



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 8, 2020

## Saturday Night Live Mocks Lockdown Protest; Protestors Bite Back

*Saturday Night Live* recently mocked a Staten Island bar owner for protesting Governor Andrew Cuomo's shutdown order even as the show itself skirted the order by paying its studio audience.

On the December 5 episode, cast member Pete Davidson, a native of Staten Island, appeared in the ["Weekend Update" sketch](#). Anchor Colin Jost brought up last week's [massive protest](#) outside Mac's Public House, a bar and grill that authorities shuttered when its owners refused to knuckle under to Cuomo's edict prohibiting them from serving customers inside their establishment. Police even arrested the bar's general manager.



YouTube

Jost asked Davidson if he opposed the demonstration.

"I mean kind of," replied Davidson. "But I'm also just happy I'm no longer the first thing people think of when they say, 'What's the worst thing about Staten Island?'"

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Later, Jost asked Davidson, "What exactly were they protesting?"

"The bar, shockingly, is in a neighborhood with the second-highest COVID infections in all of New York, so the rule is that they're [only] supposed to let people eat or drink outside, and the owner said no one wants to do that because they'll go out of business," said Davidson.

Considering that as of mid-October, [about 20 percent of small businesses in the United States had closed](#), largely because of shutdown orders, such orders might indeed seem to be a reasonable cause for concern.

As Kevin Smith, one of those who showed up to support Mac's Public House, told WCBS, "They [the bar's owners and employees] are just trying to support their family. There's people doing heroin and defecating on the subway.... I think that spreads the virus a lot more than some people having a drink in Staten Island."

"At a certain point, like people on the left like to say, our body our choice," he said.

None of this mattered to Davidson. "They're making us look like babies!" he said of the protestors.

Of course, that's easy for him to say. He has an estimated net worth of [\\$6 million](#). What's more, he still has a job at *Saturday Night Live*, which, after a seven-month hiatus, continues to crank out weekly shows with live audiences despite Cuomo's restrictions on large gatherings. The show's secret: It found a loophole in Cuomo's order.

"Based on the guidelines around pandemic-era media production that were released by the state,



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television shows are not allowed to host live audiences unless they consist of paid employees, cast and crew,” reported the [New York Times](#).

So *Saturday Night Live* started “casting” its audiences by having potential audience members register in advance and then paying them for attending (\$150 apiece, one such attendee told the paper). The state health department confirmed that this approach was acceptable.

This same television show and one of its wealthy cast members then have the nerve to criticize small businesses that are barely able to survive because they didn’t get any breaks.

“We pay high city tax, we pay high state tax, we pay high federal tax like everybody else,” one local business owner told WCBS. “A lot of us need to operate above a certain capacity just to be able to even pay our bills and pay our staff.”

Davidson’s mocking his home borough did not sit well with many.

“The ignorance level is so high now that you have mega-millionaires in the national spotlight like the folks on *Saturday Night Live* ... making fun of their friends and local business owners who are broke, and crushed and bankrupt,” community activist John Tabacco [said](#) during a Monday press conference.

Lou Gelormino, attorney for Mac’s Public House, remarked, “Maybe *Saturday Night Live* should be mocking the people that looted and rioted our great city of Manhattan and the rest of the great cities of this country.”

The feisty lawyer wasn’t finished. In a Tuesday appearance on *Fox & Friends*, he offered up [this challenge](#): “To Pete Davidson and the rest of the members of the *Saturday Night* crew, maybe they can give up part of their big paychecks they receive to small business owners throughout the country who can’t put food on their families’ tables. These are great Americans, good hard-working Americans they’re mocking, and it’s disgraceful.”



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