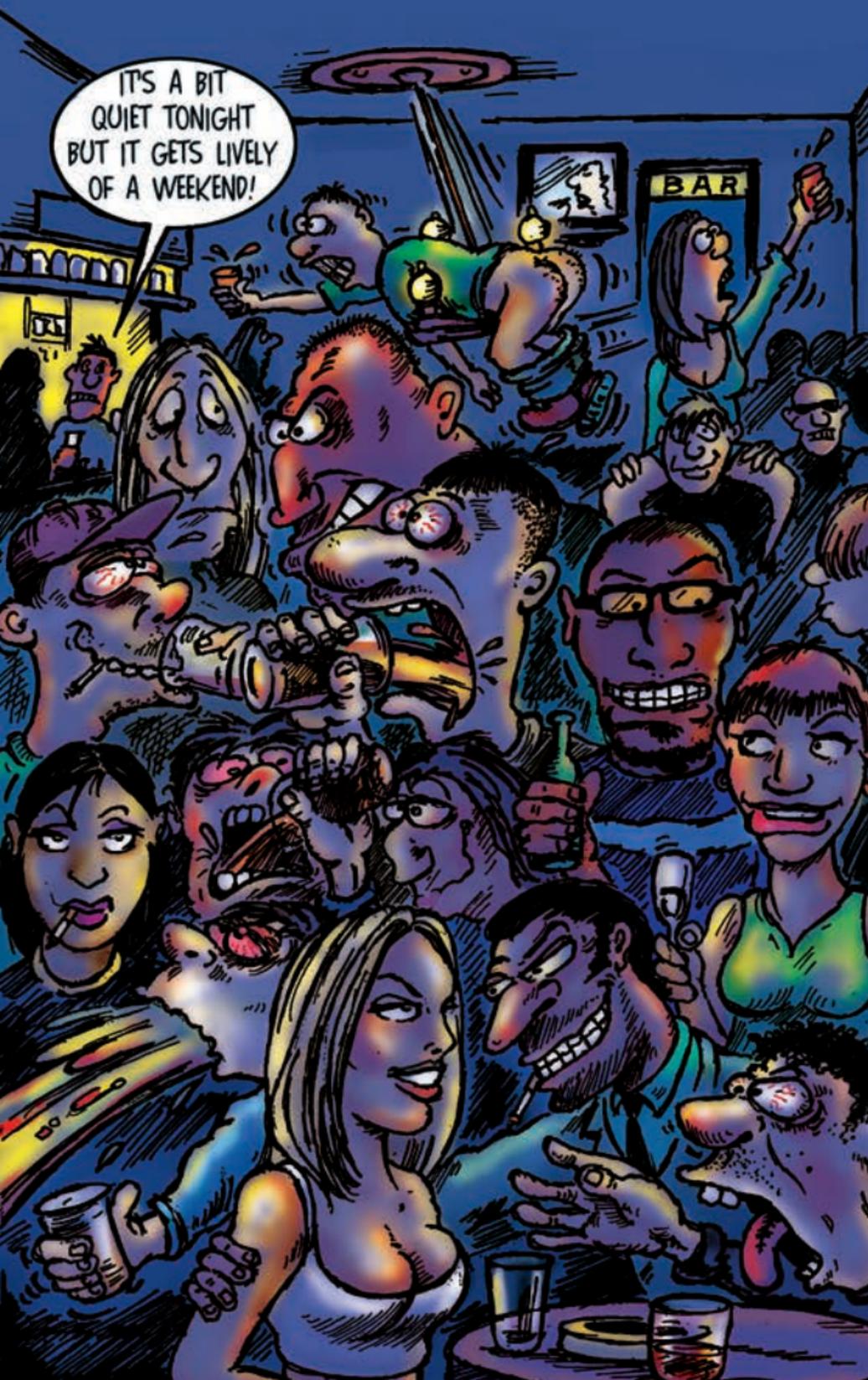


How to go out Drinking

without getting the
tripe beaten out of you



Going out

The vast majority of people go out drinking and have a good time without ever coming to any harm, but . . . at sometime in your life you will probably be in a situation that could lead to violence.



Research has shown that in a fight between somebody with a baseball bat and somebody with an amusing booklet full of cartoons, the person with the baseball bat has the advantage.

This booklet is not a self defence manual. It will show some of the common situations that can lead to confrontation and suggest some ways of avoiding them escalating into violence.

