

DAY OF HEARING SUBMISSIONS

Gaw Capital's and Elizabeth Peterson-Gower's assertion that ZA-2021-526-CUB-CUX is not a new project is absolutely correct: this is Gaw's third attempt to obtain and retain permits to expand their alcohol service to different floors in the 12-story former Park Plaza Hotel. Why is this so important to them? The areas in which they are currently permitted to serve alcohol, linked to an 80-year-old, grandfathered permit first issued when Westlake was a resort town, are segmented into separate dining halls and meeting rooms. In order to create the nightclub complex they've been intent upon opening since they purchased the property in 2015, they need spaces with open floor plans to accommodate crowds of dancers or patrons coming to see live music. After first encountering pushback from residents, Gaw, using EPG to disseminate false information and exert influence with government officials, has gone to great lengths to repeatedly deceive and defraud the community of MacArthur Park.

Their previous effort, ZA-2018-6718-CUB-CUX, was a monumental disaster that created intense animosity in our community. This iteration of their project was described as a "performing arts center." From the first sentence in EPG's findings, huge red flags were present. Why would Gaw spend over \$50 million to convert five floors of the hotel into the setting for one play by an obscure British theater troupe? What did the "Enrichment Department" of Punchdrunk that EPG described in her findings as "taking the company's innovative practice into communities, creating work with and for children . . . [that] brought to life the collection of a major museum and another that boosted the well-being of care home residents" have to do with whatever was going to happen in the old hotel? City Councilmember Gil Cedillo's planning chief Gerald Gubatan stated on record at the hearing that they believed "this project would be good for children and families." The CUB for alcohol and the CUX they insisted was only for "public dancing" were granted.

Gubatan is responsible for doing due diligence on all land use projects. Research into Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* required little more than typing a few words into Google to discover that the play featured barely clad and naked performers staging graphic sex and orgy scenes. Additionally, there were one-on-ones in which audience members physically interacted with the performers and a string of lawsuits from performers who had been sexually assaulted and told to put up with it by the producers. All of Westlake was outraged. The families of students attending the Charles White Elementary School, which is directly adjacent to the old hotel, were validly incensed by and determined to stop this project. A huge protest was launched, and I was chosen to file the appeal in 2019.

Now-retired AZA Frank Quon told me if I could prove that this was adult entertainment and not "public dancing," he would revoke the permits. I presented incontrovertible evidence that it was adult entertainment, and the appeal was going to succeed. Regardless, Gaw and EPG refused to give up. Dan Lee, also in charge of the 2021 application, held a last-minute "secret" meeting at Charles White arranged by the principal, a fawning toady to Gaw and EPG. Parents alerted us to what was happening. I ran over and disseminated articles with photos of the show. The families rose up and shouted at Lee, who was visibly shaken. As he backed out of the room, Lee advised the families that they had already withdrawn their application and cancelled the project. Then what was the point of the meeting? Another lie: EPG did not withdraw the application until the hearing the following day, which she somehow had switched to a different room to pull some last-minute stunt while dozens of confused residents including children sat for hours.

After creating such pronounced distrust and anger towards their company in MacArthur Park, Gaw should have made it a priority to offer some sort of positive contribution to the community in their latest permit application; counterintuitively, they have now dropped all pretense that their project will provide any sort of benefit at all. In the hearing, Gubatan simply stated that Cedillo approved the project giving nary a hint as to why. Cedillo's office met repeatedly with Gaw and EPG but did not return a single call or email from constituents. Our community was unable to voice our concerns about the destructive impact the massive expansion of this "event space" and daily hours of operation would have upon the safety and quality of life in MacArthur Park.

Our community does not and will never trust Gaw or EPG. Why should this old business be granted a new 5-year evaluation period? We already know what is going to happen. We suffered through years of Gaw's irresponsible event management and the disrespect and disdain of their patrons. The very last thing we want is for Gaw to use these permits obtained under the guise of a private "event space" to build a nightclub that would be open to the public daily until 2:00 a.m. We are the second-most densely populated residential neighborhood in Los Angeles. A huge nightclub/entertainment complex has no place amidst multi-family dwellings, adjacent to an elementary school, and across the street from a park and playground.

