' (Shaun). Half of the interviewees claimed that communication skills could be learnt equally as well as the physical aspect to the job. The difference, as Paul stated in his earlier comment, is having the will to back up the physical ability:

The communication and the physical side can both be learnt... Even if you've got the skills, you still need the balls to back it up. It's a fight or flight thing. Some people look at trouble and want to get out. Some people look at it and want to get stuck in (Bren).

### The Impact of SIA Licensing on the Social Composition of Door Staff

Although there was an overall acceptance among the interviewees that it was generally good that the more extreme criminal elements had been forced from the profession, all ten lamented the loss of experience that SIA vetting requirements had caused. The resultant perception is that there are now inappropriate and unsuitable candidates working as door supervisors. This was confirmed by one of the interviewees who is a security company manager: 'It's really hard to find the staff... You end up taking on unsuitable people who you know you can't trust. Management then gets the blame for taking on the wrong ones and you just can't help it' (160).

Communication skills have already been highlighted as a primary skill for door staff, yet there was also the view that the influx of foreign nationals into door supervision had caused problems due to the language barrier. The factors that deem a door supervisor inappropriate would require a great deal of analysis to fully discuss here. However, this view is summarised best with the following two comments:

A lot of experienced people have left the job and there are inexperienced people taking over. Some good guys have been forced out and they really shouldn't have... Door supervisors with a conviction shouldn't be forced out (Bren).

Just because he's got a criminal record he can still be a good guy to have on the door. We lost some really good doormen because they had convictions, and the club is a less safe place because of it. You don't get shit kicking off when you've got big scary types on the door (Pete).

The above quote from Pete reveals a negative impact of denying licences to door supervisors with convictions. It is supported by another comment: 'It's a violent society and people [who are] experienced with violence, with criminal records, are going to be better at dealing with trouble' (Dougy). It is an uncomfortable fact that people with a proven track record in violent conduct are probably the best qualified to control violence in the night-time economy, yet are deemed by the SIA as being inappropriate to hold a licence. The consequence is that post-SIA recruits into the industry are less likely to be able to control this violence.

When you combine the inability to control violence with the newly acquired reluctance to get involved with violent incidents due to potential licence revocation, the rate of violence increases and the night-time economy becomes more dangerous for all those who frequent it. There is also the troubling prospect of security companies finding a way around these issues:

Clubs are now using unlicensed people as door supervisors in an undercover way. They can't get a licence due to having a criminal record. They just stay inside the club and if it kicks off, it's them that do all the punching. It's them that can take people out the back and fill them in. When the police turn up, the door staff can just say it was two members of the public fighting. No-one has to risk their licence (Shaun).

Away from the interview setting, I informally asked a door supervisor about the covert use of unlicensed door staff in venues. I was told, 'you do get some places with very highly paid, six-foot-four, glass collectors'. These findings should be deeply concerning to those responsible for the control of violent crime in the UK's night-time economy.

## Chapter 5: Implications of the Findings

### Findings

This research has been successful in proving that the hidden level of violence inside pubs and clubs is substantial. It has shown that door supervisors face a level of threats and assault approximately four times higher than the protective service occupations that Upson's (2004) analysis of the British Crime Survey had previously revealed as experiencing the highest level of workplace violence. Upson's findings revealed that fractions of a per cent of the overall sample had suffered repeat and multiple victimisation. The findings of this research have shown that across the entire sample of door supervisors (including those that weren't assaulted) 3.4% suffered two threats, while 92% suffered three or more threats. Unlike Upson's research, this report split minor assaults into two categories: non injury, and injury related. To be conservative, if just the assaults that resulted in injury are used in comparison to Upson's findings, 13.5% of the entire sample were assaulted twice and 30.5% were assaulted three or more times. Across the different levels of assault, individuals could count their victimisation rates in tens and even hundreds. This research has demonstrably proved that door supervisors suffer a level of repeat and multiple victimisation that is substantially higher than other occupations.

What has also been revealed is the seriousness of the violence that door staff face. The findings clearly show that door staff are often attacked with weapons, and the Appendix is proof that they frequently experience assaults resulting in grievous bodily harm, and occasionally amount to attempted murder. It is unfortunate that it was not possible to ascertain accurately how many door staff were killed at work in the previous research year and to include those data in the findings.

