

Consumer story — Teddy and Coco: Purchased at Four Paws and A Tail in 2022

Consumer: *Sandy Vera and family*



“We were looking for a puppy for our family. We ended up buying two puppies from the pet store Four Paws and A Tail located in Blaine, Minnesota. Both were very sick and one died. What was to be a happy time for our family turned out to be a terrible, frustrating, and sad experience.

We found the first puppy on Facebook, posted by Four Paws and A Tail. On July 21, 2022, my kids and I went to the store and purchased this Yorkie for \$3,000. We named him Teddy.

He started vomiting as soon as we left the store. I immediately contacted the store and they told us it was fine and normal and that the puppies were just going through “change.” Two days later Teddy couldn’t hold his head up and was not eating. I brought him to a vet clinic near my home where he was hospitalized for 3 nights. They took multiple tests costing \$2,101. They told me that Teddy needed more medical treatment and should be transferred to another hospital. Instead, I chose to bring Teddy back to the pet store where, just a few days later, I saw they had put him up for sale again. No hospitalization.

We left the store with another puppy, a Yochon, whom we named Coco. Coco too was sick.

Once we got home, he was not playful; not barking like a normal dog. The next day he started vomiting blood. I booked an appointment with the veterinarian but, before we could go, Coco died. My 13-year-old went into the bedroom and found Coco not breathing. This was devastating to her. She was crying. Luckily my other children did not see this.



During this ordeal, I called the employees and owner of the pet store. The owner yelled at me and insisted he would not cover any costs beyond the price of the dog. He even posted online: “We cannot control the environment after the puppy leaves the store,” implying that he had no responsibility for how sick these puppies were when sold. The store owner did not reimburse the \$2,101 in vet bills for Teddy. He did not pay the cost for the cremation of Coco. My friend also called them and they hung up on her. My sister called and the owner blocked her and me.

The sales records show that Teddy came from a breeder in Wisconsin — J’s Hill & Valley Kennel (# 35-A-0390). I think Coco also came from a breeder in Wisconsin; I am still trying to confirm that.

For us, this was not just about money, even though it was a substantial amount. This was about two beautiful puppies who were sick and suffered. This is about a business — Four Paws and A Tail — who advertised and sold these animals. This was about my family, being forever changed with memories of a heart-breaking time that should have been loving and joyful and wonderful.

I’d like to know what will be done about this. Are stores allowed to act this way? Why were the puppies so sick? What about the breeders? Are the veterinarians reporting what they see? I doubt I am the only one this has happened to.”