

Consumer story — Lulu; Purchased at Four Paws and A Tail in April 2022.

Consumer: Queschen Moet and daughter Bella, holding Lulu (photo below); story told to Animal Folks



"We purchased a puppy, who we named Lulu, from Four Paws and A Tail pet store in Blaine, Minnesota. Lulu is a Bichon Frise. She was born on January 15, 2022. We purchased her on April 18, 2022 and she died on May 15, 2022.

My daughter, Bella, is 13 years old and had always wanted a puppy. I came across Four Paws and A Tail on the internet. At first, I thought it was a breeder and made an appointment but when we arrived we learned it was a pet store located in Northtown Mall.

When at the store, we fell in love with this little puppy. But we were told we couldn't take Lulu home right away because they like to watch the little ones a little longer to assure they are eating well. I was assured they would not release her until she was ready. We returned again to see how she was doing. The store owner pressed us to put down a \$1,000 deposit or someone else would get her. This upset my daughter so I obliged. Lulu's price was \$2,000. I asked if this dog was from a puppy mill and I was told she was not.

We had Lulu less than 24 hours when she started showing signs of being sick — vomiting. I called the store owner immediately for advice and I was told her condition was nerves from the transition. Less than 48 hours later Lulu was unable to stand. I called again begging for help. I said I was bringing Lulu to the store's vet clinic. That clinic informed us she was hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) and they stabilized her. I later learned that this is common with toy breeds sold through pet stores.

Concerned, I called the store owner from the clinic and the owner refused to pay the veterinary bill or stand by our warranty, falsely accusing us of not feeding the puppy. I was told "once I paid for the puppy and leave the store it was my problem."

The story doesn't end. About a month later, Lulu's health turned worse — she became extremely lethargic, couldn't walk, and wasn't eating. This time, we went to a different veterinarian who took tests of Lulu and diagnosed her with encephalitis. This veterinarian told us that Lulu was not eating because she was dying. Her brain was enlarged and she was suffering. The vet informed us that Lulu needed to be euthanized to end her suffering; we agreed. This vet also said that Lulu's condition was most likely due to two unhealthy dogs breeding or to poor breeding conditions. (After Lulu died, I demanded reimbursement for my costs from the store owner or he could risk a lawsuit. He eventually paid me \$3,000 — \$2,000 for the price of Lulu and \$1,000 for vet expenses.)

I believe this puppy was born to die. My purchase agreement states that Lulu came from Miller Kennel, USDA license # 35-A-0376, in Hillsboro, Wisconsin. I learned this is a puppy mill.

What was supposed to be a happy time from my family turned into a nightmare. We are absolutely heart-broken. The lies, the tricks, and the manipulation I see more clearly now. This pet store didn't even want to help my daughter find a healthy puppy — it felt like it was all about the money and they wanted it to go away as fast as possible. This should not be allowed. Something has to change."