

Alton Police Release Detailed Report of Recent Hiram's Bar Incident Violating Gov. Pritzker Order

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Full details of a report for the incident at 12:45 a.m. Sunday, April 5, at Hiram's Bar at 219 W. Third St. in Alton have been released.

Alton Police Chief Jason Simmons said at 12:45 a.m. on Sunday, April 5, he received information that Hiram's was hosting a large party in the rear dance floor area. "I went to Hiram's and parked on the south side of the Ragin Cagin bar, located at 210 W. Third St., to observe the inside of Hiram's bar," he said. "I exited my car to look

inside the bar via the front glass window. The bar has several glass windows in which you can see inside from Third Street. I observed no activity in the front section of the bar. I noticed the front door was locked.

“As I conducted surveillance, I observed, at one point, an inner rear bar door open. As the door opened, I could see dance lights from a rear dance area and I observed a female walking inside the closed and empty bar area and going back into the rear dance area. I then walked to the State Street side of the bar and I distinctly heard loud music playing, along with laughter and conversations of several people inside.”

Simmons continued and said: “The side door was unlocked and it was obvious from the burnt cigarette butts on the sidewalk, that people were using this door to enter and exit the business. I observed several vehicles parked in the immediate area of this unlocked business door, one of which I recognized as the vehicle of Shannon Walker, the Alton Mayor’s wife. I then contacted Alton Police Dispatch for assistance and met several officers on the rear lot of Danny’s Lounge located at 118 W. Fourth Street. From there, officers were briefed on my observations and they were informed that the Alton Police Department would investigate this business believed to be open.

“I along with other officers, entered Hirarm’s Bar at approximately 0122 hours. It should be noted that the unlocked business door led directly into a large room set up as a dance floor and bar area. Upon entry, I immediately observed Shannon Walker standing atop a DJ booth, looking over the dance floor, dancing in place and apparently controlling the music that was playing. She was drinking an unknown beverage.”

Chief Simmons said at that point, there were several people standing near the table, just south of the dance floor, drinking, including the bar owner, Hiram Lewis.

“Some were drinking bottles of beer, others had unknown beverages believed to be alcohol,” Chief Simmons said. “As the officers entered, I instructed Mrs. Walker to turn off the music, which she did. I informed everyone that the bar was closed and asked everyone to produce identification, as they were in violation of the state statute, being Reckless Conduct.”

After identifying these individuals, Chief Simmons said it was learned that Hiram Lewis had an active Madison County Domestic Battery warrant. He was subsequently placed into custody.

“Several other subjects also had warrants for their arrest; however, due to the current pandemic, the jurisdictions in these other venues refused to extradite, so no other warrant arrests were made,” Chief Simmons said.

The following is a list of the subjects inside the bar at the time of police arrival:

Hiram Y. Lewis, Anthony C. Griffie, Mathew N. Coolbaugh, Shannon Walker, Deven M. Fair, Nathan D. Stoeckel, and Jennifer A. Helgren.

“As the officers were identifying the people inside the business, I listened to several of the subjects talking to one another. One of these subjects stated that several people (including her friends) had left the bar just before 1 a.m. and prior to police arrival.

“Hiram Lewis was allowed to lock up and secure his business. A decision was made to cite/summons these subjects for Reckless Conduct, later via mail. Officers stood by as rides home were called for the subjects, due to several being too intoxicated to drive their own personal vehicles home.

“Lewis was placed under arrest and was transported to police headquarters where he was booked and held on his domestic battery warrant. Misdemeanor complaints and court summons' of Reckless Conduct were later signed, completed and filed, charging everyone present with Reckless Conduct. A court date of June 5th was listed on the complaints, due to the present closure and continuation of many criminal cases in the Third Judicial Court.”

Chief Simmons said after leaving the scene, he made telephone contact with Alton Mayor Brant Walker.

“I informed him that his wife, Shannon, was also inside the business and that she would be cited and charged along with everyone else who was at this illegal gathering. Mayor Walker confirmed his understanding and agreed that she should be treated the same as everyone that was present at the business.

“This report was later forwarded to the City of Alton Liquor Commission.”

Chief Simmons continued and said: “It should be noted that on 04/05/20 at 0945 hours, I received a telephone call from Shannon Walker. Apparently she attempted to contact me several times earlier that morning. I answered the call. She was crying and apologized several times to me on the phone about her ‘mistake in judgment’ earlier in the morning at Hiram's bar.

“I informed Walker that I could not speak to her about the case, as she was cited and would have to appear in court on the charge. During the short conversation, I informed her that she would receive a court date in the mail and my advice to her was to obtain an attorney and that she would be charged just like everyone else that was present at the business.

“I again informed her not to contact me again about the incident.”

At 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 6, Chief Simmons checked computer databases on Hiram Lewis, the owner of Hiram's Bar. It was learned that on Feb. 13, 2020, the Alton Building and Zoning Department cited Lewis for Illegal Occupancy concerning the address at 219 W. Third St. in Alton.

"It should be noted that while investigating a Reckless Conduct Complaint at Hiram's on 4-5-20 at approximately 0130 hours, myself and an officer walked through the business to check for other persons that may be inside the bar. I observed a sleeping bag and some toiletry items next to the sleeping bag/blanket in a room on the upper floor of the business. No other persons, other than the ones mentioned in the initial report, were located inside the business."

Hiram's Bar Arrest Summary:

Adult

Anthony Chavez Griffie

Suspect Reckless Conduct Pending Investigation

Adult

State of Illinois

Victim Reckless Conduct on 4/05/2020

Adult

Matthew Nelson Coolbaugh

Suspect Reckless Conduct Pending Investigation

Adult

Shannon R Walker

Suspect Reckless Conduct Pending Investigation

Adult

Nathan Daniel Stoeckel

Suspect Reckless Conduct Pending Investigation

Adult

Jennifer Ann Helgen

Suspect Reckless Conduct Pending Investigation

Adult

Deven Marlene Fair

Suspect Reckless Conduct Pending Investigation

Adult

Hiram Yardly Lewis

Suspect Reckless Conduct Pending Investigation

Adult

Hiram's Tavern

Suspect on 4/05/2020
