

DRINK WATCH CAMPAIGN

A PROBLEM ORIENTATED POLICE APPROACH TO DRUG RELATED SEXUAL ASSAULTS AND THE ISSUE OF SPIKED DRINKS

(CRIME REDUCTION CATEGORY)

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

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SUMMARY

DRINK WATCH CAMPAIGN A PROBLEM ORIENTATED POLICE APPROACH TO DRUG RELATED SEXUAL ASSAULTS AND THE ISSUE OF SPIKED DRINKS

This project sought to address the growing problem of members of the public patronising nightclubs in the city centre of Bristol having their drink spiked with tranquillizer type drugs. This had resulted in male and female victims becoming victims of sexual assaults whilst under the influence of such drugs.

The evidence used to define the problem was crime and information reports made to the police, reports from licensees of city centre clubs where incidents had occurred and local hospital liaison. .

Between May 2000 and December 2001 there were 38 reports of spiked drink offences on the Central Police District. 6 victims also reported being raped or subject to a sexual assault whilst under the influence of the drug.

As a response to the problem analysis of the reports of drinks spiking was undertaken. All District uniform and support staff took part in a training session on investigative procedures and forensic evidence. Guidance letters were sent to all licensees advising them on what action to take if one of their customers was a victim of drink spiking. Training on the subject was incorporated in the Doorsafe' doorstaff Training Course.

A public safety and awareness campaign followed using extensive media coverage. Licensees of city centre clubs produced drink watch posters to affix to the lip of glasses or bottles and A4 posters for distribution in all city centre clubs. HTV and BBC News provided local TV coverage, local Star Radio highlighted the dangers and the Evening Post provided a sustained local newspaper campaign together with the distribution of 20,000 drink watch warning cards to pubs and clubs in the city centre and South Gloucestershire. This was extended to Bristol University and UWE Student Union Bars and accommodation blocks. Community Safety Police *Officers* contributed to the production of a Training Awareness Video produced by students from the Media Department at the University of the West of England. This will be available for the Date Rape Trust Charity as a training tool nationally.

The response was measured by a questionnaire of club goers that indicated that a significant number of people were aware of the campaign and had altered their behaviour in clubs to prevent themselves becoming victims of this growing social problem.

In the first four months of the year 2002 there have been only 3 reports of spiked drinks, a reduction of over 50% in incidents of this type.

The Licensing Team based on Central District has responsibilities for ensuring the compliance of licensed premises with licensing legislation and the provision of a coordinated response to alcohol related violent crime. There are approximately 600 licensed premises on the Central District. One hundred of these have late night licenses and operate as nightclubs.

At the beginning of the year 2001 the police received a growing number of reports from members of the public that their drinks had been spiked with sedatives and they had been raped. In response to this alarming trend the CID and Licensing Departments began to collate information reports and crimes from members of the public. The aim of this intelligence gathering exercise was to analyse the information and discover common patterns in terms of victim profile, repeat locations of offences and to compile an offender profile or gather intelligence on likely suspects.

In this report reference to the spiking of drinks relates to the malicious administration of a sedative type substance such as benzodiazepines, for example valium/temazepam or substances like GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) or ketamine, a substance used by vets to sedate animals. The first are prescription drugs available from doctors and the latter two are substances misused in the dance scene to produce a "chilled" effect counteracting the symptoms of amphetamine or ecstasy. GHB is used by bodybuilders to enhance muscle growth.

The application of such substances is contrary to a number of offences under the Sexual Offences Act 1956 and the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861.

The Date Rape Trust a charity offering advice and guidance to victims of drug related sexual assault received 1,100 allegations of drug-assisted rape last year (2001). The previous year (2000) they received 780. The increase in these offences recognised locally in Bristol reflected the national growth in these types of incident.

Members of the Licensing Department collated information and liaised with club staff to gain further intelligence on incidents occurring in their premises. It became clear that the reports made to the police were the tip of the iceberg. One Harbourside club reported that they regularly had at least three reports on Saturday nights from their customers of spiked drink incidents and called ambulances to treat victims. Many of these incidents were not reported to the police. Although victims attended the local Accident and Emergency Department at the Bristol Royal Infirmary hospital staff did not test victims to find out what substance they had ingested. This was due to cost implications. Victims were monitored until their condition improved and they

were allowed to go home. There was no guidance from hospital staff for victims to contact the police to report the offence or general information about other agencies who might be able to offer them specific advice, for example The Date Rape Trust or Victim Support. There is now a telephone available in the A & E Department for victims of offences to contact the police to report incidents. Another important move is the installation at the Bristol Royal Infirmary Accident Department of a computer system that maintains details of patients affected by alcohol or drugs and enables this information to be shared with the police. It is currently in the early stages of implementation and will provide essential information when planning joint crime and disorder safety strategies.