Alcohol

This booklet is not anti alcohol as most of us wouldn't dream of going out without having a drink. Nor is it about sensible drinking (whatever that is). What's the point of drinking alcohol all night if you don't get drunk? For most of us alcohol helps us relax and have a good time. Whether it's a glass of Chardonnay from a wine bar followed by the opera or fifteen pints of bitter followed by a kebab, we enjoy drinking and we enjoy ignoring all advice about moderation and staying in control.

Alcohol can make you aggressive and vulnerable. Most people who commit and are victims of violence are young (18 to 24) and most are drunk when it happens. Alcohol clouds your judgement and makes you do things you wouldn't dream of doing when sober (one of its main attractions). The problem is, when you have drunk so much that your judgement is clouded, it seems like a really good idea to drink a load more...

TOP TIP: it usually isn't.



Drugs

Just as alcohol can increase your chances of becoming involved in violence, so can drugs. Different drugs have different effects and risks.



Back in the old days people went out to a club, took ecstasy, drank water rather than alcohol and hugged perfect strangers they had no intention of shagging. It didn't last long. Britain has become a polydrug culture, where pills and lines are washed down with designer high octane booze.

Not all drugs make you aggressive. It is unlikely for instance to find somebody stoned on cannabis starting a fight (let alone winning one), but the more you lose control the more vulnerable you become. Combine alcohol with any other drugs and you increase the likelihood of violence.

Mixing drugs with alcohol has a chapter on its own in the book 'Really Dumb Things To Do: Vol 1'.





Cocaine does not turn people into violent psychopaths. But it can make you over confident, paranoid and aggressive, an extremely unpleasant combination that makes violence more likely.

Amphetamine is a drug that can encourage you to drink vast amounts of alcohol. You don't then realise how drunk you have become. You get the effects of the amphetamine: non stop talking shite and over confidence and the aggression and loss of judgement from the alcohol. A sure fire recipe for disaster.

GHB, GBL are drugs you should never mix with alcohol as you will rapidly become unconscious. If you are with somebody who has become unconscious with either drink or drugs, put them in the **recovery position** (lay on their side). This is vital as they can choke to death on their vomit if they pass out when on their back. Call for an ambulance.



The Recovery Position

It is vitally important that you tell the ambulance crew what they have taken as this information could save their lives.



Around town

There is more to being streetwise than studying an A to Z. Being streetwise is not about how hard you are, it involves knowing how to spot trouble looming and avoiding it. You should above all trust your intuition. It may be an unpleasant fact of life, but being a bit cynical, suspicious and on your guard is the safest thing to be.



Knowing your territory

Knowing your territory is important. Try and plan out in advance where you are going. If you want to go out wearing nothing but a loaf of bread on your head, that's OK providing you go to somewhere appropriate.

Nobody is suggesting you don't try new places or talk to strangers. But try and pick the right venue for whatever it is you want to do. If you want a rowdy night club full of young people or a quieter wine bar full of designer labels, fine, there are plenty of those around. But act appropriately and try and fit in with the mood of the place. If you feel uncomfortable or out of place, go somewhere else where you feel more at home.

Student venues

In towns and cities with large numbers of students, there are usually bars and clubs which cater to students. Students are often new to the area and are often at an age when they are new to the joys of drinking. Student bars and venues often tolerate student behaviour (silly haircuts, having an opinion in a posh accent, paying for a round with a cheque). Outside of these venues, it is good advice to try and fit in and not make yourself stand out so much. Try and find a local student who can advise you on places to go where you'll have a good night.

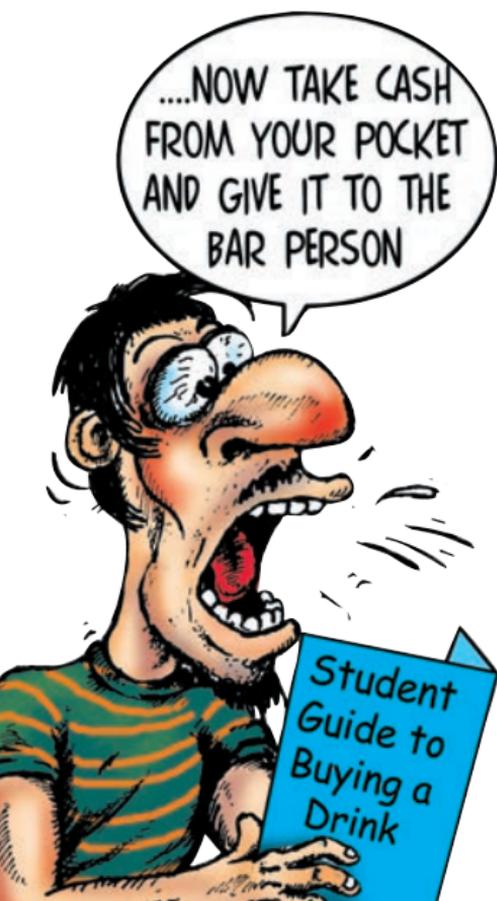
Red light district

Unless you are looking to use the services of a prostitute, avoid walking into a red light district just to be nosy. Don't bother the prostitutes and they won't bother you. Red light areas are usually down back streets and a bit away from the centre of town. If you walk into one accidentally (honest officer), turn round and walk back where you came from.

