

Angry California Restaurateur Wants to Know, 'Are You Going to Pay My Rent?'

In a heartbreaking exchange shared on social media Monday, a restaurant owner in Southern California confronted government health officials who reportedly issued him a citation for staying open after being given a closure order.

"I followed the rules!" pleaded Ventura small business owner Anton Van Happen. "I continued to follow the rules and you guys still, time after time, are giving me citations. ... Are you gonna pay my rent?"

Van Happen, owner of Nick the Greek, put up protest signs last week, urging other local restaurateurs to flout the government's unconstitutional orders. He said at the time he is issuing a call "to all restaurant owners to open your restaurants," KEYT-TV reported.

"If we all open up," he said, "they can't do anything."

"Are you going to pay my rent ? says owner Anton Van Happen of 'Nick The Greek' to public health inspectors issuing him a citation for staying open after being issued a closure order. Things got tense

– Jorge Ventura Media (@VenturaReport) December 15, 2020

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, has issued unilateral decrees banning all indoor and outdoor dining, demanding restaurants only serve customers via take-out and delivery.

When Newsom first issued his dictate, Van Happen moved his tables and chairs outside, giving patrons a space to sit—if they so chose—after purchasing takeout food. He did not, however, serve people sitting at those tables. As a result, Ventura health officials ordered the small business owner to close his restaurant.

Government inspectors returned this week and issued another citation to Van Happen, telling him he is breaking “the law” by serving customers without a permit. He had since moved his tables and chairs back inside and has only served customers via take-out and delivery.

The female inspector told Van Happen, “There is a law that you’re breaking right now by operating without a permit.”

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