How We Defined and What Information we used to Analyse the Problem

The Licensing Department officers held regular meetings with club managers to collect information of spiked drinks incidents in their premises. The aim was to find if there were any common patterns regarding victims, locations and possible offenders to tackle the problem. The other aim was to provide an emphasis to members of the public of awareness of the dangers inherent in the spiking of drinks. Clear strategies members of the public could adopt to ensure their safety when they went out drinking in the city centre needed to be publicised. This would lead to a reduction in the number of serious sexual assaults and avoid potential deaths arising from fatal medical reactions to unknowingly ingesting these substances. In 1996 Susan Amos a nurse from Crawley Hospital in Sussex had her drink spiked with Midazolam by Kevin Cobb a male nurse from Hampshire, Ms. Annis had a heart defect and died after reacting to the drug. Cobb went on to drug female patients in the hospital where he worked and raped them. He is now serving seven life sentences.

This problem was prioritised due to the serious potential consequences of this malicious activity. It was important to avoid the possibility of a victim dying as a result of a spiked drink in Bristol.

A secondary objective was to gather intelligence with a view to detecting offenders. This by the very nature of the activity proved difficult.

One of the underlying conditions was that incidents seemed to be occurring in city centre clubs rather than local public houses. The Sturman Report (2000) reported that 50% of drug assisted rape victims were drugged in clubs or pubs. Interestingly a recent questionnaire conducted by the police with clubbers in the city centre of Bristol revealed that they differentiate between local pubs and city centre clubs and indeed are more wary in certain clubs with a poor reputation than others. Incidents occurred when victims left their drinks unattended whilst they went to the loo or for a dance or allowed a stranger to buy them a drink.

The nature and extent of the problem was that reports were received by the police at the rate of nearly two per month. Not all of the victims had been *subject* to sexual assault.

The Community Safety Team conducted a questionnaire amongst 174 male and female clubbers in Bristol City Centre in January 2002. 37% of respondents had either been a victim of spiked drinks themselves or had a friend who had been a victim of the problem.

A census conducted by the Licensing Department in pubs and clubs in Bristol City Centre at midnight on Sat 13^h to Sunday 14th October 2001 revealed that there were 20,954 persons in clubs at that time. The analysis made would indicate that 7,752 of them or their friends had at some time been the victim of drink spiking.

How We Planned and Implemented a Response

Club managers were encouraged to contact the police if they suspected a customer was a victim of this offence and to try to encourage the victim and friends to report it to the police. Eventually club owners, security doorstaff and the A & E Department of the Bristol Royal Infirmary all became involved in identifying the problem.

In a 20-month period between May 2000 and December 2001 there were 38 reports of spiked drink offences on the Central Police District, (31 females and 7 males). This figure included 5 females who reported they had also been raped whilst under the influence of drugged drinks and 1 male subjected to a sexual assault. See table at Appendix B for profile of victims. The age of victims ranged from 17 years to 36 years of age. The incidents had occurred at a variety of different city centre pubs or clubs. Of the repeat locations 4 occurred at

'Clusky's, 2 Lizard Lounge, 4 Evolution, 2 Horn and Trumpet, 2 Chicago Rock and 4 at The Rock. The repeat location may not necessarily indicate that these incidents are more likely to occur at these premises but reflect the attitude of responsible managers to provide customer care and encourage reporting to the police.

The incidents where sexual assaults had not occurred suggested that in many cases the offenders were either experimenting to see what effect the drug had on victims or the administration was a prank because they thought the effect would be funny. The reality was that the administration of such substances had a devastating effect upon the victims. Some reported being violently ill and lethargic for days after the incident. Others had severe asthma attacks as a reaction and respiratory problems. One female was taken to Accident and Emergency Department of the local hospital and experienced continuous fits for a period of 5 hours. The comments received from respondents to the questionnaire showed that victims suffered long-term serious effects to the extent that they lost their confidence and refused to go out socially since their experience.