Gay bars

Often some of the liveliest venues in town are gay bars and clubs. Some of these places welcome people who are straight, providing you show respect to the gay men and lesbians who may be there. Some venues may be strictly gay and they won't let you in if you're straight (blag it, if you're desperate).

Unfortunately, in many places hate crimes against gay men still occur. So it is wise to be careful, and unless you are confident of the area, be a little discreet when leaving gay bars and clubs.



Hot spots

Chucking out time

Trouble frequently occurs after people have left pubs at closing time when they are milling around looking for a club to get into or buying a bag of chips. Try and get from the bar to the club as quickly as possible or call a taxi from the bar. Avoid milling around the city centre at closing time. Another risky time is after the clubs shut and people are still milling around or trying to get a taxi.

Taxi queues

Taxi queues are frequent causes of arguments. If you're in a taxi queue and somebody pushes in, think about it before you start an argument. Whilst you may be totally in the right, is it worth getting into a fight over an extra couple of minutes wait. Being assertive and having self respect is one thing, but it is difficult reasoning with an unreasonable drunk. It is easier for you to just ignore it.

On a weekend, try and leave a bit earlier, as you'll only end up queuing for ages if you don't. Ring for a minicab from a bar, club or restaurant or better still book it in advance as it can take ages getting through at chucking out time.





TOP BANANA NIGHT CLUB

TECHNO DJ - HAPPY HOUR -
TOPLESS DWARF TOSSING

OLD GIT ALE

SNLC &
TAP ROOM

SNLC &
TAP ROOM

NIGHT CLUB
ENTRANCE

I'M NOT
QUEUING.
TAXI!

X

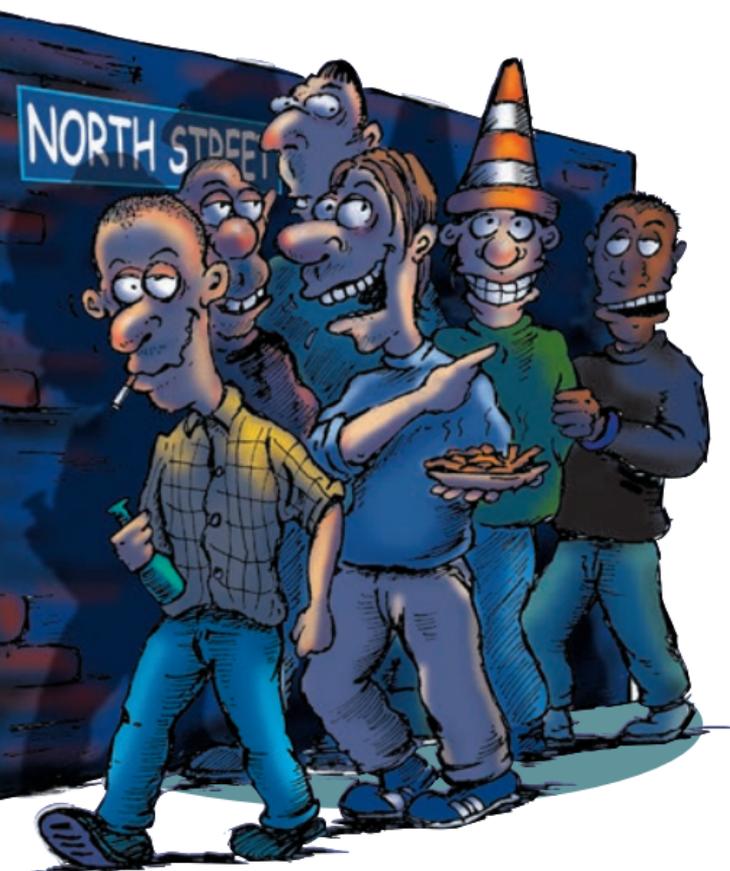


What causes fights?

Most fights involve people who have been drinking and usually start over something petty. Somebody bumps into somebody, stares at them or takes their drink by mistake. The easiest way of stopping any conflict starting is by apologising. There are however some situations that are more likely to lead to trouble than others.

