

“Last month saw the tragic story of John Jones in the news headlines”

It appears that John Jones was having an argument with his girlfriend when the door supervisor decided to restrain him using a Full-Nelson hold. While then moving him to the door, both men tripped and fell, which is when John Jones received a severe injury to his neck, which has left him in a wheelchair and receiving 24-hour care.

The door supervisor, Andrew Lee, has been convicted of GBH and sentenced to four years in prison, with the judge calling his actions “unnecessary and unreasonable” and that he used an “extremely high degree of recklessness” when he “grabbed him from behind”.

What strikes us first about this tragic case is the use of the ‘ubiquitous’ Full Nelson Hold. We call it such because we find that many door supervisors advocate, promote and even try to validate the use of this hold - and other dangerous ones like it - in control scenarios.



Relying for its efficacy on the application of pressure to the upper spine and neck area, this hold has been the culprit in a number of restraint-related serious injuries. A casual investigation into the hold’s origin and history tells us that it comes from wrestling and that in the modern competitive wrestling game it has been banned, because of its inherent danger and its capacity to cause serious injury.

Of course, any door supervisors who are lucky enough to have training provided for them, or who have the forethought to commission physical intervention training for their team from a reputable provider, will already know that the Full Nelson hold, in particular, is an extremely risky control tactic and should be prohibited in their workplace.

Furthermore, they will know that several pieces of UK legislation, guidance and research specifically refer to the increased risk which any kind of ‘neck hold’ or gripping around the collar can present.

They will also know that if restraint is called for in any particular scenario, then the safest professional approach, in line with risk management principles, is to carry out a team-based intervention. In venues or facilities where the ‘team’ is too small for this approach to be practicable...then it becomes management’s responsibility to control risks appropriately.

Approved and accredited training protects:

- The door supervisor from taking actions which, in the light of certain evidence, could be shown to be clearly reckless and unreasonable, therefore putting them in the frame for assault.
- The venue management, who could be liable for the actions of the door supervisor through the mechanisms of Vicarious Liability and Health and Safety Law (particularly Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974).
- The people who visit our venues, from often needless, tragic consequences when a restraint incident goes bad.

Comments from a Southampton based Door Supervisor

“I’ve been a Doorman/Bouncer in Southampton for the last 12 years and am so glad this scumbag has been found guilty. The Full Nelson is such a dangerous position to put someone in and in my opinion should NEVER be used. Also the internet clips are disgusting; you should feel ashamed of yourself. I’ve been in many situations that have been caught on tape, but I’ve never slapped a woman, never elbowed a defenceless man while being held by a colleague or sucker punched someone when they are not expecting it. There is no room on the Doors in Southampton for you Mr Lee, you will soon find out you’re not that hard at all in jail on your own away from your team of doorman. Good luck John Jones with your future, I’m really sorry on behalf of all the decent doorman in Southampton” (daily Echo, Southampton. dated: Thursday 25th June 2009)

news story courtesy of Gerard O’Dea at [Dynamis Insight](#)