Licensees of clubs were concerned about the spiked drinks issue and requested guidance from the police about what procedures they should adopt when they suspected an incident. It became apparent that there, was a training need for managers of clubs, their door security staff and bar staff. It also became clear that many police officers were unfamiliar with the legislation relating to spiked drinks and lacked knowledge of evidential procedures they needed to follow. This compromised the gathering of information, as some incidents were not taken as crime reports by police officers.

The Licensing Department dealt with this problem by liaising with the District Training Officer to produce a training package to present to all uniform officers and support staff (enquiry officers) on the spiked drinks issue. Topics included legislation, the investigative process, examples of incidents and forensic knowledge. Guest speakers from Criminal Investigation Department and Drugs Strategy Unit attended. Training was delivered in Tidy and August 2001. North Somerset officers have also implemented this training package.

This was followed in August and September 2001 with meetings between licensees of clubs and doorstaff. Guidance notes on what staff could do to deal with victims and procedures to assist in gathering evidence and dealing with suspects was delivered to all city centre clubs. Appendix B.

A local club, Creation and club music magazine Out of Hand sponsored the production of A4 size Drink Watch posters. See Appendix F. These gave a clear warning of drink spiking, advice and contact telephone numbers for further information. The posters were distributed to every club in the city centre for display in their premises. They were placed in the bar area and the "rest rooms".

In a joint approach by the Students Union and Student Accommodation Officers of both Bristol University and University of the West of England these posters are now displayed in Students Union Bars and the 200 notice boards situated in student accommodation blocks throughout the city.

The Community Safety Team also assisted media studies students from the University of the West of England by contributing interviews on the spiked drinks issue. This included advice strategies to prevent people becoming victims and if they were victims what they should do to report it to the police. The 15 minute video will be available for the Date Rape Trust Charity to use for training purposes.

It was important to raise awareness in the student environment as a large number of city centre clubs are patronised by students from the two universities. According to statistics provided by Dr. Forrest of the University of Sheffield Department of Forensic Pathology 20% of all complainants of drug-facilitated sexual assault are University students. Crime Reduction Officers attended Freshers Events at University Halls and gave

crime prevention advice to new students. A warning about spiked drinks was included in that campaign. Respondents to the questionnaire later conducted by the Community Safety Team revealed qualitative information that this advice had effected new students awareness levels of the problem.

Evolution and McClusky's and Chicago Rock nightclubs sponsored the provision of advice cards. These were handed out to customers or affixed to the lip of their glasses. See Appendix G.

Now that all the basic information and education of both internal and external partners had been completed the Community Safety Team commenced a multi media campaign to publicise the dangers of spiked drinks. Interviews were conducted with local Star radio, HTV, BBC and Sky News TV stations and the local Evening Post newspaper. Tremendous support was received when three female victims assisted by giving their personal account of their experience when their drinks were spiked and the medical complications they suffered as a result. HTV compiled an extended report for a half hour Crimestoppers programme transmitted in the run up to Christmas. This included a moving personal account from a victim and a reconstruction of the incident using actors. Partners in the licensed trade, McClusky's supported the campaign by allowing filming to take place in their premises.

The local Evening Post newspaper ran articles on the subject of spiked drinks. They publicised the Drink Watch campaign as part of their Club Safe message directed towards female club goers. This campaign was a safety awareness aimed at females to improve their safety after leaving clubs and to encourage the use of bonafide taxi companies to get them home safely. It arose out of the murders of young women after they had left local nightclubs to go home. The drink watch campaign dovetailed neatly into this awareness issue due to the serious implications involving the drugging of victims and excellent safety awareness coverage resulted. 20,000 Drink Watch cards were produced in partnership with the Evening Post and clubs throughout Bristol and South Gloucestershire publicised them in their premises to drive home the safety awareness message. See Appendix E.

The nature of the offence required awareness to be raised amongst the target victims. The strategy adopted by the use of the Drink Watch cards and posters provided by the clubs tackled the problem of informing potential victims at the location of the majority of offences. On another level the general publicity campaign reached a wider audience including parents who in turn informed their grown up daughters of the risks of spiked drinks (anecdotal qualitative evidence obtained by means of conducting the Questionnaire)

The detection of offenders was difficult because rarely was anyone caught placing a substance in a drink. Although arrests were made no one so far has been charged on Central District with this specific offence. It was agreed that the most realistic method to prevent the occurrence was to heighten the awareness through the

publicity strategies adopted. The questionnaire conducted after the introduction of the publicity awareness campaign tested the efficacy of this strategy.

Questionnaire Method of Evaluation to Test Response Achieved by Awareness Campaign

The questionnaire conducted after the campaign amongst 174 respondents showed that there was an awareness of the danger.

