

Loud sex: Should there be a law to protect neighbours?

IT was a hot and steamy night. She went on the verandah to escape the oppressive concrete that surrounded her. Basking in the cool breeze and quiet that surrounded her, she sought contentment until she heard the sounds. It was a scream at first, then mild moans and heavy panting, then the pleads for more and slapping of some part of the anatomy. With a sigh, she shook her head. The neighbours were at it again, and even louder this time.

"At first I found it shocking, I thought someone had turned up their television too loud while watching porn, until I realised it was them when I heard her call his name," 21-year-old Rochelle Alexander said, of her experience in Barbican, St Andrew.

"Well you can bet it was awkward the next day when I saw them while going to school," she said with amusement.

Alexander says that it was a relief when her neighbours moved a couple of months later, as she did not know how much more she could take.

"I know I'm not the only one who heard them and I was tempted a few times to talk to them about it but I didn't. I know everyone needs some good loving sometimes, but you don't have to let the whole neighbourhood hear," she said.

Last April the UK Sun carried a story about a couple, where the woman, Caroline Cartwright, was arrested several times and slapped with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order for having sex "so raucous they woke her partially deaf neighbour". She was given a suspended sentence for breaching the order this January.

It's a situation that some neighbours would like to see replicated in Jamaica.

"I had this neighbour once, who used to bring in a different girl every time, one a dem even break his car window for it. At the time my little grandson was living with me and I had to send him to the far side of the house so that he couldn't hear what they were doing," said 54-year-old Pauline Lawrence.

She said that since the neighbour left she has had more who have moved in and done the same thing, some even in the middle of the day.

"It's not right, is dem private business yes, but keep it private. You have to think that young children live in the community and you are exposing them to it, that is reason alone for me to think there should be a law to protect neighbours from such acts," she said.

A resident of Lady Musgrave Road, who opted not to use his name, said that he hears his neighbours getting on all the time and he has complained to them about it repeatedly.

"It's like every time I talk about it, the next time they do it it's even louder, like they trying to spite me or something... they must get lock up if they are going to behave like that," he said.

But can the police do anything to help protect persons from their too-amorous neighbours?

Three police persons we spoke to said no, since these persons are conducting the sexual acts in private. When asked whether loud sex could be considered an infringement under the Noise Abatement Act, our sources tell us that the noise has to be at a certain decibel -- which human voices are not -- to be able to qualify. One policeman did say though, that if the noise gets too loud, the police can be called to quell the "disturbance".