The downside of the changing face of door staff is that many of the people who are capable of dealing with the extremes of violence in the night-time economy have been forced to cede their place on the doors of Britain's pubs and clubs due to having a criminal record. There is obviously a view among many door staff that SIA licensing has resulted in inappropriate or unsuitable individuals becoming door staff. This is a concern. It is also a concern that when communication is deemed as such an important skill for door staff, there appears to be a rise in foreign nationals in the industry who, even with good English language skills, may not be able to note the subtle nuances in interpersonal communication that can be necessary to diffuse a potentially violent situation.

### Implication of the Findings

The result of changes to the make-up of door staff, coupled with the potential reluctance of door staff to become involved in violence among customers, due to the fear of arrest, is that we should expect a rise in the rate of violence in the night-time economy. An increase in violence may not only be felt by the door supervisors who are shown to be often at the receiving end. Rather, increases in violence will also make the night-time economy more dangerous for the general public. Although this increase in violence may be confined to the after-dark bars, clubs and streets of Britain's towns and cities, any rise in violent behaviour will resonate throughout society. This is because it adds to the crime rate generally and also due to the impact it has on the public purse, through increased costs of NHS treatment and policing. The consequence is that this rise in violence should be a concern to all those who have a part in policing the night-time economy and to those who are concerned with the sociological impact of living in a more violent society.

A further implication of such a high incidence rate of assault against door staff is that security companies ought to be required to provide their door supervisor employees with suitable protective equipment. This is unlikely to happen. Under UK Health and Safety (H&S) legislation, companies have a responsibility for assessing, and providing for, the safety of their staff. Workplace violence falls within its scope. The following comment is symptomatic of the view among door staff and security companies of how violence against door staff is not regarded as workplace violence: 'You can't look at violence against door staff in that way as a different set of rules apply in a bar or club. As a DS [sic] you have to accept that violence will be used against you' (Louis). This viewpoint must be changed.

While this research serves to reveal the true risk faced by door supervisors, there will still be a reluctance to provide expensive equipment such as body armour. Profit margins in the security industry do not easily allow for such investment. Despite the findings of this research, the level of violence against door staff is still largely hidden, and is therefore deniable by employers.

Without more research and the increased pressure their findings create, employers will face no further motivation to better protect their staff. Another problem with this aspect is that many door staff are often required by their employers to become self-employed, with the result that employers take little responsibility for them. The SIA might regulate door staff but it offers no protection or assistance for them in this regard. As one respondent pointed out, 'We have no union; no rights' (Shaun).

Leisure companies should also take note of the true extent of violence in their venues and take appropriate action. As Winlow *et al*, (2003) point out, leisure corporations want to promote the carnival atmosphere and consequent excesses, even though they know these excesses may be vented in violence. Rather than providing greater self-regulation and control, there is clear evidence that the licensed trade is now pushing for less regulation and the encouragement of greater excesses in consumption (Economist, 2008).

Even when police, backed by organisations such as the Pop Campaign (Welch, 2008) try to encourage the use of polycarbonate glasses in pubs and clubs to prevent glassing injuries, there is general resistance by the licensed trade which claim that it isn't what the public wants (Walsh, 2007). Leisure companies cannot see the benefits of reducing violence. This view can be changed by highlighting the benefits of greater control and safety, such as reduced litigation and insurance costs, or if that fails, by putting governmental pressure on them to act. A vicious circle presents itself here: pressure can only be applied when the true rate of violence in leisure companies' venues is revealed by research. This research can only be conducted if the leisure companies grant access.

## Chapter 6: Violence Reduction Measures and Concluding Comment

### Reducing Assault Against Door Staff and Violence in the Night-Time Economy

Door staff generally cited two measures which they thought would combat the perceived rise in assault against them: stiffer legal penalties, and a greater use of police protective equipment such as CS spray and restraints. The 'stiffer penalties' claim is often proclaimed as a perceived cure for many of society's crime problems. Stiffer penalties would certainly not be a deterrent in this context. Assault against door staff is almost exclusively committed by individuals who are intoxicated with alcohol, drugs, or a mixture of the two. Violence in this context is probably not going to involve a rationalisation process of the potential outcome by the assailant; when aggression has reached the physical violence flash point, the rationalisation process is degraded further by these intoxicants. They are not going to consider the stiff penalty for what they are about to do.

The use of CS / pepper spray is also not worth considering as an option. CS spray affects all those around it and often leads to unforeseen injuries, with consequent litigation claims. Its use in the confines of a bar or club could easily lead to the type of rush for exits by customers that can lead to serious injury.