Stag/Hen nights

There are some restaurant /bars that specialize in or will book a room for stag and hen nights, where you can eat drink, dance and where you are safe to enjoy the debauchery of hen and stag nights.



Groups

If you're out with a group of mates you feel confident and safe. With a few pints in your belly this can spill over into over cockiness and a pack mentality amongst even the mildest mannered groups. If trouble starts with somebody from another group it is all too easy for it to turn into a mass brawl.

If you're in a group and there's someone more drunk than the others (and there always is) who is getting out of hand, look after them. Sit them down, buy them only soft drinks and try and calm them down. If they are so out of it they are a danger to themselves or at risk of getting you into trouble, try and persuade them to go home. If you feel really noble take them home, but at the least put them in a taxi. The evening will only end in trouble or you'll all get refused entry into a club unless you do something about it, and after all it's what you would want your mates to do for you.

If you're in a very large group, it is often better to split your group up into smaller groups and then move between groups during the evening.

OI YOU!
THAT'S
MY AIR
YOU'RE BREATHING



The lone nutter

There are some people whose idea of a good night is to start a fight with someone else. Most of the time you need to give them very little reason to start a fight, so follow the advice in the rest of this booklet and try not to give them an excuse. There is also a type who will approach a table of people and just start being offensive. Try and ignore them if possible, telling them to fuck off usually escalates the situation, it rarely makes them leave you alone. If ignoring them doesn't work go and tell the bar/security staff. They will usually chuck them out.

Chatting up

Being chatted up can be a nice experience, even if you don't fancy the person doing the chatting up. At least it proves somebody fancies you. At other times it is unpleasant to have somebody with a face like a baboon's bum leering at you and asking for a shag. The temptation is to be blunt in case they carry on bothering you. Polite but clear refusal is always better than belittling somebody "I'm sorry, but I'm not interested". If people feel humiliated it can turn nasty. If they are really bothering you, touching you or won't leave you alone, say clearly "Please, go away and leave me alone". If they carry on, tell the bar staff to ask for the manager. It is their job to deal with bar room pests.

Getting a knock back when attempting to chat somebody up is never a pleasant experience, but try and take it with good grace and not get aggressive. If you are attempting your best chat up lines and a boyfriend or girlfriend appears a simple apology should normally diffuse any trouble. "Sorry, I didn't know you were together, I'll leave you in peace".



Getting involved

As a general rule try not to get involved in somebody else's fight if you can possibly help it. Even if you are trying to break up a fight it is easy for you to become involved. Letting bouncers or bar staff sort it is a safer option. If you see a serious fight in the street report it to the police.

Calling the police

If you need to call the police and haven't a mobile or there are no telephone boxes about, black cabs are very good at radioing for the police. You could also try asking fast food places to ring for help.



Arguments between friends

Calming down a confrontation between friends is often hard as arguments tend to be about things less trivial than those with strangers. If you're in a group and the argument is getting overheated, keep them sitting down and keep them apart. Try and distract them, change the subject or make an excuse for one of them to give you a hand at the bar then talk to them in private and try and calm them.





Couples fighting

A man and a woman are arguing and it turns violent. What do you do? You shout or try and stop it and the man could turn on you.

It can also be the case that you try to intervene to stop the man hitting the woman and the woman attacks you. Ignoring it could mean that a woman is badly beaten (and it is usually the woman who is being attacked) while you stood by and did nothing.

It all depends on the situation. If one or more of you feel confident enough to step in, ask the woman if she is OK. If she tells you to fuck off, then leave well alone. If you feel intervening would just cause you to be involved in the fight, call the police and let them sort it. If it looks really serious try shouting from a distance that the police have been called or try and get other people's attention.

If you are a woman involved in a fight or being attacked, make it clear to strangers what is going on. Either tell other people to stay away if you don't want them to intervene or ask for help. Shout at people directly "Oi you in the blue shirt, help me".

