

# CRIME ON THE LAS VEGAS STRIP?

## UPDATE

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In the last newsletter we reported on the increase in violent crime involving guns on the Las Vegas *Strip* and some of the mitigation measures implemented by law enforcement and casino security. Additional information in an article in Global Gaming Business in November can be found at the following Link: <https://ggbmagazine.com/article/cool-it/>

Las Vegas Police responded in a big way to decrease the violent crime by deploying special teams and resources in what was

called *Operation Persistent Pressure*. By the end of December, those incidents did in fact decrease along the Strip. On the weekend of January 18, 2021, two shooting incidents did occur at Venetian and in the parking lot at the off-strip Rio property that although were unrelated, still gave pause for concern.

Investigated independently the Venetian incident started with a verbal altercation which was broken up by security and the perpetrators ejected from the casino out different exits. The two groups then met up a short time later on Las Vegas Blvd. where it escalated into a shooting when one of the men pulled out a gun. The incident at the Rio appeared to be an interpersonal dispute between two men.

Statistical data is not yet available for calendar year 2020 at both the state and national level and experts are divided on what the final results will be for Las Vegas and around the country. The year 2020 was definitely a unique and challenging year in many ways and crime rates were affected by the numbers of people not working or how they were socially interacting.

Some other cities to include Chicago and Portland have had dramatic increases in shootings and homicides during 2020 just based on local reporting which may be an indicator of what will be seen when the final FBI reports on crime come out in the next two months.

What did occur in Las Vegas on the Strip from 09/18/2020 through 12/20/2020 (3 months) during the weekends during *Operation Persistent Pressure* was a noticeable and positive decrease in violent crimes as a result of the saturation of law enforcement and casino security targeting the violent crime problem. The operation resulted in 1,229 arrests according LVMPD. 55% of those arrested were from outside of the Las Vegas area indicating 45% involved Las Vegas locals. A previous operation dubbed *Top Gun* resulted in the confiscation of 64 firearms.

LVMPD also reported that between October and December there had been a decrease in the number of sexual assaults and robberies and the number of shooting incidents dropped by 54%. October 2020 overall

### Community Leadership

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had an 8% increase in violent crime with November and December at 1.8% from the same period the previous year.

The efforts of police and casino security were noticeable and the targeted approach for crime reduction worked although at a high financial cost to police and casinos. As the country slowly migrates to a more normal condition, (Whatever that may mean) only time will tell what success casinos and law enforcement will have in preventing and deterring violent crime at casinos.

Some security directors in Las Vegas have reported a decrease in incidents and crime as a result of Covid screening at ingress and egress points on the property. Las Vegas has previously resisted security posted at entrances although many casinos across the U.S have had them for decades. The prominent presence of security personnel at the entrance, conducting basic screening, appears to have a positive effect on reducing incidents and crimes inside of casinos.

We continue to monitor the Strip violent crime and still are interested in hearing from the community members on what trends you have experienced and what countermeasures your property has successfully implemented.

## **ALERT- Possible Security Breach**



On March 10, 2021, [Bloomberg](#) reported that a group of hackers were claiming to have successfully hacked into Verkada Inc., and gained access to a massive amount of surveillance cameras inside a variety of companies. The list of organizations whose video and live feeds might have been compromised include police departments, schools, prisons, hospitals, and Tesla.

The hackers appear to be motivated by showing just how easy the system could be compromised. While the true extent of the breach is not yet fully known, it would appear that at least 150,000 feeds were accessed.

## **Wind Creek Casino Lawsuit**

The [Wind Creek Casino](#), located in Bethlehem Pennsylvania, is in the middle of a lawsuit alleging gross negligence in its security protocols. In 2019 an 84 year old guest was assaulted and abducted from the casino's parking garage. The law suit claims that the casino should have prevented the robbery and assault, had they appropriate security and surveillance practices in place at the time of the incident. Despite casino a casino employee hearing the screams of the guest, she was forced to drive off property before security could respond.



According to the lawsuit, the casino should have noticed that the guest was being followed throughout the facility, leading up to the attack. It also notes that the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board had cited the casino for [laps in security](#), as recently as the months leading up to the incident.

This lawsuit is similar to another one filed in 2012 ([Kawamura v. Boyd Gaming Corp.](#)). In that lawsuit a casino patron sued Main Street Station in Las Vegas was negligent for not providing enough security in the area leading back to the restrooms. The guest was [knocked unconscious](#) by a homeless man who was able to enter the casino and then lay in wait in the restrooms located at the end of a long narrow hallway.

While these types of lawsuits are not new to casino operators, the need to prove and document adequate security precautions are in place to ensure the safety of both patrons and employees continues to increase.

## Where's the Buffet?



A growing trend, that has emerged from the impact of COVID-19, is rethinking the option of providing a buffet to casino patrons. Back in July [Harrah's Resort Southern California](#) made the decision to transition their buffet into a more Grab and Go style venue, citing the difficulty to ensure patrons could remain socially distant, while keeping the area compliant with health and safety standards. [Spotlight 29 Casino](#), located in Coachella California, has also repurposed their buffet venue into a new brewpub and [Casino Pauma](#) moved its café into the location, previously occupied by their buffet then placed a Mexican grill specializing in oaxacan cuisine.