13 respondents reported they were unaware of the issue.

61 % of respondents had seen the TV campaign

54% of respondents had seen the local newspaper campaign

45% of respondents had seen the national newspaper campaign

26% of respondents had heard the radio campaign

25% of respondents had seen the posters in clubs

22% of respondents had seen the awareness cards in clubs.

72% of respondents stated they would never leave their drink unattended

23% of respondents stated they would never let a stranger buy them drinks

21 % of respondents dealt with the problem by purchasing bottled products (they felt it to be more difficult to administer a substance in a bottle).

65% of respondents had talked to their friends about the issue

Refer Appendix C for summary of questionnaire.

The campaign intervention had raised awareness and respondents had altered their behaviour to prevent their victimisation.

It was apparent that respondents also talked to their friends about the issue. The fact that police officers were conducting a questionnaire into the subject also emphasised to respondents and their friends that the issue was serious. The timing of the questionnaire conducted between 8pm and 10pm on Friday and Saturday night just as they were about to step into a nightclub was a crime prevention exercise in itself.

The costs involved in training sessions and provision of posters is broken down at Appendix D. The total cost was £9,986 excluding £1410 covered by sponsorship from licensed premises for provision of posters and advice cards.

An additional cost of one Crime Reduction Officer for a one-day advice input to Freshers students came to £136.

The cost to the Criminal Justice System of dealing with one drug assisted sexual assault is £3,900. The cost to the victim in terms of emotional trauma and long term psychological effects are unquantifiable.

The response as indicated by the questionnaire suggested that a large number of people were now aware of the spiked drink issue and had altered their behaviour and habits in clubs to prevent them becoming victims.

The number of reports has reduced. 78% of respondents to the questionnaire stated they would report an incident to the police.

The awareness message is one that needs to be continually emphasised. This is particularly relevant when considering the influx of new students each year to the two universities in the city, Bristol University and the University of the West of England.

Headquarters Drugs Strategy Unit provides a spiked drinks training input to doorstaff undergoing training to become registered 'Doorsafe' security staff under the Bristol City Council approved scheme. This is enhanced by regular drug training sessions with new licensees and bar staff at city centre licensed venues provided by the Drugs Strategy Unit and Licensing Unit staff throughout the year.

Difficulties Encountered and How We Responded

One of the difficulties encountered was the cost of forensic evaluation of urine samples from victims to confirm they had been drugged. Forensic evaluation costs approximately £700 per sample. Authorisation for the examination of forensic samples was limited to those cases where a serious sexual assault was also reported.

The second difficulty was the periods of time that substances would remain in the victim's body and available for analysis.

	Blood	Urine
Benzodiazepine	12 - 24 hours	3 days
GHB	6 hours	12 hours

Any samples taken therefore needed to be taken promptly when the report was received. However, many victims did not report incidents of drink spiking for several days. This was often due to the confusion they experienced not knowing exactly what had happened to them and their own physical illness and experience of feeling really sick for a number of days. Some victims had not realised that the incident was actually an offence. It was therefore impracticable to take samples outside the above time limits due to the likelihood of negative results. For those reports where serious sexual assault had occurred samples of head hair could be analysed to give a reading of drug substance outside the above time limits.

The problem of the cost of forensic analysis was addressed by conducting enquiries with drug testing companies for initial screening test kits that could be used by police officers to obtain basic drug information from samples of victim's urine. A reputable company has been identified that market a Multi Drug Test that produces a qualitative determination of drugs in human urine. This will determine the presence of benzodiazepines in victims. A District Policy for its use is currently being evaluated. L.G.C. the privatised government laboratory expect to develop a similar test for GHB this year.

Another difficulty encountered was locating a Drug Testing Kit that a customer could use to dip into their own drink to check if any sedative substance had been applied. One company markets such a testing kit but it is not very user friendly as the results are difficult to read. The use of such testing devices may provide a false sense of security, as it cannot be guaranteed that a substance is not administered after the test has been carried out.

The other problem encountered was that there is no legislation covering the possession of GHB under the Misuse of Drugs Act. In the UK the substance is controlled by the Medicines Act. Although it is illegal to

produce or supply GHB it is not currently illegal to possess it. It is used by body builders to enhance muscle development and readily available for purchase over the Internet.

As a result of lobbying by pressure groups such as Cosmopolitan Magazine the Government have stated they will give GHB the status of a controlled drug and make its possession illegal this year.

