

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

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Statement of: Daniel White

Age if under 18: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: Police Officer

This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: Daniel White PC 811CP..... (witness) Date: 2/7/21

The following statement is made in relation to Police representations with regards to the premises licence review of THROGMORTONS, 26B THROGMORTON STREET, LONDON EC2N 2AN.

I am the Licensing Officer for the City of London Police and part of my duties include the monitoring of crime and disorder associated with licensed premises.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the City of London Police were informed of a strong smell of cannabis emitting from the premises known as THROGMORTONS. On police attendance, officers could smell a very strong cannabis aroma coming from within the venue and saw that all the windows were boarded and covered to obscure visibility of what was going on inside.

As a result of enquires carried out the police entered the premises executing a warrant on the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Police entered the building which comprises of the ground floor as the bar level with a main staircase leading down to the basement levels. Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> basement level officers found what can only be simply described as a cannabis factory.

The factory consisted of heating, lighting and watering facilities consistent with the productions of cannabis. The factory also consisted of 1142 cannabis plants which have a street value of £1,038,500. This was a considerable operation giving its size and amount of plants already produced. The police licensing team were immediately notified of the find due to the fact it was

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uncovered in a licensed premise. However, the investigating officers asked for the licensing team to refrain from engagement with the premises licence holder at that stage as not to hamper any investigations efforts. The premises licence holder is Blank Gallery Limited of which the only listed director is a Mr Saeed HOSSEINI. Mr HOSSEINI, was arrested in connection with the cannabis factory and enquires are ongoing.

At around 16:00 hours on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021, I attended THROGMORTONS in the company of Andre Hewitt of the City of London’s licensing team. HEWITT had informed me the premises licence was still suspended and the venue was still operating licensable activity. The purpose of my visit was to assist HEWITT to establish what was occurring at the venue. On arriving at the venue both HEWITT and I introduced ourselves to a male who identified himself as Ronnie COHAN. I could see that there were tables and chairs outside the venue despite the business not having a licence for them. The bar was fully stocked with alcoholic drinks on display for sale. COHAN stated that he was the manager and a director of the business. The main conversation took place with HEWITT and COHAN in which COHAN was informed the licence was still suspended due to the non-payment of annual fees and that any licensable activity was unlawful. Also present in the venue at the time of our visit were 3 males sat at table adjacent to the bar, these males were consumer pints of lager. I also had a conversation with COHAN regarding the matter and found him most uncooperative. He was belligerent, rude and argumentative throughout my entire conversation. I was aware that HEWITT was also speaking to MR COHAN’s solicitor on the phone and after this we left the venue informing COHAN that as things stood his licence was suspended and he was not to undertake any licensable activity there.

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June at around 15:15 hours I attended THROGMORTONS again but this time in the company of Nad VALAYDON from the City of London’s licensing team. On arrival I could see 4 tables outside the venue again despite not having as licence for them. Again, the bar

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was fully stocked with alcoholic beverages on display for sale. We then spoke to male who would only identify himself as Jack who stated he was the manager. There were no customers present and he stated there was no one else present in the venue. Throughout my conversations with Jack, I found him to evasive and without any respect for myself or my colleague. I walked down to the basement levels in order to check if any licensable activity was taking place and on the first basement level, I saw scantily dressed females being photographed by a group of oriental males. I spoke to one of the males who told me that he had been given permission by Ronnie COHAN to use the venue for their event. I went back upstairs and enquired with Jack as to what was taking place. Jack told me he did not know they were there, had not spoken to them and did not know them. I went back down to speak to the male and as I did so Jack came down the stairs. The oriental male called Jack by his name and they started chatting like old chums, It was clear to me that the males definitely did know each other and Jack had lied to me about this fact. I then ventured down to the second basement which was where the cannabis factory had been housed. It still smelt strongly of cannabis even after all the time that had passed since its removal. After VALYDON had finished with Jack we left the venue.

I am aware that the licence holder is claiming no knowledge of the cannabis factory within their venue claiming their sub-letted the basement. However, given the lay out of the venue and the huge undertaking of the operation it is my opinion that there is no way the licence holder would have not been aware of the activity taking place. The smell, the noise and huge consumption of power not to mention the manpower required to resource the factory would have been obvious to anyone in the building as to what was going on.

Signature: Daniel White ..... Signature witnessed by: .....