

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Stuart Jensen. I am a part owner of Curio Bar, located inside The Denver Central Market.

I arrived at my bar at approximately 9am today. Shortly thereafter, I was informed by the owner of Crema Bodega (the coffee shop within the market) that a large group sitting at a community table had just purchased coffee cups but had not filled them with coffee. He suspected that they had brought alcohol in from the liquor store across the street and were mixing it with juice in their coffee cups.

After observing them for a few minutes, I noticed that they were very loud and vulgar, to the point of causing other patrons to become uneasy. Me and the other bartender on duty watched them for about 10 minutes, hoping to see them actively mixing drinks. After watching them pass some cups around, add juice, swirl their cups and then discuss how good their drink tasted, I went over and politely told them that they could not drink in our space and that they needed to leave. The reaction from the man I informed was a chuckle and a "whatever." Another man said that they had ordered food and were going to stay and eat.

At this point, I went back behind the bar and after a couple of minutes, told them again that they needed to leave, and that if they refused that I would call the police. More time went by, during which one of the men shouted to me behind the bar "Don't you eyeball me, man!" This is when I stepped outside to call Denver's Non-Emergency Police line. I explained the situation and asked for an officer to be dispatched to remove the group from my bar. For the next fifteen minutes, the group laughed at us from their table, continued drinking, and gave no impression that they were going to exit the premises.

Getting more frustrated and becoming slightly nervous about their demeanor, I called 911. I explained to the dispatcher that I had previously called non-emergency and was hoping to get an idea of when an officer could come and assist me. I was told that there were no ETA's given through dispatch, and I again explained in detail what had happened.

Approximately 15 minutes later, a group of Firemen walked in (I would estimate there were 6 of them). They were in uniform, and clearly came in full knowledge of the calls that I'd placed. They approached the table and gave hugs to the entire group. As this was happening, several in the group of offenders began laughing and asking me if I really thought the police were going to show up. One of them, after putting his hands in the air and saying "Oh, are you here to arrest me?!" to the group of firefighters, came to the bar and told me that he'd been a firefighter for 23 years and that the police were not going to do anything to make them leave.

There was a period when the firefighters that had arrived hung out with the group at the table, shaking hands, laughing about the situation, and making it clear that they had no intention of pursuing any course of action that would lead to the group exiting my bar. Through the entirety of this scenario, the men in the group continued to heckle me about calling the police. At one point one of the men in the group stepped aside and spoke to the firemen that had arrived and they all had a good laugh.

All the firemen then left the building and the offending group remained, still drinking their beverages and taunting us about how we thought calling the police would have any sort of consequence. This went on for about 10-15 minutes, during which time at least one of the group came up to the bar and tried to shake my hand and thank me for calling their friends.

Eventually, they exited the bar, while waving at me and hollering insults. This was loud and aggressive enough that 3 men having drinks at the bar took out their cell phones and said, "This is just in case I have to call 911."

After approximately 15 minutes, I exited the Market through the alley exit to clear my head and saw a police car drive through the alley. I ran after them and shouted for them to stop. I asked if they were responding to the call that I had placed, and they answered that they were. I gave them my name and explained that the fire department had shown up and they remarked that it was strange that they would have gotten the call. I suggested that perhaps since there were no officers in the area, they had sent the Fire Department. They seemed to think that was a possibility. They were very kind and professional and apologized for not being able to get there sooner.

My frustrations with this situation are first, that government employees who are certainly fully knowledgeable about the illegality of bringing alcohol into my bar would do it so brazenly. Second, that when asked to leave they refused, which to my understanding makes them trespassers. Third, that they had such little respect for myself and my staff that they felt the need to heckle and bully us. Fourth and most importantly, that once the Fire Department showed up (I'm still not sure how that call ended up with them), they celebrated the situation. And finally, that when the offenders finally decided to leave, they felt compelled to further taunt and insult me, to the point that a group sitting at my bar pulled out their cell phones and remarked that they were getting ready to call the police.

As a bar owner, we are in constant fear of violating our liquor license. There are undercover stings and severe consequences that result from us violating our terms in any way. The fact that a group of government employees would come into my business and behave in a manner that clearly violates those terms, and then insult us when we try to take recourse, is unacceptable. The fact that more government employees showed up and joined them in celebrating their blatant disregard for the terms of our liquor license is shocking, appalling and to be honest, frightening.