Avoiding confrontation

Respecting personal space

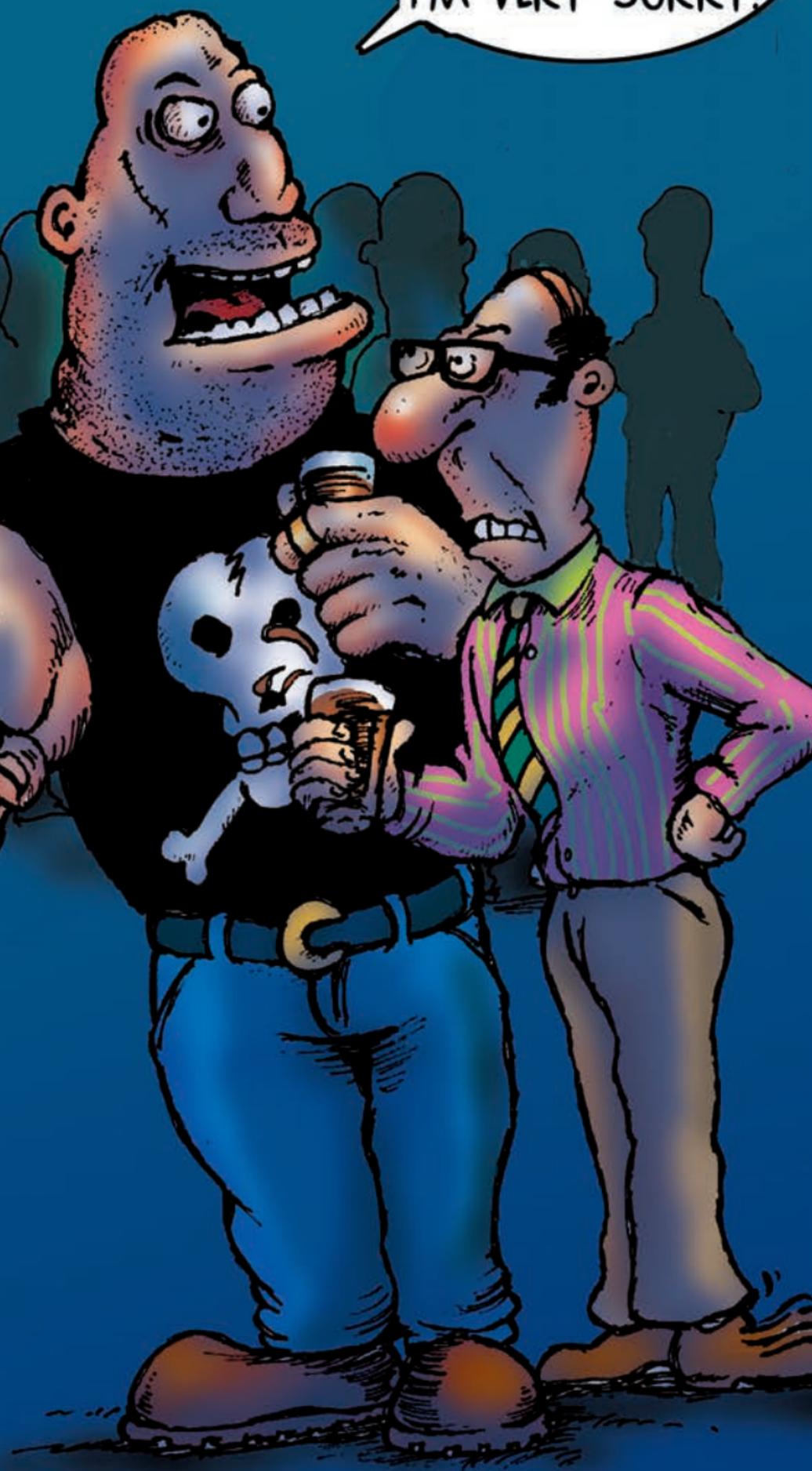
In British culture, personal space is very important. A stranger getting too close or touching us is often seen as a threat. Try and respect other people's space. If you're in a bar or club and there is a small amount of room to sit, ask permission from the people sitting there, "would you mind if I sat here". This is polite and friendly. You will either get an aggressive response in which case you wouldn't want to sit there anyway or people will say they don't mind. It is often a good way of striking up a conversation with a stranger.

