

The Final Straw (On the theme of 'I'm not putting up with that')

The setting: Interview Room, Watford Police station. Detective Constable Lyons has asked Ray to tell him in his own words exactly what happened.

"It was the dead rat that pushed me over the edge. I opened the front door to get the milk and there it was on the mat with its guts spilling out. 'Right that's it,' I thought, 'Enough is enough.' I retired three years ago. We downsized and moved to Springfield Gardens. Since then we have been subjected to an unbelievable stream of harassment from the guy in the next-door semi, Jerry Cobham. To this day I have no idea what he had against us. Neither my wife Linda nor I could think of any reason why he did the things he did....Other than that he had a screw loose. Of course he always denied it when we confronted him....But we knew it was him.

It started with loud music....but with a nasty twist. The party wall in our semi is pretty thin. We'd be in bed asleep and Cobham would suddenly shatter the quiet night hours with brass band music so loud it nearly blew us out of bed. This went on for weeks. It took its toll on my poor Linda's fragile health.

Stage two of his campaign was to throw stinking refuse into our front garden two or three times a week. He claimed it was done by local jobs. It was strange that they never seemed to chuck rubbish onto his lawn.

I suddenly started to get punctures in my car tyres. The local garage said that I'd picked up nails through the tread and occasionally tears in the sidewall like I'd scraped against the kerb...But I knew I hadn't.

Cobham then bought a vicious brute of a dog....I think it was one of those Staffordshire Bull Terriers with huge meaty jaws. Cobham seemed to have a sixth sense about when me and Linda were leaving the house and chose that precise moment to take his dog out. He called it Brute. It was constantly snarling and slavering at us. It got so bad that Linda didn't dare leave the house for weeks at a time.

Cobham did so many other nasty things that I kept a log and gave it to one of your officers about six months ago. He said he would have a strong word with Cobham but he didn't think there was enough hard evidence for a prosecution. After that Linda just gave up all hope. She faded away in front of my eyes.

Do you know what the bastard did as her coffin was being carried out to the hearse? He played that song from The Wizard of Oz...you know...'*Ding dong the witch is dead...The wicked witch is dead.*' Everybody could hear it blasting out.

This morning, only two days after the funeral, the swine plonked this rat on my doorstep. I don't remember much after that. I must have gone to my gun cabinet and got my twelve-bore.... There was a lot of blood....

And now you tell me Cobham wants to press charges against ME for shooting his dog!"

500 Words excluding title and preamble