

## ***The Airbnb Hotel Next Door***

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### **Short-term rentals, a boon for travelers and landlords, make life hard for homeowners.**

By Masada Siegel, *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 2, 2019 5:37 pm ET

*Scottsdale, Ariz.*

Becoming a homeowner is part of the American dream, and after three years searching, my husband and I found a fixer-upper in a quiet Scottsdale neighborhood. Unknown to us, however, the house next door was a short-term rental, an Airbnb that can host more than 16 people.

An optimist, I thought it would be a way to meet interesting people. Then reality set in.

It's known as "the party house" for good reason. A party it is, day and night, from screaming kids in the pool at dawn to buses arriving to pick up a rowdy wedding group. Short-term rentals are usually filled with vacationers for whom every day is a celebration. This is no exception. There have been dozens of late-night, loud, drunken festivities filled with foul language. One group smoked so much pot, the smell was overwhelming in our front yard.

Another visitor arrived with a large group of men. He got so drunk he wandered into the wrong house—the owner had left the door unlocked—and passed out. He's lucky he didn't get shot for trespassing—many of my neighbors own guns.

Fourteen women once arrived to celebrate a bachelorette party. Three banged on our door several times to borrow household items, which they never returned.

The party house isn't alone. Across the street is a second short-term rental, and there are several more within five blocks. It's disruptive to the many families with young children who bought houses in the neighborhood looking to set down roots.

In 2016, Gov. Doug Ducey signed a law known as the Airbnb bill, which severely limits local regulation of short-term rentals. The only restrictions it allows are for safety, noise, parking and neighborhood nuisances. Even these are poorly enforced. While Scottsdale law mandates only six adults and their dependents can stay in a short-term rental, you will find all over Airbnb's website houses boasting rooms for far greater numbers of people. Before 2016, Scottsdale prohibited rentals of fewer than 30 days in residential neighborhoods.

According to All the Rooms, a company that analyzes Airbnb data, in July 2019 there were 3,026 Airbnb rentals available in Scottsdale and the adjacent town of Paradise Valley, with a 40% occupancy rate. These rentals generated \$5.3 million in revenue. How can they not be viewed as unlicensed hotels? I didn't sign up to live next to a hotel.

In May 2019 Mr. Ducey signed another law, with a few more restrictions. Owners of short-term rentals must provide cities or towns with contact information and respond to complaints in a timely manner.

While the owner of the neighboring house has great reviews for being prompt and attentive to his guests, he is unresponsive to my concerns. He told me in one year he raked in more than \$100,000 from this property. That's quite a return, but his neighbors paid the price.

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