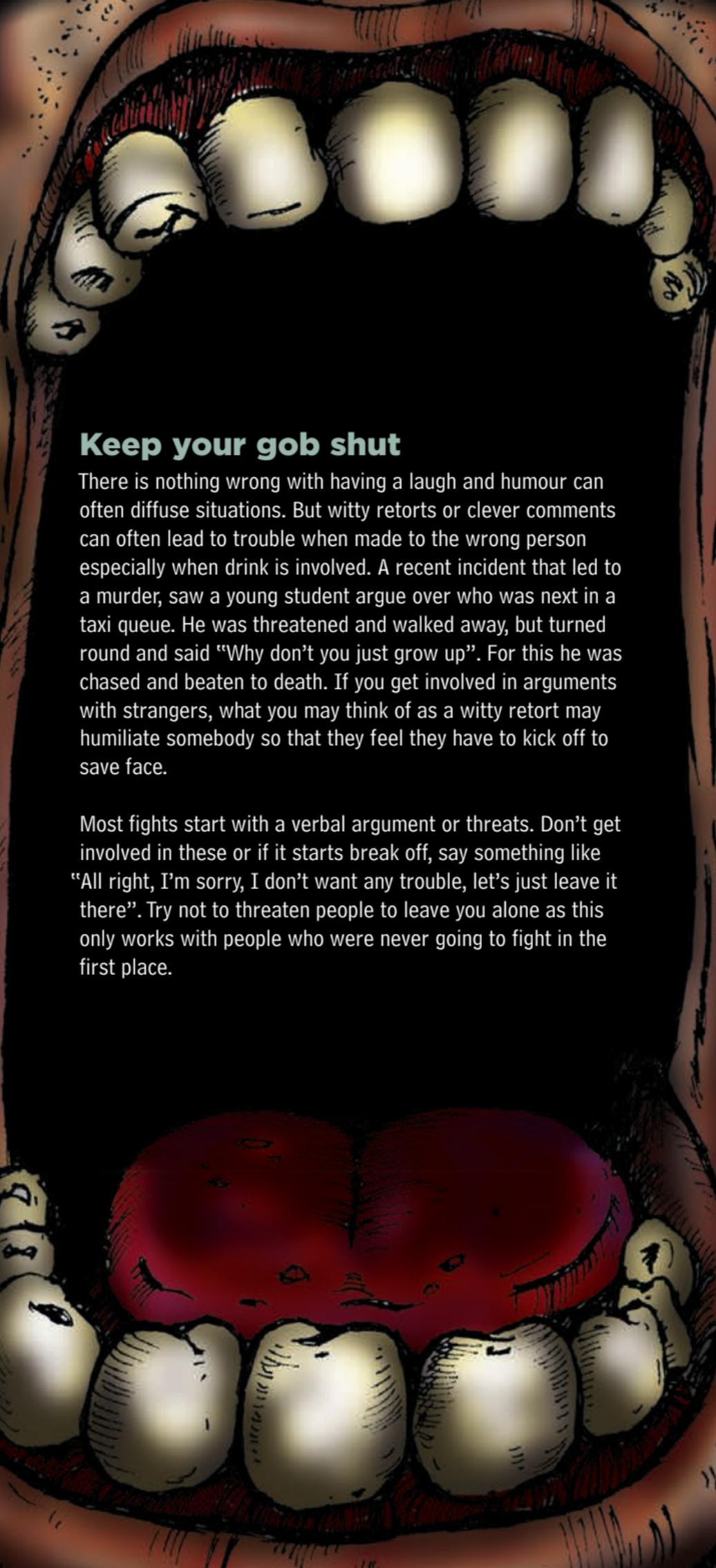
Who you looking at?

If you are staring around a bar and you meet somebody's eyes, scratch your nose and pretend you are admiring the decor. Staring at some people can be seen as a challenge. Most fights start over very minor incidents, like bumping into somebody. Apologising is the best response. If you spill somebody's drink, offer to buy them another, it's what you would expect in return. Even if you think you are in the right a simple apology is the easiest way of diffusing any situation. Remember that you are bumping in to somebody who has been drinking and may be looking for an excuse to start a fight. Even if somebody is rude and half your size, apologise. After all even if you win a fight, you'll get chucked out, it'll ruin your evening and you never know if they have a group of friends who could join in.



I BEG YOUR PARDON
DID I TREAD
ON YOUR TOE?
I'M VERY SORRY!





