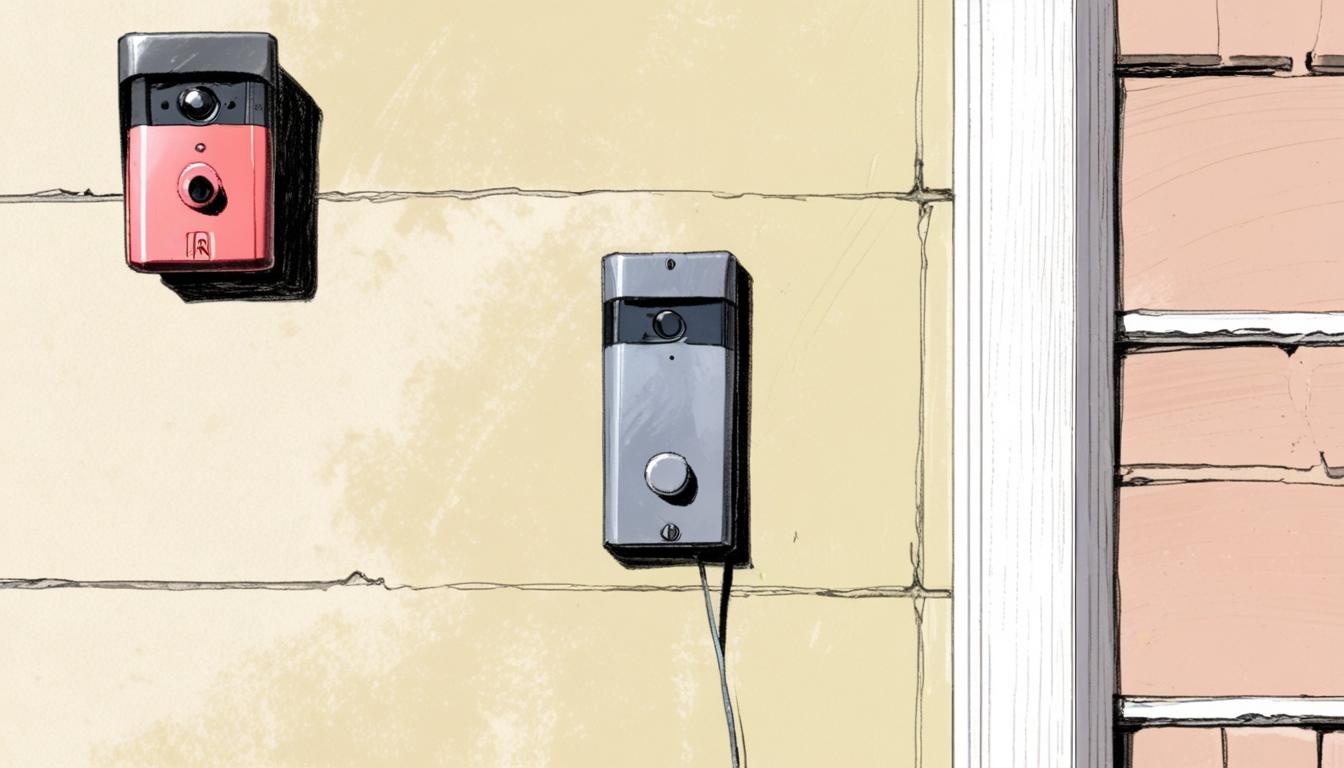
# Birmingham neighbour dispute ends with eviction amid Ring doorbell harassment claims



A prolonged neighbour dispute in Birmingham has come to a close following the eviction of Stephen Groves, 59, who was accused of conducting a sustained harassment campaign against his disabled neighbour, Steven Persaud, 65. The conflict, reportedly lasting five years, began after Mr Persaud installed a Ring doorbell at his Shard End bungalow in 2020, with the purpose of enhancing his personal security.

Mr Persaud, who is wheelchair-bound, and his carers endured continuous abuse from Mr Groves, a convicted criminal who repeatedly objected to the presence of the doorbell camera. Groves claimed the device violated his human rights and directed verbal and psychological harassment towards Mr Persaud and his support staff. According to footage obtained from the Ring doorbell, Groves engaged in acts including wielding a claw hammer against the device, making offensive gestures, and issuing explicit threats such as telling one of the carers he would “chop her up and put her in the bin.”

Incidents escalated to Groves removing the hinges of a shared gate, which then fell dangerously close to himself, as captured on video. Despite multiple legal interventions, including a 24-month restraining order, an electronic curfew, and over 25 court hearings, Groves remained in his council property until his eviction this month by Birmingham City Council. The council cited breaches of tenancy agreement and disturbances to other residents, including loud music and allegations of drug-related activities.

Throughout the ordeal, Mr Persaud’s niece, Victoria Rascinskis, fought persistently for Groves’ removal. She described the experience as “absolute hell,” highlighting both the emotional and physical toll the situation took on her family. “Groves should have been in prison in my opinion. Instead, we had five years of abuse and fear. We’re lucky no one was seriously hurt or worse,” she told MailOnline. Ms Rascinskis criticised the system’s handling of the case, stating, “The council, the police, even the courts – it was like they didn’t talk to each other. No one had a clue. We were constantly told, ‘just one more report,’ ‘just log it again.’ It became a running joke.”