Even [Las Vegas](#) is not immune to this change in food options, before COVID-19 Vegas had over 40 buffet options, today there is only one. In March 2020 Circus Circus closed its buffet and announced it would be converting part of this space into a food court. Today the Garden Buffet, located inside the South Point Casino is the lone surviving option for guests. It is unclear if this signals the end of the traditional buffet's we have become accustomed to seeing in gaming establishments, but one thing is clear, buffets have always been expensive to operate which may continue to contribute to this trend for the foreseeable future.

## Crown Casino Investigation Update



In the wake of the continued fallout from multiple allegations of money laundering and links to organized crime activities, [Ken Barton has resigned](#) as CEO of Crown Resorts, the biggest gaming and entertainment firm in Australia. Helen Coonan will take over as executive chairman and assume leadership of the embattled company. While Crown searches for a new CEO it is Coonan's responsibility to [navigate the company out of this crisis](#).

While Coonan has yet to indicate how long she may lead Crown Resorts she has made no secret that she does not want to be in her position for "[an extended period of time](#)." The board of directors has hired an external firm to conduct the global search for Barton's replacement. In the meantime, the gaming giant must also face its uncertain future and a full-blown inquiry into its suitability to operate their gaming facilities, not to mention AUSTRAC's in-depth investigation into money laundering activity.

## GWPC Quarterly Meeting Reminder:

The next Gaming and Wagering Protection Community quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 31 (6:00 p.m. Eastern / 5:00 p.m. Central / 3:00 p.m. Pacific / 10:00 a.m. Sydney)

Meeting Topics will include:

Return to Work – Unique Issues Impacting Gaming

GSX Submissions

GWPC and Security Professionals

Meeting Link:

<https://cherokee.webex.com/cherokee/j.php?MTID=medf0123fbb7efa1b0dd583071114e7d3>

Or Call: (415) 655-0001

Meeting Access Code: 133 187 3242

## Additional Headlines & Resources:

### [National Brands Look to Legalize Mobile Sports Betting in Arkansas](#)

Three companies offering mobile sports betting are seeking a rule change to let them operate in Arkansas. Mobile sports betting is not permitted in Arkansas now.

### [CALL ARISES FOR PENNSYLVANIA TO ADOPT NEVADA COURT MODEL FOR ADDICTED GAMBLERS](#)

Retired Nevada Judge Cheryl Moss spent two years running a novel Gambling Treatment Diversion Court in Clark County, and she would love to see Pennsylvania and other states adopt the model.

### [Deadwood Sports Betting Bill on Governor's Desk, But Mobile Wagering Killed](#)

Legislation to allow Deadwood casinos to conduct sports betting has made its way to South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's (R) desk.

### [Casinos across Green Country back open after week-long shut down to conserve energy](#)

The casinos run by the Cherokee Nation shut down this week to help conserve energy as the state battled the bitter cold.

### [Nevada lawmaker drafting bill to create esports regulatory body](#)

Sen. Ben Kieckhefer envisions a "light touch" state oversight group akin to the Nevada Athletic Commission, which regulates combat sports such as mixed martial arts and boxing through licensure and sanctions.

### [FanDuel Becomes First Mobile Sportsbook Operator to Partner with American Gaming Association's Responsible Sports Betting Initiative](#)

FanDuel is the first mobile sportsbook operator to sign on to the AGA's national campaign to promote the fundamentals of responsible sports betting.

### [Nevada Gaming Commission denies license to game developer](#)

The denial prevents [Graboyes](#) from operating in Nevada or collaborating with gaming licensees in the state. Graboyes said he has 12 video gambling machines operating in Nevada and four in Oklahoma.

### [CASINO MAINTENANCE WORKER ACCUSED OF EMBEZZLING HKD270,000](#)

According to the casino, the worker, who had access to two keys that are used to maintain the slot machines, was spotted opening the machine and resetting it every time a certain player would lose a large sum of money. When resetting the machine, the worker would return all the credit previously lost to the player.

### [Missouri Lawmakers push for release of Gaming Commission report](#)

During a hearing Thursday on the commission's budget for the coming year, State Rep. Sarah Unsicker, D-Shrewsbury, asked for details about the report delivered to the commission in January by the Kansas City law firm Graves Garrett.

### [Suspicious Activity Reports Related to Cash Transactions Surge](#)

The number of suspicious activity reports filed last year to the U.S. Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network on cash transactions below a \$10,000 threshold was the highest in the seven full years the category has existed, according to an analysis conducted by Dynamic Securities Analytics Inc., a Tampa, Fla.,-based compliance data firm.

### [ARIA sued on racial discrimination allegations surrounding 2019 incident](#)

A California couple has filed a civil lawsuit against ARIA Resort and Casino alleging racial discrimination after a 2019 visit that ended in security throwing them off the property.

### [Town of Newburgh offered \\$3 million a year in host fees for casino at Newburgh Mall](#)

Resorts World is offering the Town of Newburgh \$3 million a year in host-community payments as part of its proposal to open a gambling hall with 1,300 video gaming machines in the Newburgh Mall