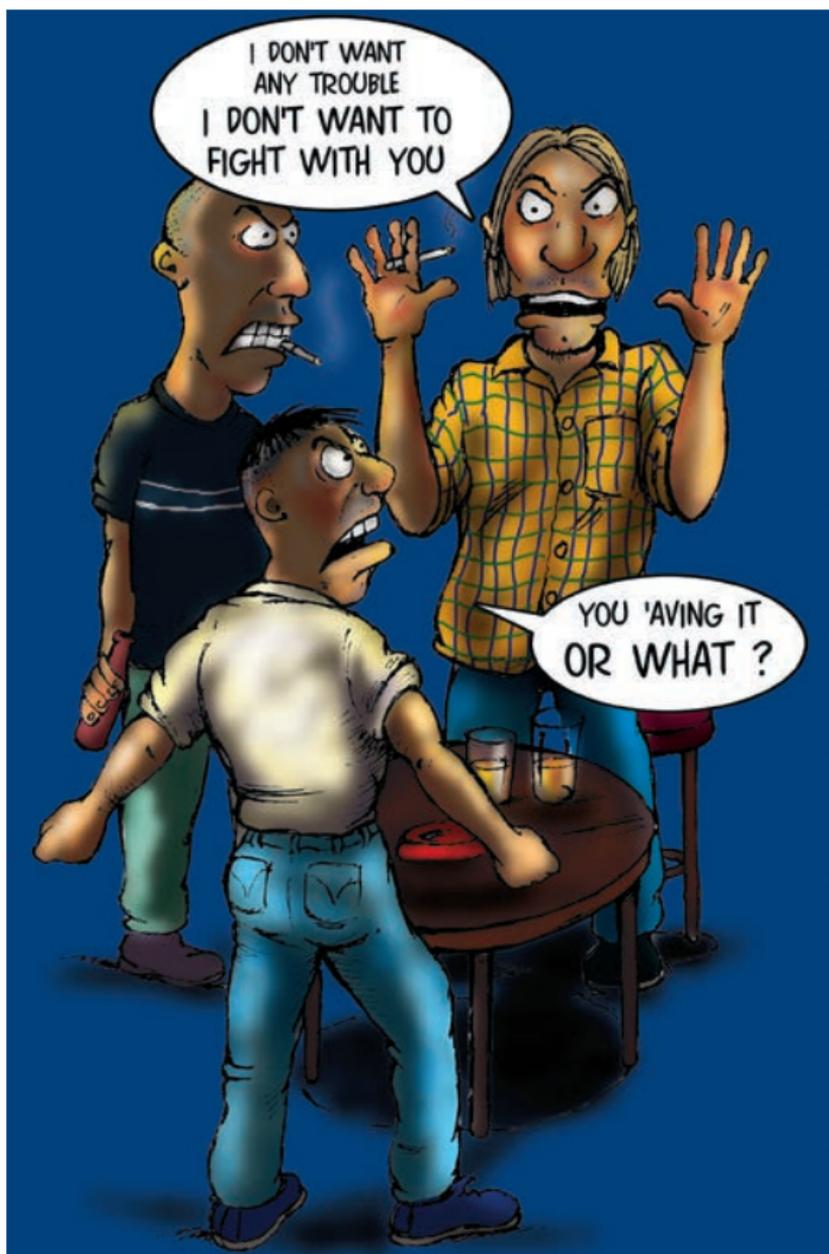
Keep your gob shut

There is nothing wrong with having a laugh and humour can often diffuse situations. But witty retorts or clever comments can often lead to trouble when made to the wrong person especially when drink is involved. A recent incident that led to a murder, saw a young student argue over who was next in a taxi queue. He was threatened and walked away, but turned round and said "Why don't you just grow up". For this he was chased and beaten to death. If you get involved in arguments with strangers, what you may think of as a witty retort may humiliate somebody so that they feel they have to kick off to save face.

Most fights start with a verbal argument or threats. Don't get involved in these or if it starts break off, say something like "All right, I'm sorry, I don't want any trouble, let's just leave it there". Try not to threaten people to leave you alone as this only works with people who were never going to fight in the first place.

Stopping it starting

If it looks like somebody is ready to start a fight, slowly put your hands up, palms out in a passive way, say in a loud voice that you wish to avoid violence, "Look I don't want any trouble, I don't want to fight". This lets any friends of the other person and security staff know you are not the aggressor and they may well intervene. If they have a weapon again make it public "He's got a knife, I don't want to fight". Try reasoning, "Look if we kick off, we'll both get kicked out and we'll both end up in the cells, let's just forget it". If they push or prod you, say again, "Don't touch me, I don't want to fight". Sometimes distracting tactics may work, "This is a pub full of people out for a quiet drink; my wife is over there; the police have been called, etc". If they back off walk away slowly keeping your eyes open but not staring them out.



If it kicks off

You have the legal right to defend yourself if attacked, providing you do not use excessive force. If you are in a situation where there are more people involved try not to let it escalate. If you can, get away and out of the place, don't hang about in the toilets waiting for round two.



To leave or not to leave?

If you can leave safely it is often the best way of getting out of a confrontation. Get out quickly and go somewhere else, don't hang around outside. If you have been involved in an incident that has resulted in violence, you will probably be chucked out anyway. If there is a risk in leaving, for instance if you think you will be followed or they have been thrown out or are waiting to attack you outside, try and explain the risk to the staff or bouncers. Try and ring for a taxi to take you somewhere else and try and get the manager or staff to escort you to the door. After all it is not in their interest to have it kick off outside their place. If you really think you are in danger and getting a taxi is not feasible try and call the police.



