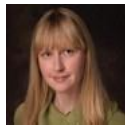




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# Lawyer for Ikea monkey's owner denies claims from sanctuary the animal was abused

[Megan O'Toole](#) | Jan 21, 2013 3:01 PM ET



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Tyler Anderson / National Post files A week after a primate sanctuary alleged Darwin the Ikea monkey suffered abuse at the hands of owner Yasmin Nakhuda (pictured), the woman's lawyer has hit back, publicizing evidence the animal was unharmed when animal-control officers seized him.

A week after a primate sanctuary alleged Darwin the Ikea monkey suffered abuse at the hands of owner Yasmin Nakhuda, the woman's lawyer has hit back, publicizing evidence the animal was unharmed when animal-control officers seized him.

The fate of Darwin — the Japanese macaque who rose to fame after Toronto Ikea shoppers found him wandering the store's parking lot in a miniature faux-shearling coat — will be argued in an Oshawa courthouse next week.

But evidence gathered from animal-control officers in preparation for the Jan. 31 hearing "reveals that Yasmin very much wanted Darwin back, that he was not abused and was thrilled to see her," a spokeswoman for lawyer Ted Charney said Monday.

The law firm has now posted links on its website to transcripts of evidence given earlier this month by animal-control officers David Behan and Joseph Fiorillo. After shoppers spotted Darwin outside Ikea in December, Toronto Animal Services retrieved and held the monkey until Ms. Nakhuda arrived, and then asked her to sign a surrender form.

A supervisor issued instructions to try to "get the monkey signed over," considering it is a prohibited animal in the City of Toronto, Mr. Behan testified.

"She was upset," Mr. Behan said of Ms. Nakhuda's reaction. "She was still in tears."

Asked whether there was any evidence of abuse, Mr. Behan said Darwin appeared fine when officers observed him at the shelter, and seemed "very excited" when he was reunited with Ms. Nakhuda later that day.

Mr. Fiorillo said when he first saw Darwin at Ikea, the monkey was relatively well-behaved, although he "screamed a little bit."

"I'm sure he was looking for his owner, but he didn't attack anybody and he was scared," Mr. Fiorillo said.

As to whether there were any signs of abuse, Mr. Fiorillo responded: "No."

The transcripts come a week after the Story Book Farm Primate Sanctuary, which was granted temporary custody of Darwin, alleged his owners strangled the monkey, hit him with a wooden spoon and planned to remove his teeth to prevent bites. In court filings, the sanctuary accused Ms. Nakhuda and her family of abusing the monkey to ensure his obedience.

The sanctuary also alleged the family confined Darwin to a small crate and neglected to change his diaper for days at a time.

*National Post*