One of the problems with the Problem Orientated Policing Model was finding sufficient information on offenders. It was impossible to provide a profile because of the difficulties in detecting suspects. One named person working as a D J in clubs was highlighted as a suspect. However difficulties were encountered planning an operation to carry out observations to catch him in the act or gain information from informants without running the risk of him becoming aware of police interest in his activities. It was difficult therefore to deal positively with the perpetrators. For this reason the emphasis was placed on a media campaign to raise awareness amongst staff at the locations of the offence, members of the public attending these locations and young persons who were at risk of becoming potential victims.

The problem orientated approach implemented by Central District police officers and partners in the leisure, entertainment and healthcare industry has resulted in increased awareness of the danger involved in the spiked drinks issue and contributed to the safety of members of the public enjoying a social night out in the city centre.

In the four months January to April 2002 since the crime reduction operation has been in force there have been only three reports of spiked drinks incidents by females in clubs. A reduction of over 50%

Appendices



AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

Licensing Department
 Bridewell Police Station, PO Box 985, Bristol, BS99 5BL
 Office Hours 8:00am -4:00pm
 Telephone 0117 945 5011 Fax 0117 945 5005
 Date: 29 August 2001

Dear Licensee,

**DRINK WATCH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN — SPIKED DRINKS
 DRUGS ASSISTED SEXUAL ASSAULT**

The past few months have seen a significant increase in reports of drugs administered in the drinks of customers. The incidents **have** occurred **randomly** at a **variety** of different bars and dubs.

The information is **reported to police** in a number of ways:-

A report from the licensee who suspect a collapsed customer has been drugged and call an ambulance and police to their premises.

A report from the victim **to the police several days after** the incident when the victim **has** recovered and had an opportunity to discuss their suspicions with family or friends.

In some instances the victim has been subject to a sexual assault whilst drugged. In other cases **property** is stolen from the victim whilst **drugged**. In the majority of cases reported to police there appears to be no obvious motive other than a prank.

It is a criminal offence to administer a 'noxious substance' under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 -- commonly known as poisoning. It is an arrestable offence, attracting a **5** year imprisonment **penalty**.

The consequences of a victim unknowingly mixing drugs and alcohol can of course have serious implications for persons suffering medical conditions. In extreme cases this has resulted in death of the victim.

I know from concerns expressed by licensees that the reports received by the police are only the tip of the iceberg.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

if you suspect a customer has been maliciously administered drugs and is unconscious – call an ambulance immediately and inform the police.

Continued...

Working with you - Working for you

It would assist the police in their investigations if you could carry out the following actions at your premises.

Get contact details of victim.

Get contact details of friends of victim, together with brief account of what has happened to victim.

Get Information on how much the victim has had to drink that night.

If it is possibly to identify the glass/bottle the victim was drinking from get one person to put this in a safe place to hand to police. The police will take it for forensic examination, even if it is now empty.

If a person is suspected of spiking drinks get your Security staff to detain them in a separate room. Call the police who will investigate further.

Make an entry in your Incident Book about the incident

Please ensure your bar staff and door staff are aware of the contents of this letter.

I am enclosing A4 posters sponsored by Creation and Out of Hand Magazine. I would be obliged if you would display them in your customer "rest rooms".

These are part of a media campaign to highlight awareness of the spiked drinks issue.

If you have any comments, queries or want to know what else you can do to support the Drink Watch Campaign please contact me.

**Sergeant Carole Ajinkya
Licensing Department**

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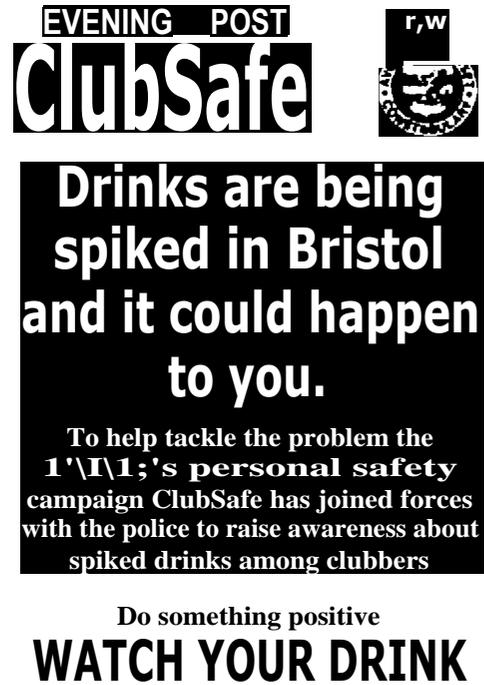
COST SUMMARY