The use of restraints by specially selected and trained door staff, potentially the 'head door man' as suggested by one respondent, does have some merit. While restraints cannot prevent assaults from happening in the first place, they can help subdue violent assailants while awaiting the arrival of the police. Subduing violent assailants without restraints can involve a lot of staff, who subsequently can not be deployed elsewhere. These incidents also often draw in members of the public or the assailant's friends, which can make the situation worse. Brightly coloured 'security' handcuffs can also send out a visual deterrent to potential offenders. However, what should be clearly borne in mind with restraints is the potential for litigation. Training is therefore essential to avoid the legal implications of their use.

This report is in agreement with Finney's (2004) claim that more research is needed to establish the true extent of violence in the night-time economy so that appropriate preventative measures and interventions can be established. This research should now be done at a micro level of individual licensed premises rather than the macro level of the night-time economy generally. Bars and clubs are particularly amenable to situational crime prevention measures (Finney, 2004), with Macintyre & Homel (1997, cited in Wellsmith, *et al*, 2007) showing that the way in which licensed premises are designed, staffed and managed effects their associated incidence of crime. However, as has been discussed, the difficulty will be in gaining access to venues through the corporations that own them.

Leisure companies generally have a vested interest in not revealing the level of violence that takes place in their venues, even though they arguably have the most to gain. If success is to be made on this front, it will have to be in cooperation with companies such as Luminar PLC, which has already proved receptive to introducing situational crime prevention measures (Walsh, 2007). Research in venues belonging to receptive companies can then be used to inform judgement and to provide guidance to other venues. In the face of opposition from the licensed trade, these findings can be used to force them to make necessary changes.

Individual venue managers will also be rightfully fearful of revealing the true extent of violence in their establishments for fear of potential liquor license revocation. Liaison with the police and licensing authorities will therefore be essential to garner licensees' assistance.

Having conducted this research, one of my major concerns is door supervisors' fear of arrest and how this results in them being less willing to intervene in violent incidents, with the result that there is less control of violence. Door supervisors have freely expressed their opinions on how they believe the police view them and how the police seem quick to arrest them for using force. This situation can be addressed but will need active input from all door staff. All door supervisors have their part to play in improving liaison with the police and changing perceptions by the police. It will not be easy. Some door supervisors will have to overcome their stereotype of police officers to ensure police officers overcome their stereotypes of door staff.

If there is greater understanding among the police of door staff, SIA licensing requirements and the implications of arrest, door staff could feel safer in preventing violence. The night-time economy will become safer for door staff and for the public. Liaison will be harder in cities where the large numbers of door staff and police make it harder to forge relationships between the two parties. To date, the SIA has not appeared to assist with this situation as its press releases have generally related to action they have taken against unlicensed door staff, rather than helping to promote the increased professionalism of door supervisors. This will only perpetuate the 'regulation mind-set' that fosters greater hostility between police and door staff. Companies or organisations in the door supervisor sector that recognise the reciprocal benefits of improved liaison can play a large part in improving the situation. I have highlighted door supervisors' fear of arrest as a key issue, and believe that improvements on this front can help create real improvements in reducing levels of violence. Unfortunately, unlike other processes that can be implemented and measured, success with improved liaison and perception will be difficult to quantify.

A practical measure that can help prevent door staff from being arrested and prosecuted for assault when using necessary force is the use of body worn video cameras. CCTV captures violent encounters from a third party view point and normally without the audio ability to capture what is being said during the incident. When played back it merely confirms that the incident took place and that the door staff used force. With this limited and impersonal view of the incident, a subjective analysis then has to be applied by the police or jury who view the footage. Conversely, body worn video captures the incident from the door supervisor's point of view. Not only does it clearly capture the aggression and anger that is directed at the door supervisor prior to force being applied, the audio will clearly record any threats being made. Once violence ensues, the video will capture exactly what violence is directed at the door supervisor and also how the door supervisor responds. If the assailant subsequently makes an allegation of assault, the police and courts can be shown the footage.

Evidence of this nature is far more compelling and far more beneficial to the door supervisor than CCTV because it allows the viewer to put him/herself in the shoes of the door supervisor. It goes without saying that footage from these cameras is also an excellent aid to prosecution of those who commit violence against door staff. Video units are now available that are so small and compact that there is no need for a 'head cam' or separate recording unit needing cables that can be a safety issue. It is for all of these reasons that body worn video is now being used as standard practice by front-line police officers in virtually every force. There has been some discussion as to whether an SIA CCTV licence is required to use body worn video. It is not. The former Chief Executive of the SIA, Mike Wilson, confirmed this to me.