Groves had a history of damaging the doorbell equipment, including snipping wires and scratching the camera lens, actions which were recorded and used as evidence in court. He also played loud electronic dance music late at night, prompting police calls that often went unanswered. His repeated breaches of injunctions and anti-social behaviour orders underscored the challenges faced by the authorities and victims alike.

In a 2021 court case, Groves admitted his conduct was “pathetic” but defended his objections to the doorbell’s presence, claiming, “I feel like a prisoner. I open the gate and the camera is looking straight at me. It’s just not right.” Despite his admissions, legal action continued, with subsequent convictions for harassment against both Mr Persaud and his carers, to whom Groves was ordered to pay compensation.

Following his eviction, Groves was seen removing belongings from the bungalow. His niece expressed uncertainty about the location of his new accommodation, fearing potential future disturbances if he were placed near other vulnerable individuals. She said, “He should be in a tent with the rats. It doesn’t even feel real that he’s gone. I still panic. I’m scared he’ll come back. But for now, we’re free.”

Birmingham City Council confirmed the eviction, acknowledging the distress caused to Mr Persaud and ensuring that future tenants would be subject to tenancy conditions and an anti-social behaviour policy. A spokesperson said, “No tenant should have to tolerate anti-social behaviour and we will use the appropriate tools and powers available to us to address it.”

The case in Birmingham typifies a broader trend of neighbour disputes involving Ring doorbell cameras and other smart security devices, which, while intended to improve home security, have increasingly become sources of conflict. These devices feature high-sensitivity microphones and wide-angle cameras capable of capturing video and audio far beyond a property’s immediate front door. Reports have emerged of residents overhearing private conversations and exchanges of complaints about neighbours, inadvertently recorded by such equipment.

Dr Mike Talbot, chief executive of UK Media, speaking to MailOnline, remarked, “What tends to happen when people overhear these conversations is that people tend to fly into revenge. If neighbours are already arguing about something – parking, pets, the bins, DIY – sometimes we hear of people b\*\*\*\*ing about them on their Ring doorbells. People do not find it funny and see it as an absolute betrayal of trust. It becomes like gossip spread on social media.”

Instances of doorbell cameras capturing contentious or private moments have led to significant social tensions and, in some cases, legal action. For example, footage has helped convict individuals of offences ranging from criminal damage to animal cruelty and even electoral misconduct. The cameras have recorded delivery drivers making disparaging comments, family members speaking negatively about relatives, and neighbours engaging in petty or serious disputes.

Experts have warned that residents may be unknowingly infringing on their neighbours’ privacy rights by recording areas beyond their property boundaries, potentially violating data protection laws. Martin Cheek, managing director at SmartSearch, the UK’s digital compliance authority, explained to MailOnline, “Because these doorbells come with cameras that record in the area outside of your front door and often beyond, you run the risk of capturing footage of neighbouring gardens and areas, including private spaces like windows or entrances to doorways, without the neighbour’s consent.” He also noted concerns about audio recording sensitive or private conversations without consent.

UK data protection regulations may hold Ring doorbell users liable for breaches of privacy, with potential fines reaching £100,000 if cases are proven in court. This was exemplified by a 2021 Oxford County Court ruling where a judge found that the use of Ring cameras constituted harassment and breached GDPR, particularly highlighting the extensive audio range of the devices.

In response to privacy concerns, Ring has implemented features such as customisable privacy zones to block out specific areas, motion detection zones, and options to toggle audio recording on or off. A company spokesman stated, “We strongly encourage our customers to respect their neighbour’s privacy and comply with any applicable laws when using their Ring device. We have and will continue to provide our customers with the features, tools and information to help them use their devices responsibly and in respect of the privacy of others.”

While Ring cameras serve as popular home security tools, the emergence of privacy issues and neighbour disputes linked to their use underscores the complexities associated with deploying such technology within closely settled communities. Residents installing these devices are advised to consider the angle and scope of their cameras carefully and to communicate openly with neighbours regarding their presence to mitigate potential conflicts.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://ground.news/article/hammer-wielding-neighbour-from-hell-still-living-on-same-street-years-later> - This article corroborates the prolonged neighbour dispute in Birmingham involving Stephen Groves and his harassment of a disabled neighbour, including threats and wielding a claw hammer, matching the described behaviour and timeline.
* <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/shard-end-eviction-neighbour-harassment-26124453> - This Birmingham Mail article confirms the eviction of Stephen Groves, the harassment of Steven Persaud, and details about the mental and emotional toll on the victim's family, supporting the article's account of the dispute and legal actions.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ring-doorbell-neighbour-dispute-court-b1829004.html> - This Independent piece discusses disputes triggered by Ring doorbell cameras, including privacy concerns and neighbour conflicts, supporting the wider context of smart security devices causing tension as described.
* <https://www.privacyinternational.org/explainer/4267/smart-doorbells-rise-and-privacy-concerns> - Privacy International explains the privacy risks and legal implications of smart doorbells like Ring, including recording beyond property lines and potential data protection breaches, reinforcing the article's points about privacy laws and disputes.
* <https://www.ring.com/privacy> - Ring's official privacy page details features such as customizable privacy zones and audio recording controls aimed at addressing privacy concerns, which aligns with the article's mention of Ring's response to privacy issues.