Bouncers

Bouncers should all be trained and registered, all door supervisors should wear a badge with an ID number. If you are assaulted or treated badly you should complain or report them to the manager, or police if it is more serious. Having said that, being a 'bouncer'/security staff is not the easiest job in the world. It is often unclear who is the aggressor in any conflict. All a bouncer may see is trouble in the bar or club, and their response is to quite naturally get it sorted and get all those involved in the trouble out of their premises. If you are rude and aggressive to a bouncer you can expect to be met with a fairly aggressive response. If you are innocent or in danger if you are chucked out, try to explain the situation calmly. In any case being polite to a bouncer is going to get you a better response than shouting and screaming.

Weapons

If you carry a weapon, you are not only breaking the law, but you are upping the stakes. You will find that you will be met with equal force or have the weapon taken off you and used against you.

Gangsters

If you walk in to a place and a group of gangsters is in residence or you're already inside and a group walk in, get your coat on and walk out. Even if you have paid good money to get in, get out. Write to the manager and tell them that you and your friends will not go there until they sort the problem out. There is no easy solution to the problem of gangsters in clubs and bars, but if all decent customers boycott the places until it changes, the management and police will have to deal with it or they will go out of business.



Getting home

Driving

If you are driving, do not drink or take drugs at all.

Taxis

Either use a black cab from a rank or ring for a minicab. Unlicensed taxis are unregulated and risky. They will not have insurance that covers you should there be an accident, and you could be stepping into a car with a very dodgy individual.

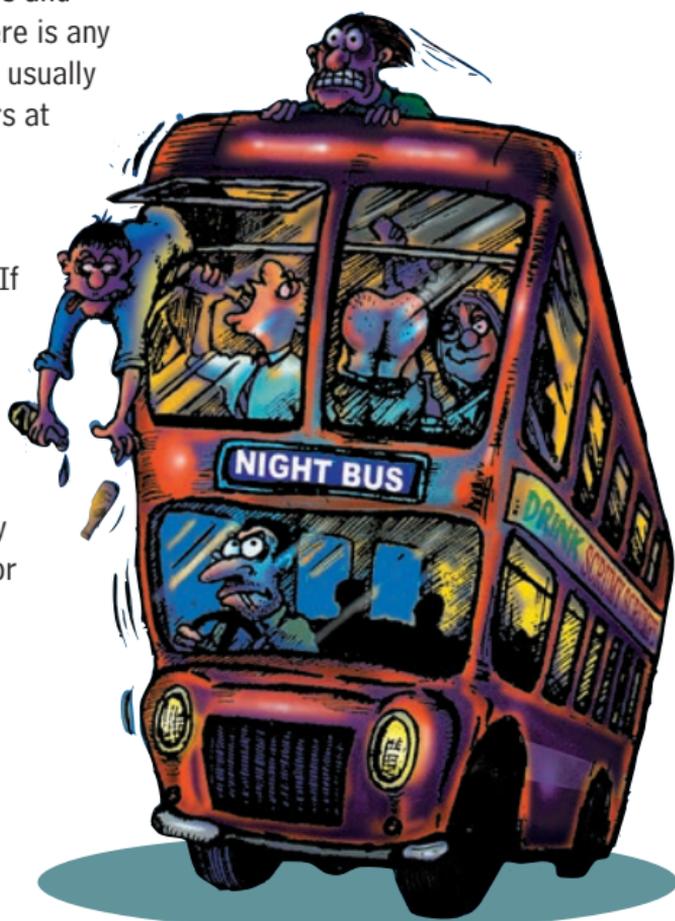
Taxi ranks have been mentioned as trouble spots, so leave a bit earlier to avoid the queues. It is worth remembering that taxis will not take you if you are too drunk or look as though you are going to puke.

Buses, tubes, trams and trains

Find out in advance if there are late night buses, trams, trains or the tube. They can be rowdy, so if other passengers look like trouble, sit away from them or near the driver if on a bus.

Most of these vehicles have emergency buzzers and will respond if there is any trouble. There are usually emergency buzzers at stations as well.

Stations are often covered by CCTV. If you are in trouble don't walk away from the station if it is late at night. Ring the station emergency buzzer and wait for them to send for the police.



Police

As we explained at the beginning of this booklet, the vast majority of people will go out and have a good time without coming to any harm. If there is trouble there is often a reluctance to report things to the police. Either through some sort of mistrust or a belief that they will not bother to do anything about it. Unless you report it, somebody else will be next.

If you experience a serious assault, report it immediately to the police, any delay may lose forensic evidence. The police may be able to get witnesses or CCTV evidence. Even if you are drunk or have taken drugs, report it.

For advice and information
about drugs or drinking contact:



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[>] aims
To look at common causes of alcohol related violence and suggests ways of avoiding them.

[>] audience
Students and young people aged 16 +

[v] content
Some swearing. Cartoon images of drug taking and violence.

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