



Patrons allege abuse in Ft. Worth gay bar raid

By OnTopMag.com

Dallas, TX - Reports that a Fort Worth, Texas gay bar was raided on Saturday have left gay activists angry as police remain quiet on specifics.

Gay weekly the *Dallas Voice* was first to report on the raid that occurred Saturday night at the Rainbow Lounge, located at 615 S. Jennings Street.

The Fort Worth police have not commented on the specifics of the raid, but a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission spokeswoman, Carolyn Beck, confirmed to a *Dallas Observer* reporter, Robert Wilonsky, that TABC agents were on the scene.

"There were TABC agents there, but other than that I don't know anything," she said.

According to emails published by the *Dallas Voice*, the police appeared unannounced with paddy wagons in tow. Several people at the bar told the paper that the officers abused patrons.

Another report indicates that one man has been hospitalized after suffering critical injuries during the raid.

"They [police officers] asked this guy if he had been drinking, and he said 'some', and they snidely replied, 'Well, we'll see how much!' and plastic handcuffed him as they read him his rights," Kayla Lane, an eye witness wrote in one of the emails. "It was utterly repugnant."

"This looked like random harassment, plain and simple," wrote Todd Camp in another email. "It's sad that in this day and age, on the anniversary of one of the most important days in gay rights history that the Fort Worth and State police would choose to attack gays in such an aggressive and unjustified manner."

The raid comes on the day most people recognize as the birth of the modern gay rights movement, June 28. In 1969, the patrons of Greenwich Village's Stonewall Inn revolted against an aggressive New York City police department. For five days, thousands joined in protesting against police who often raided gay bars. Stonewall has become synonymous with gay rights.

"After more than a generation of progress, this action shows that there is still much work to be done to ensure that all Americans enjoy equal protection under the law," said Rev. Michael Piazza, Dean of the Cathedral of Hope, known as the world's largest GLBT church, in a statement. "It is tragic that lesbian and gay taxpayers are still abused by the very people who are paid by our taxes."