In the PowerPoint I submitted, you will find a plethora of data and municipal codes as well as data, statistical evidence, and authoritative analyses that establish this project will be unable to operate safely or legally. Before you read that, please imagine billionaires proposing to build an "event space" next to an elementary school and across the street from a park and playground in any socioeconomically fortunate neighborhood. It would never happen. Look at the clippings featuring *Sleep No More* and imagine the uproar if this type of adult entertainment was placed next to elementary schools or playgrounds in those communities. This is the worst sort of class warfare. MacArthur Park is being preyed upon because the majority of our community lives below the poverty line. This is a violation of our civil rights that cannot be allowed. Please correct this egregious error and revoke these permits.

How to Find All the Nudity in Sleep No More

Brian Moylan



For months now the hottest ticket in New York is to experimental theater "experience" *Sleep No More*. (Well, the hottest ticket has been *Book of Mormon* but this is a close second.) Maybe part of the reason is people know the show is full of nudity, an orgy, and other sexy goings on. Well, I figured out how you can get the most (ahem) bang for your buck and see all the nudity.

DANCE



Why I Wasn't Surprised by the Sleep No More Accusations



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Shakespeare Slept Here, Albeit Fitfully

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Sleep No More (top): *Book of Mormon* as Lady Macbeth and Nicholas Drake as Macbeth in their role-playing scene on West 17th Street. In the middle are audience members. *Book of Mormon* The New York Times

Tell us about yourself. Take our survey.

TAKE OUR SURVEY

Sleep No More

's first stop is a bar where you're (somewhat aggressively) encouraged to drink alcohol before entering the show. Then, groups of 10 or so patrons at a time are ushered into an elevator lobby, where you're given a mask and three rules: No talking, no cell phones and no taking your mask off.

AVENTON



As we boarded the elevator, all I could think about was how those three rules didn't seem quite sufficient. Were they really not going to tell us not to touch the performers? (Later I would also wish they'd told us not to run.) Instead, the elevator attendant gave us one final directive: "Fortune favors the bold."

All three rules were frequently disregarded. Even in the presence of performers, patrons were on their phones and talking loudly. Even more troubling was how audience members treated *Sleep No More* like a competition. Those who did their research could have found [guides of advice](#) about how to have the best *Sleep No More* experience, many of them including tips about how to land a one-on-one. (Basically, there are some scenes in the show only meant for one audience member to see. A performer will select someone and take them to a room that isn't accessible to anyone else.) The articles suggest that to get a one-on-one, you have to follow a performer closely, and be towards the front of the crowd where they can see you.

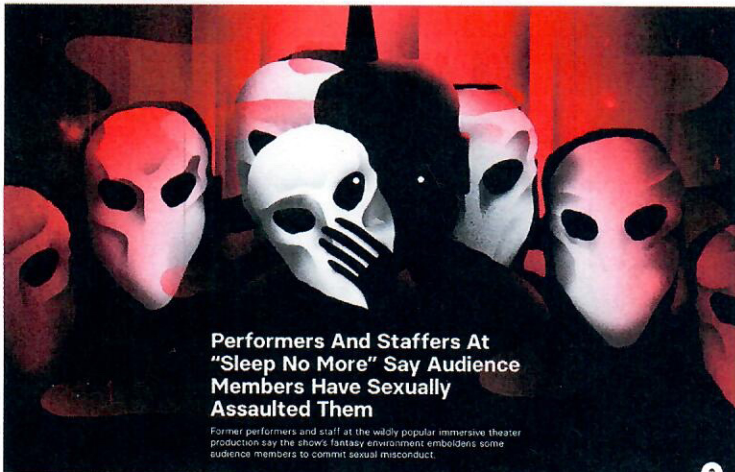
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Performers And Staffers At "Sleep No More" Say Audience Members Have Sexually Assaulted Them

Former performers and staff at the wildly popular immersive theater production say the show's fantasy environment emboldens some audience members to commit sexual misconduct.

BuzzFeed News

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The written policies also include a guide for each scene and character, telling performers where crew members are stationed in case they need assistance. And part of the training includes role playing, in which someone acts like an unruly audience member and performers and staffers practice how to react and get help.

Regardless, Billy Bell, an actor who played Boy Witch, was grabbed on the genitals by an audience member. Another actor who performed as Boy Witch four years earlier told BuzzFeed News that an audience member tried to insert a finger into his anus in the same scene.



A former original cast member said she was groped three times over 17 months.

And an audience member rubbed his crotch on former steward Jessica Jarvinen while she was guarding an off-limits staircase, Jarvinen said. She said patrons also groped her breasts several times.