



## **Ikea monkey's human 'mom' wants him home for the holidays**

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An Ontario judge who heard arguments on whether “Darwin,” the now-famous Japanese macaque found in an Ikea parking lot, should be returned to a Toronto woman won’t make a decision until at least Friday.

But Darwin’s owner, Yasmin Nakhuda, didn’t leave the courtroom empty-handed Thursday. She was returned the tiny shearling coat Darwin was wearing when he managed to escape from his crate at a busy Ikea parking lot in early December, surprising shoppers and becoming a near-instant online sensation as his photos went viral.

Nakhuda was in court Thursday to ask the judge to have her monkey returned to her for the holidays.

into an Oshawa courtroom visibly upset this morning, with family members trailed behind her carrying large “Free Darwin Now!” signs.

Nakhuda alleges that the tiny primate was illegally taken from her by Toronto animal control officials before being relocated to a Sunderland, Ont., primate sanctuary.

Court heard Nakhuda’s lawyer, Ted Charney, ask for an interim order to allow Darwin to return home with Nakhuda until a decision is reached in the New Year.

Charney alleges Animal Services threatened Nakhuda with criminal charges unless she relinquished Darwin, when they do not have the authority to lay such charges. He also said that the animal control officer who seized Darwin did not have the authority to do so.

Since Darwin’s move to the sanctuary, Nakhuda and one of her son’s have been suffering from anxiety, argued Charney.

In court documents filed by Nakhuda, she says her family is willing to move to a city where she would be able to legally keep Darwin as he has become a part of the family.

But in its court filing, the sanctuary claims it now owns the monkey.

It argues that unlike domestic animals, wild animals are owned by the person who possesses them and Nakhuda voluntarily turned Darwin over to Toronto Animal Services.

The Story Book Farm Primate Sanctuary has granted Nakhuda permission to visit Darwin under the condition that she is escorted by police and has no physical contact with him.

Nakhuda had protested outside an office of Toronto Animal Services on Wednesday in an effort to win back Darwin, drawing a crowd of around 15 supporters.

Nakhuda claims she was never given the opportunity to remedy the situation after being fined \$240 for breaking Toronto's prohibited-animal bylaw.

"I've spoken to a number of people in the legal community and they do agree that there is no statute allowing the city to take an animal away based on the circumstances," said Nakhuda on Wednesday. "Hopefully, based on the law, the judge will decide that Darwin should be returned to his rightful owner."

*With files from CTV Toronto's Austin Delaney and The Canadian Press*