Training	
30 Officers x 5 groups x £ 17 per officer x 3 hours	£7,650
Training staff including guest speakers x 5 x 5 Weeks x 3 hours x £ 17	£ 1,275
Cost of venue £ 125 x 4 weeks (HQ budget)	£ 500
Training staff preparation 3 officers x £ 17 x 3 hours	£ 153
1 District Training Officer preparation 3 days x8hours x£17	£408
Crime Reduction Officer 1 day students	£ 136
Total	£10,122
Cost of awareness cards and A 4 posters from McClusky's, Evolution, Chicago Rock and Creation (Sponsorship from partners in licensing industry).	£1,410



"Evening Post" Glass Fitment (front)

Scale 1:1

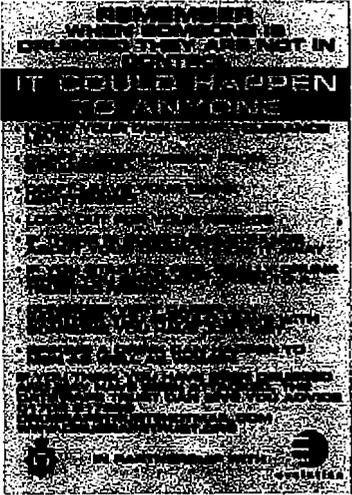


"Evening Post" Glass Fitment (rear)

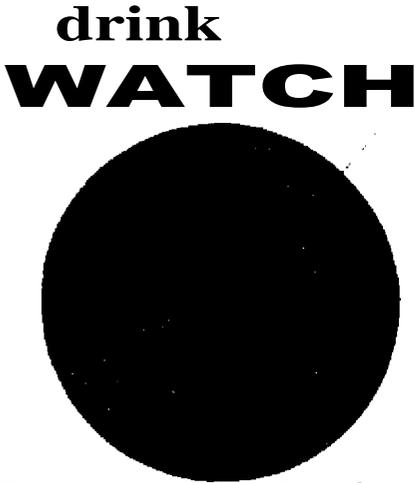




"Evolution" Warning Card (front)



"Evolution" Warning Card (rear)



"McCluskey's" Warning Card (front)
(drinking glass fitment)



"McCluskey's" Warning Card (rear)
(drinking glass fitment)

Scale 1:2

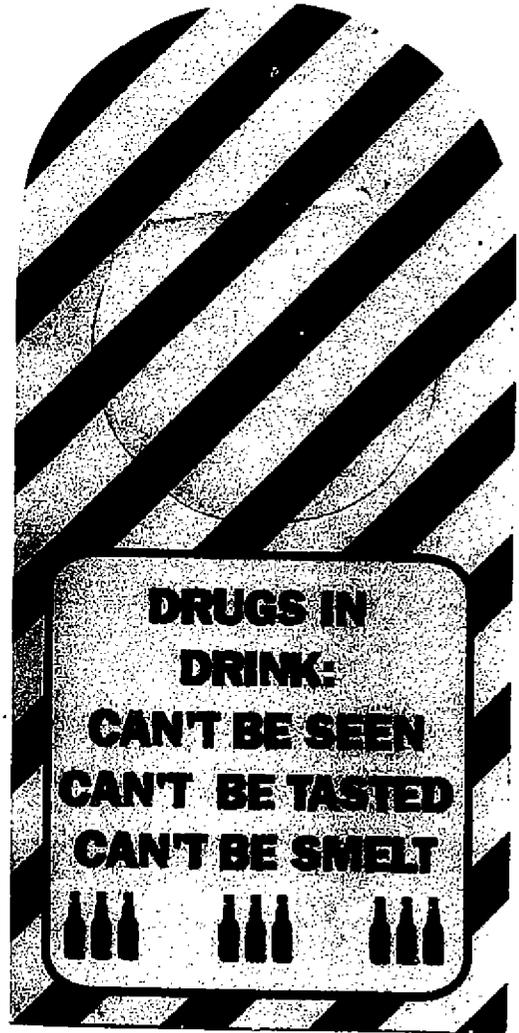
Scale 1:1



in partnership with **OW^EN***



Scale 1:1



"Chicago Rock" Bottle Neck Fitment
(front)

"Chicago Rock" Bottle Neck Fitment
(rear)