

Activity #1: Newspaper Articles the Day After the Stonewall Riots

Historical Context: Below are two articles written the day following the Stonewall riots by the New York Times and the New York Daily News.

3 Cops Hurt as Bar Raid Riles Crowd

New York Daily News, June 29th, 1969 (Dennis Eskow)

A predawn police raid on a reputed Greenwich Village homosexual hangout, the second raid within a week, touched off a two-hour melee yesterday as customers and villagers swarmed over the plainclothes cops

Before order was restored, the cops were the targets of thrown coins, cobblestones and uprooted parking meters, windows were smashed, a police van was nearly overturned and the front of the raided bar, the Stonewall Inn, was fire-bombed.

Three cops suffered minor injuries and 13 persons were arrested. The fire was quickly doused by a hose from the bar.

First Raid a Cinch

Police officials said they had raided the social club at 53 Christopher St. last week to gather evidence of illegal sale of alcohol. The club had no license to sell alcoholic beverages to the public. That raid went off without a hitch.

Yesterday, at 2 a.m., plainclothesmen, under direction of Inspectors Seymour Pine and Charles Smyth, moved in under orders to gather fresh evidence of illegal sale of alcohol, arrest offending parties and close the bar.

After 28 cases of beer and 19 bottles of liquor were confiscated, police began clearing the bar.

Reinforcements Called

The customers milled around outside. They were joined by other villagers. As the cops came out, some persons in the crowd began throwing things. The missiles gradually grew more dangerous and the brief fire followed.

Reinforcements were called and the crowd was dispersed.

Among those arrested was doorman, Anthony Verra, 25, of 864 49th St., Brooklyn, charged with unlawful sale, consumption and storage of liquor, and Dave Van Ronk, 33, of 55 Sheridan Square, a folk singer, guitarist and song writer.

Cop Hit by Missile

Van Ronk, who made his Town Hall debut in October 1965 before 1,000 young people, was accused of throwing an object that injured Patrolman Gil Weissman, 44, of the Charles St. station.

Judge Nicholas F. Delagi in Criminal Court paroled Van Ronk for a hearing July 15, but held Verra in \$500 bail for a hearing July 14 because there was a similar warrant out for him.

Seven of those arrested were charged with unlicensed sale of liquor. Police have been keeping an eye on the inn to explore the possibility of "local syndicate involvements."

4 Policemen Hurt in Village Raid

*Melee Near Sheridan Square Follows Action at Bar
New York Times, June 29th, 1969*

Hundreds of young men went on a rampage in Greenwich Village shortly after 3 A.M. yesterday after a force of plainclothes men raided a bar that the police said was well known for its homosexual clientele. Thirteen persons were arrested and four policemen injured.

The young men threw bricks, bottles, garbage, pennies and a parking meter at the policemen, who had a search warrant authorizing them in *[sic]* investigate reports that liquor was sold illegally at the bar, the Stonewall Inn, 53 Christopher Street, just off Sheridan Square.

Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine said that a large crowd formed in the square after being evicted from the bar. Police reinforcements were sent to the area to hold off the crowd.

Plainclothes men and detective confiscated cases of liquor from the bar, which Inspector Pine said was operating without a liquor license.

The police estimated that 200 young men had been expelled from the bar. The crowd grew to close to 400 during the melee, which lasted about 45 minutes, they said.

Arrested in the melee, was Dave Van Ronk, 33 years old, of 15 Sheridan Square, a well-known folk singer. He was accused of having thrown a heavy object at a patrolman and later paroled in his own recognizance.

The raid was one of three held on Village bars in the last two weeks, Inspector Pine said.

Charges against the 13 who were arrested ranged from harassment and resisting arrest to disorderly conduct. A patrolman suffered a broken wrist, the police said.

Throngs of young men congregated outside the inn last night, reading aloud condemnations of the police.

A sign on the door said, "This is a private club. Members only." Only soft drinks were being served

New York Daily News.

Class Discussion Questions

- 1) According to the articles, who are the key actors in the Stonewall Riots and what are the key events? Think critically about occupation and gender.
- 2) Who is left out of this narrative? How could the newspapers frame the story differently?
- 3) In what ways does the newspaper have a bias? What are the consequences of this?