The other issue that went hand-in-hand with fear of arrest is that of experienced door staff being forced from the profession due to having a criminal record, with inexperienced or unsuitable door staff taking their place. Some respondents suggested that a solution to the first part of this situation would be to issue licences to prospective door supervisors 'on merit' with consideration being given to the individual's ability; or to use door supervisors' parlance, if they are a 'good lad'. Although this would be the seemingly perfect outcome, it would need such a subjective test that it is not practical or achievable. The process would appear so arbitrary that

no licence denial would ever be accepted by the applicant. The SIA already has difficulty issuing licences in a timely manner even with the unequivocal stipulations in place, never mind with a more ambiguous in-depth analysis of a person's character.

Even if more relaxed regulations were brought in to accommodate individuals with more of a criminal past, a bar would still have to be set. The bar would surely not allow for door supervisors to have committed assault while performing their role. Yet this is exactly where they are most likely to pick up a criminal record for assault if deemed to have used too much force. It is also clearly not desirable to return to the 'bad old days' before the SIA where there were cases of violent career criminals working as bouncers. Consequently, there is no easy solution to the fact that suitable, experienced, professional door supervisors - who are capable of preventing violence due to the type of experience that has also resulted in them gaining a criminal record - are now deemed unsuitable for door work.

It could be assumed that if new door supervisors are properly trained, the loss of suitably experienced door staff would not be an issue. Training was not the focus of this research and it is not appropriate to address it here. However, there were several comments provided by interviewees that related to the perceived poor level of training that door supervisors receive in order for them to obtain an SIA licence. Training deficiencies can be addressed.

### Concluding Comment

Even with correct training, the interviews established that there are certain attributes a door supervisor requires that generally cannot be taught. In addition to experienced and professional door staff being deterred by vetting requirements, there is the probability their replacements frequently do not have the necessary life skills and attributes to prevent violence. Taking this last issue into consideration and combining it with other issues that have been revealed, such as door supervisors' fear of arrest, it is my observation that rather than making the night-time economy safer, in these respects, SIA licensing has made it more dangerous. A rise in violence in the night-time economy is to be expected.

The process of gaining access to, and then gaining information from, door supervisors has led to many hours of contact with them. It has been enlightening. I hope that in addition to revealing the staggering levels of violence door supervisors face, this report helps to not only overcome the stereotypes we may have of door staff, but also helps to promote a greater respect for them. They should be commended for the role they play in keeping the public safe, in what has been shown to be an extremely violent occupation.

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## Appendix: Worst Injury Received by Respondent

226 respondents from the sample provided an answer to this question. The answers they gave are listed alphabetically.

What is the worst injury, to date, you have received in relation to you working as a door supervisor?

No injury: 19 respondents
Back and neck problems. Pulled muscles and vertebrae out of place.
Back injury from being hit with a chair. Relates to an on going problem with my back.
Bite to my right forearm and fingers gouged into my eyes.
Bitten (x 7 respondents).
Bitten by a drug user (x 2 respondents).
Bitten on leg requiring stitches.
Bitten, causing a significant laceration and bleeding.
Black eye (x 5 respondents).
Black eye, along with a torn ear, scratches to the face and ears and cuts to the inside of my mouth.
Bleeding nose.
Bottle attack - resulted in six inch laceration.
Bottle attack / hit with a bottle (x 10 respondents).
Bottle attack requiring fifteen stitches.
Bottle attack resulting in concussion.
Bottle attack resulting in permanent scarring.
Bricked and belted over the head resulting in head wounds and hospital treatment.
Broken Arm.
Broken cheek bone and broken eye socket.
Broken cheekbone (x 3 respondents).
Broken fingers and nose, and slashes / cuts (x 2 respondents).
Broken foot.
Broken foot, maced and knocked out.
Broken hand (x 3 respondents).
Broken nose (x 17 respondents).
Broken nose and also knocked out for five minutes and stamped on.
Broken nose and chipped eye socket.
Broken nose and two bitten fingers in the same incident.
Broken nose, broken fingers and broken ribs.
Broken nose, cheekbone and arm all in one incident, as well as twenty four stitches in a head wound.
Broken nose, cracked rib, broken toe, snapped ligament in wrist.
Broken nose, cut mouth, broken fingers, stabbed in hand, stitches to head, three cracked ribs, all from the one incident.
Broken nose, two broken fingers, cuts to head.
Broken / cracked ribs (x 4 respondents).
Broken ribs, broken bones in hands, knee stamped on.
Broken shoulder and two stab wounds.
Broken shoulder.
Broken toe.
Bruises and cuts (x 8 respondents).
Bruising (x 9 respondents).
Bruising to the brain resulting in 24 hours of memory loss and left side of jaw swollen and bruised.
Concussion (x 3 respondents).

