

Quizno, the Burned Ferret

By Laura Hamlett

On May 3, Kelly Haughay, part-time employee at a pet store in North Little Rock, Arkansas, answered the telephone at work. On the other end of the line was an irate customer who had purchased two ferrets from Haughay's store a month prior. He accused the store of lying to him when they said ferrets do not kill each other. Very calmly, Haughay explained that she had never heard of that happening. According to the caller, the female ferret had killed the male and was "eating his head." When he had tried to remove the dead ferret from the cage, the female had then attacked him.

Irate, the caller wanted to know what the store was going to do about his situation. Haughay quickly alerted her manager who, in turn, got the general manager involved. The general manager ultimately told the man to return the ferrets and accessories to the store and his money would be refunded. However, minutes later, the man called again. He said his girlfriend was fed up with the ferrets and that she had thrown everything—ferrets, cage, and all—into the Dumpster.

Haughay, of course, was sickened; she asked the general manager if she could call the man and ask permission to come and get the ferret; of course, as giving our customer information is against store policy, the general manager declined her request. However, Haughay saw the form on his desk and managed to write down the man's address.

That night, she and her fiancé drove to the man's apartment complex. They checked the Dumpster outside the man's building and, sure enough, there was a cage in the bottom. Next to the Dumpster, she saw a ferret curled into a ball;

when her fiancé shone the flashlight on the ferret, they saw that her fur was scorched all over. She had been set on fire.

Haughay and her fiancé met the police at a nearby intersection. The police called Animal Control, who came to the scene and signed the ferret over to Haughay. The group returned to the Dumpster to retrieve the cage, and also discovered the dead ferret; it, too, had been set on fire. The man's girlfriend was at the apartment, and she admitted having thrown away the ferrets. She was issued a citation by Animal Control and given a court date.

Haughay then rushed the ferret to the After Hours Animal Clinic, where they pronounced her dehydrated and emaciated. She was lucky in that she had only first-degree burns on her upper back and lower stomach. Within a week, however, the ferret's stomach had swollen and she was having trouble breathing. It had also become apparent that she would need surgery on her back, as a patch of skin had begun to rot.

All of this was brought to the attention of the Ferret Mailing list by Shannon Goins, daughter of C.B. Goins, an avid FML member for a number of years.

Afterward: Quizno has made it through her surgery and recovery and will be going home to live with Haughay. The case against the man and his girlfriend has yet to go to court; however, the state is seeking full restitution of Quizno's veterinary bills as well as pressing animal cruelty charges.

For updates on Quizno's story, see www.avantgardesolutions/net/quizno/.



Quizno, the burned and rescued ferret.

Photo by Kelly Haughay