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NEWS | PROSPECT AVENUE

Scharf '08 charged by Borough

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Correction appended

Will Scharf '08 has been charged by Princeton Borough Police with serving alcohol to minors and maintaining a nuisance following an investigation of an altercation between two University students at Charter Club. Each offense carries a maximum penalty of up to six months in prison and a \$1,000 fine.

Lt. David Dudeck of Borough Police confirmed that around 1 a.m. at Charter on Saturday, Dec. 1, 2007, one junior female poured beer down the back of another student, also a junior female. A minor altercation ensued, and one of the two students struck the other. Dudeck declined to identify the two students in question.

After the Borough Police was contacted to investigate, the case was turned over to the police department's detective bureau, Dudeck said. The investigation revealed that Charter Club was serving alcohol to minors, he said.

Scharf, who was also the 2007 president of the Interclub Council, was served with the two charges on Monday, Dec. 10, and has pled not guilty to both. "I believe myself to be entirely blameless," he said in e-mail.

Scharf declined to comment further on the case. A hearing has been scheduled for March 10.

Scharf was not personally involved in the altercation, **Rocco Cipparone, Scharf's attorney**, said. **"Nobody to my knowledge has said that Mr. Scharf served anyone beer that night, let alone anyone who [was] under 21,"** he explained.

Current Charter president Michael Coolbaugh '09 and chair of the Charter Graduate Board Carol Cronheim '86 both declined to comment.

The relationship between the altercation and the charges against Scharf is not entirely clear. The testimony of at least one of the two women will likely state that alcohol was served at the club on the night in question, **Cipparone said.**

Charges were filed against the person on whom the beer was poured, **Cipparone said,** adding that he believes that these charges were later dropped. Dudeck declined to comment further on this issue.

Cipparone said that he has viewed a videotape of Borough Police interviewing the woman who had been charged, and that she told the police that alcohol was served at the club that night. Nevertheless, "from what I saw of her interview, [she] said the bar wasn't serving people under 21," he added.

The club was using wristbands to distinguish between minors and legal drinkers, Cipparone said. "It appeared to me that the club did what it was supposed to do and did it efficiently," he said.

In the interview the police assured the woman that all charges against her would be dismissed, Cipparone said. "The discussion of the dismissal and the question about the serving of alcohol were conjoined in the same interview," Cipparone said, calling the juxtaposition "interesting." He hopes to play the videotape in court.

There are currently no plans to transfer the charges from Scharf to another defendant. When the Borough brings charges against an eating club, the first person to be charged is the president, Dudeck said. Legal action is then usually transferred to the club's graduate board or the club itself.

Though many club presidents have faced legal action from the Borough, none has been convicted in the recent past.

In October 2007, the presidents of Cloister Inn, Cottage Club and Tiger Inn were charged with serving alcohol to a minor and maintaining a nuisance. Then-Cloister president Savannah Sachs '08 and then-Cottage president Vince Ley '08 were both cleared of all charges, while then-TI president Chris Merrick '08 was cleared of the charge of maintaining a nuisance. The charge of serving alcohol to a minor has been transferred from Merrick to the TI Graduate Board and will be dropped if the club is not convicted of serving alcohol to a minor again before June 2, 2008.

In May 2007, then-Colonial president Tommy Curry '08 was charged with serving alcohol to a minor, but his charges were transferred to the club as a collective entity. Charges filed in 2006 against then-Terrace president Patti Chao '07 were transferred to the graduate board, which pled guilty and paid a fine.

Cipparone said he is confident that the charges against Scharf will either be dropped or that his client will ultimately be acquitted. "I don't think there is any support whatsoever for Will Scharf to be charged in this matter," he said.

Cipparone also represented Anthony Campbell, Rider University's dean of students, after two administrators and three students were charged with hazing following the death of freshman Gary DeVercelly in March 2007. The charges against the administrators were dropped in August.

Correction:

The original version of this article stated that one of the charges against Scharf was "recklessly creating a dangerous situation." The charge was actually "maintaining a nuisance."

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