Concussion, fractured jaw, bruised ribs, damaged lower spine, damaged teeth, two broken fingers from a crowbar attack.
Crushed ribs, bruising, eye gouged.
Cut head and concussion. (x 2 respondents).
Cut head, sixteen stitches needed.
Cut throat - five inch scar.
Cut under the eye with a piece of glass. Very lucky to have my eye sight still.
Cut with a bottle on my forehead that required ten stitches.
Cuts and bruises, black eyes, dislocated fingers.
Cuts that needed stitching.
Cuts to head. Injuries to thumbs. Bite in chest and shoulder. 3 broken noses. Bruised testicles.
Cuts various (x 8 respondents).
Deep laceration to the head and concussion requiring an overnight stay in hospital.
Dislocated fingers.
Dislocated major joints (x 3 respondents).
Dislocated shoulder severe bruised ribs and face also cracked ribs.
Facial injury.
Fifteen stitches to my head as a result of a piece of two by four wood across my head.
Four cracked ribs, and bruised kidneys.
Four inch gash to back of head after being hit with a chair.
Fourteen stitches to my face.
Fourteen stitches to my head and two broken fingers.
Fractured skull, three broken ribs, broken ankle and severe bruising all over all from the same incident.
Glass to back of head requiring sixteen stitches.
Glassed (x 2 respondents).
Graze.
Having my lip split open, the bottom half of a tooth chipped off and general bruising from a large fight.
Head butted.
Hit on back of neck with high heel shoe.
Hit on the head with a piece of fire door and needed my head glued and stitched. Had concussion.
Hit with an ice pick to the head. Treatment resulted in me having a metal plate fitted to my skull. (Discovered by author during interview that respondent had also been shot in the leg).
Hit with bar stool. Blood vessels in my nose ruptured so badly, that I still get nosebleeds if I sneeze too hard.
Hospitalized for three days after being kicked and stamped on.
Ice pick in the shoulder.
Injured jaw.
Kick to the head resulting losing a week's memory. Slashed on my arm near the wrist.
Kicked and punched by fifteen males.
Knee joint injury during a scuffle that resulted in pain lasting several weeks.
Knocked unconscious (blind sided punch to the side of the head).
Lost front teeth (x 2 respondents).
Lost two teeth, and nose and cheekbone broken when hit with a fire extinguisher.
Nineteen stitches to face and severe concussion.
Ran over then knocked out, while knocked out kicked ten times in the ribs.
Ruptured ACL ligament and broken nose.
Scar from being assaulted with a crowbar.
Serious head injury.
Seven inch scar from a machete.
Severe concussion, broken ankle, fractured ribs.
Shot in the back, leg and hand, requiring a long stay in hospital of five months, and almost dying.
Shot in the head. Shot in the leg. Separated shoulder.
Shotgun wound to the leg.

Six stitches under right eye, six stitches in back of head, nose broken and couldn't see, all from one attack.
Slashed with a knife resulting in a scar approx five centimetres from my eye.
Smashed elbow, black eye and various body bruises.
Sore arm.
Split / cut lip (x 5 respondents).
Stab wound to abdomen with a kitchen knife, requiring several stitches and two nights in hospital.
Stab wound to the left bum cheek.
Stabbed (x 10 respondents).
Stabbed and sliced with a Stanley knife.
Stabbed in the arm with a pen knife, severed artery needed blood transfusion. Also glassed.
Stabbed in the right hand side and was hospitalised for several weeks.
Stabbed with a screwdriver (x 2 respondents).
Stabbed with broken bottle.
Stabbed, slashed, bottled.
Stabbed in right leg and left lung with a sharpened screw driver resulting in time off work from both day job and doors.
Stitches to eyelid requiring plastic surgery.
Surgery on leg for a ruptured muscle.
Sword put through forearm resulting in broken bones and nineteen stitches and screws to put it back together.
Three broken ribs, broken nose and a stab wound all in the one attack.
Torn ankle ligaments. Spent sixteen weeks off work due to this.
Twisted ankle (x 2 respondents).
£3,500 worth of dental work over the years. Countless broken jaws. Punctured lung. Metal plate & pins in hands. Broken ribs. Dislocated knee.