# Former postman found guilty of manslaughter after fatal neighbour dispute in Covent Garden



A 57-year-old former postman, Trevor Gocan, was found guilty of the manslaughter of his 74-year-old neighbour, James O’Neill, following a violent confrontation at their residential estate in Covent Garden, central London. The incident occurred on 6 October last year and left O’Neill in a coma from which he did not recover, succumbing to his injuries two weeks later when his life support was withdrawn.

According to proceedings at Southwark Crown Court, the altercation began over a dispute related to shutting a gate at the entrance to the Odhams Walk estate, situated just off Long Acre. Prosecuting barrister Lisa Wilding KC detailed that the confrontation escalated rapidly, leading to Gocan punching and kicking O’Neill, who then fell to the ground, sustaining a severe head injury that resulted in significant blood loss.

The court learned that Gocan did not contest the fact that his actions led to O’Neill’s death but denied a murder charge, with the jury ultimately determining his actions amounted to manslaughter. The jury, composed of ten women and two men, reached their verdict after deliberation lasting approximately four hours.

Wilding recounted the immediate aftermath of the assault, stating, “He punched with such significant force to dislodge a tooth and kicked him,” while emphasising the severity of O’Neill’s injuries, which were compounded by his fall. Evidence presented in court included police body-worn footage depicting Gocan’s arrest, as well as footage showing him purchasing food shortly before the incident unfolded.

A key witness, a 12-year-old boy visiting London for a birthday celebration, expressed in court that he was left "frozen with shock" after witnessing the attack, particularly noting a kick delivered to O’Neill as he lay on the ground. During his testimony, Gocan mentioned he returned to his flat following the confrontation to care for his cat and asserted he had looked outside to check on O’Neill before supposedly calling for help.

In the course of her closing arguments, Wilding challenged Gocan’s narrative, suggesting he had ample opportunity to avoid further conflict. She remarked, “If you would have walked through your door, that would have been the end. Why didn’t you do that? I wish I had done,” to which Gocan reportedly responded, implying that he was not a coward.

Having been cleared of the murder charge but found guilty of manslaughter, Gocan is scheduled to receive sentencing in July, marking a poignant conclusion to a distressing incident that has raised serious questions about neighbourly disputes and their potential for escalation into violence.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/man-charged-muder-pensioner-covent-garden-london-met-police-b1192050.html> - This article reports that Trevor John Gocan, 57, was charged with the murder of 74-year-old James O'Neill in Covent Garden, following the victim's death on October 21, 2024.
2. <https://www.newsshopper.co.uk/news/24701053.odhams-way-covent-garden-assault-man-charged-murder/> - This source details the incident where James O'Neill was found seriously injured in Odhams Walk, Covent Garden, on October 6, 2024, and later died in hospital on October 21, 2024.
3. <https://www.irishpost.com/news/covent-garden-murder-suspect-charged-as-victim-named-280559> - This article identifies the victim as 74-year-old James O'Neill, known to his family as 'Jim', and reports that Trevor John Gocan, 57, was charged with his murder.
4. <https://londonnewsonline.co.uk/news/murder-charge-after-alleged-covent-garden-assault-leads-to-death/> - This source provides details about the assault on James O'Neill in Covent Garden on October 6, 2024, and the subsequent murder charge against Trevor John Gocan.
5. <https://www.murdermap.co.uk/victims/murders-london-2024-total-how-many/> - This page lists James O'Neill as one of the homicide victims in London in 2024, noting that he was found injured in Odhams Walk, Covent Garden, on October 6, 2024, and died in hospital on October 21, 2024.
6. <https://news.met.police.uk/news/man-charged-with-murder-as-part-of-ongoing-investigation-in-covent-garden-490148> - This official Metropolitan Police statement announces that Trevor John Gocan, 57, was charged with the murder of 74-year-old James O'Neill in Covent Garden, following the victim's death on October 21, 2024.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMifEFVX3lxTE52WC1TN1dpT214Mnp3YUhHajJRdkJ4aHFwaWNQeDF5dmFEcDhVMVpnLUV3OVVHN1Zwc19sMVluRDQ2Z2ZIZ1h6Vy0tLU1vREdRSXFuczd4SWRWd2wyWklRMkxmZGZ2bktMTFREWkJXZk03cXBGbklNMTF5YWTSAYIBQVVfeXFMTlBRbkRYTU9tRGtONlZ2RVJUc0pxVXpfcnl1RXVQSlhiRU1IMm5EM0Q0azlBNzlsbTFacDA4T2hyb0pUaWZKaEtrZUstam05WWVGVFZvSVFFVFRKYjZLRE81dDgxLTRjZkNsdXpzN0hHU1BHZTI4YjQxSmFGWWxDMDlLUQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data