

Jailed Neighbour Who Terrorised Couple for Two Years Turned Their First Home into 'Living Hell'

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A couple's first home together was turned into a nightmare after they were subjected to more than two years of harassment by a neighbour who has now been jailed. Drina Grey, 52, was sentenced to 40 months in prison after a campaign of intimidation and abuse against

Ben Stanley, 32, and Emma Williams, 31, that included threats of violence, criminal damage, and sustained antisocial behaviour.

Grey, a council tenant, moved into the flat below the couple's Wandsworth, south-west London home in April 2022, just months after Ben purchased the property. What should have been a fresh start for the couple quickly spiralled into a harrowing ordeal. Kingston Crown Court heard that Grey issued repeated threats via Ring doorbells, smashed two of the devices, and deliberately left dog mess on their doorstep. She also harassed the couple at all hours by playing loud music, shouting abuse, and even vacuuming the shared hallway in the early morning.

The abuse had a significant toll on both victims. Ben, a product manager, eventually lost his job at a start-up due to sleep deprivation and the stress of the situation. Emma, who works in marketing, struggled to work from home and said the couple lived in fear, even keeping a baseball bat by the front door. "It turned into what was a living hell," Emma said. "I couldn't work, I couldn't read, I couldn't sleep. We were trapped in our own home."

Grey's conviction includes one count of harassment intended to cause fear of violence, two counts of criminal damage, and a public order offence for using threatening language and behaviour. Judge Judith Elaine Coello told the defendant she had made the couple's lives "hell" before handing down the custodial sentence on 25 June.

Court proceedings had been delayed on at least six occasions, extending the couple's distress. In an emotional victim impact statement, Ben described feeling "embarrassed, humiliated, numb" and admitted the ordeal had at times made him feel suicidal. Despite the delays and frustration with the justice system, Ben said the outcome was worth the wait. "It has taken so long to get here, but now we are here, it has all been worth it," he said. "She got the sentence she deserves."

Emma echoed the sentiment, describing the impact Grey's actions had on their early relationship. The couple had only been together six months when they moved in, with hopes of building a life together and starting a family. "It tested our relationship," she said. "But I am proud we didn't take it out on each other."

The abuse extended beyond noise and vandalism. The couple reported receiving disturbing text messages from Grey directed at Ben, often laced with inappropriate and manipulative undertones. Emma said Grey displayed obsessive and antagonistic behaviour towards her,

regularly misnaming her and blocking her from leaving the flat. “If I knew she was there, I wouldn’t go outside,” Emma said. “I changed plans, waited for Ben to come home, anything to avoid her.”

Ben said the psychological trauma caused by Grey was far worse than any physical threat. “What people don’t understand is the emotional impact it has on you. It was relentless,” he said. “I told the police I’d rather she punched me, just so they’d take action.”

Even after Grey’s sentencing, the couple acknowledged they are still processing what they endured. Emma referred to a letter Grey submitted during sentencing in which she accused Emma of being jealous of her relationship with Ben. “That letter was just nasty,” Emma said. “She enjoyed pushing people’s buttons; it became a game to her.”

Despite their ordeal, Ben and Emma are now hopeful for a fresh chapter. “We’ve endured two-and-a-half years of abuse from Drina, and that’s likely the time she’ll serve,” Ben noted. “It was right not to suspend the sentence. I was happy with the outcome.”

He added: “Whether it changes her, I don’t know. But if it stops her from doing it to someone else, that’s a win.” Emma agreed, saying the couple now appreciates the peace they once took for granted. “Sometimes we sit in silence and think, ‘This is so nice.’ No calls to lawyers, no council, no police, it’s finally over.”