

## Nothing new: Madison bars don't like blacks

Jack Craver on Tuesday 10/11/2011 9:46 pm

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Madison bars have long sought ways to keep black customers out. I've been meaning for some time to discuss my experiences with their various tactics.

In August I went to Logan's with Mrs. Sconz and two friends. On the door we saw a sign that proclaimed "UW student and alumni night." Hoping that meant my old UW student ID would get me discounted drinks, I asked the bouncer what the occasion was. "You don't need to worry about it," he replied.

However, his co-worker was apparently more honest with one of my friends, after she inquired. "This is to keep you safe," he informed her. "We're trying to keep out the troublemakers."

Upset with what she perceived as racial undertones to the bouncer's reasoning, she suggested we leave. I thought that decision was a little rash, so I gave the bouncer another chance to explain the fake "UW student and alumni night."

"We've had some problems with some African-Americans," he responded. "We decided it'd just be easier to say it was a private party."

"So you're just trying to keep out blacks," I asked.

"No. Blacks, whites...anybody who makes trouble," he said.

So we left. Then we watched the bouncer deal with two young black guys trying to get in. "Sorry guys, you have to have a valid driver's license," he told the men, who had Wisconsin state ID cards.

I sent some angry Twitter messages. And that was that.

Logan's is certainly not the only bar to implement policies designed to keep blacks out. Others just put in place dress codes that ensure the crowd is as white as a College Republicans rally. For instance, Whiskey River (formerly The Pub):

Patrons are not allowed to wear over-sized shirts, plain white t-shirts, bandanas, long or over-sized jewelry or tilted hats. Other downtown bars, including Monday's, Madison's and Brothers, have similar dress codes.

Dress sharp. Dress sloppy. Just don't dress black.

It's hard to say what we should expect these bars to do if they feel threatened by certain customers. According to their reasoning, excluding the clothing that their problem customers wear is the fairest customer filter possible. In theory, a black kid could exchange his White-Tee for a Toby Keith wife-beater. In theory.

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