

April 24 1974

Bar's ID policy is under attack

by JOEL TLUMAK

A sign at the entrance to the bar "After Dark" on Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles warns people that they may have to show three pieces of "valid" identification to get in.

This requirement—"the exception rather than the rule," according to one state official—is the reason why two complaints of discrimination have been filed with the state ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) against After Dark.

Several people turned away because of the inability to provide three pieces of valid ID—valid here meaning government identification—planned to picket the bar on its busiest nights, Friday and Saturday.

They claim the management is using this self-imposed requirement to keep down the number of women and black men in this popular dance bar and cabaret.

Refers to Code

In defining valid ID as government identification, After Dark manager Larry Murphy is following Section 25660 of the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Code.

But the code does not specify how many pieces of identification should be checked by a bar.

The most acceptable identification is a California drivers' license or a California ID, which is issued if someone who doesn't have a driver's license wants an official state ID.

A bar that doubts the validity of someone's driver's license usually asks for some other identification, not necessarily government ID, to verify the name or the signature of that person.

Harry Knudsen, senior special in-

vestigator for the Hollywood ABC office, said it is "the exception rather than the rule" to require three pieces of ID to get into a bar. One piece of valid identification is usually sufficient, he said.

Few people have three pieces of ID issued by a federal, state, county, or municipal agency, a random survey indicated.

Women are at a greater disadvantage than men because they don't have a draft card or a military card, both of which After Dark accepts as valid identification.

Knudsen noted that hunting and fishing licenses are not acceptable according to ABC standards. The ABC has approved passports as valid IDs, however.

It appears to be up to After Dark whether it accepts Medicare, welfare, and government employment cards as additional pieces of valid ID.

Not Consistent Check

Most people going to After Dark don't show identification. Some are recognized by employees at the door, or they are considered obviously not under age.

Many get by with only a driver's license when asked, and some, when pressed further, find that a draft card satisfies the door checker. But in some cases the three pieces of ID are demanded.

A woman and a black male have made complaints to the Inglewood District Office of the ABC, and inspectors Ray Meyers and David Wainstein said the complaints are under investigation.

Attorney Tom Coleman, who represents gay clients, said he witnessed a friend of his being refused



Photo by Walt Blumoff

Good times inside — controversy outside

entrance in what he claims is an obvious case of discrimination. Two other people have contacted Coleman about similar experiences.

Morris Kight of the Gay Community Services Center said the center has been receiving complaints about After Dark's ID policy for some time.

Gay people at GCSC and those who complained to Coleman organized the picket action outside After Dark for Apr. 4 and 5, Friday and Saturday nights.

Procedure Selective

Coleman said the incident he witnessed took place Mar. 25, when he arrived at After Dark with three friends. Two of them, ages 24 and 28, both white, got in without showing any ID, he explained.

Coleman's other friend, 28 and black, had trouble. He produced a driver's license, school identification with a photo, and an employment ID without a picture. He was not permitted to go in, Coleman said.

Coleman, standing in back of his friend, protested. He said the After Dark employees at the door bodily removed him from the entrance.

In addition to wanting After Dark's policy discontinued, Coleman is calling for a public apology by the management. If picketing doesn't work, Coleman said he has other strategies, which he refused to name, but one might be an appeal to the ABC and another is the possibility of going into court.

There have been similar complaints made about the ID policy of

the After Dark cabaret and dancing bar in San Francisco.

According to one report, the ABC checked out two discrimination complaints by women but found nothing to substantiate the charges. On any night, both blacks and women are present at After Dark in both cities.

Blacks and women refused entrance, however, claim the management is trying to limit their numbers and keep the two bars predominantly male and white.

ABC investigator Knudsen said he remembers only one other time in his career when a bar required patrons to show three pieces of identification. That was a gay bar, he explained, which sought to keep straights out.