

Edinburgh Publican gets licence endorsement after assault

An Edinburgh pub owner who violently assaulted a patron he blamed for a campaign of harassment against staff has been allowed to keep his licence.

Murray McKean, who owns and manages The Tourmalet pub on 25 Buchanan Street, was convicted of assault after confronting the barred patron who he said had engaged in an 18 month campaign of harassment against the venue's staff.

Police sergeant Barry Mercer told councillors the altercation occurred at 10pm on 15 April of last year in the pub's smoking area, where the barred patron was standing.

According to Mercer, McKean, 57, went outside to confront him, being heard to shout by a witness, "200 yards, 200 yards and me and you will sort it out" before kicking the barred patron, knocking him over.

The patron then stood back up, after which McKean said "let's f***** go, you f***** deserve it", shoved him and kicked his right leg, and then struck his head three times, after which the patron fell again.

Police were called, and arrested McKean after reviewing CCTV footage at the pub. He was convicted on 10 January of this year, being fined £300 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, and notified the council on 14 January – within the required 28 day period.

Mercer said McKean was off duty when the altercation took place, and also that he was not under the influence of alcohol.

His licensing solicitor, Alistair Macdonald, told councillors that he had known McKean for “many years”, and that the publican was “seeing red” when the attack occurred.

McKean, who also operates the Ventoux pub on Brougham Street, told councillors: “I made a mistake I deeply regret. I understand that I’ve brought it on myself.”

He further said that the barred patron had harassed and attacked staff at The Tourmalet repeatedly in an 18 month period after he was barred, being arrested by police twice.

In one incident, he said the patron attacked a member of the bar’s staff soon after they had left work, requiring their hospitalisation and six stitches on their forehead.

In another, he said a member of staff had his shirt ripped off his body by the patron.

SNP councillor Catherine Fullerton, who represents Sighthill/Gorgie, told McKean: “What surprised me was that there was no alcohol involved. You were sober, you would expect an attack like that to involve alcohol.

“Surely continuous nuisance or gross provocation should be dealt with by the police, especially in your line of work.”

He replied, saying: “We certainly called in 2022, and several times afterwards. He seems to have the ability to disappear before the police come out.

“Every time he’s been passing our bar, banging on the windows, we always call the police. There’s been multiple occasions, and our first actions were obviously to call the police on those five or six occasions.”

Councillors on the city’s licensing board voted to add an endorsement to McKean’s personal license by a vote of four to one, with Cllr Fullerton dissenting to say that the council should take no action on the matter.

The endorsement does not limit McKean's ability to act as a licensed person to authorise or supervise the sale of alcohol.

However, if he receives two more endorsements within five years, he will be required to attend a licensing hearing.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter