

## Pet Sitting Company Sues Texas Couple over Bad Yelp Review



*Summary: A Dallas pet sitting company sued a couple for writing a negative Yelp review.*

A Texas pet sitting company is in deep dog doo after suing its former customers for writing a bad Yelp review, The Dallas Morning News reports.

Prestigious Pets of Dallas sued Robert and Michelle Duchouquette after the couple wrote a detailed, negative review after using the service in October. Michelle said she found the company on Yelp and decided to use them when her regular company was unavailable.

In Michelle's review, she wrote about how Prestigious Pets had limited hours to reach them and that she was alarmed when she learned her fish tank had "gone from clear to cloudy." She also stated that she did not like the way the company communicated about fees.



**michelle d.**  
Piano, TX  
👤 1 friend  
👍 24 reviews

★☆☆☆☆ 10/28/2015

My usual pet sitter/walking company, Great Paws was closed so I decided to try Prestigious Pets based on all of the good reviews. We have 2 dogs and a fish that were being cared for while we were gone a Friday through Tuesday evening.

I knew in the initial meeting that I did not think the company was a good fit. The walker would not share her phone number and said any communications had to be emailed through the company. Since their hours are M-F 9 am - 4pm or Sat. 11 am - 3pm and closed Sunday, this leaves a lot of time where you cannot contact your walker if needed. We would have liked to contact her when we saw the alarm was not set and also when we saw the fish bowl had gone from clear to cloudy.

I also did not like their fee and the services you receive. In the initial meeting, our walker told us it was \$20 to come to the house, but that did not include a walk. She told us that was \$5 extra. Granted they invoiced and charged us \$10 and it took multiple emails to get that credited back on my card. The request was made on 10/6 and I did not receive the credit until 10/14. Their initial quote said the visit included 10-15 minutes of a walk or backyard time so I was confused that our walker was telling us something different.

While most business owners on Yelp respond publicly on the website or try to contact the reviewer directly, Prestigious Pets at first sent a cease and desist letter. When the couple ignored it, Prestigious Pets escalated by filing a lawsuit.

Prestigious Pets is seeking \$6,700 in damages. They allege that the Duchouquettes violated a non-disparaging clause that they initially signed. Michelle told the press that she knew about the clause but that she was about to go on vacation and needed a sitter ASAP.

Prestigious Pets told KTVT-TV, "We are honest people seeking protection from dishonest individuals, not other honest ones. Fair and honest feedback is not the issue here."

For Prestigious Pets, it seems like they fell victim to the [Streisand Effect](#). Since the story broke days ago, [Prestigious Pets' Yelp page](#) has been bombarded with new reviews, the majority of them criticizing the company for their inability to accept criticism. While Yelp has suspended the page and says it is "being monitored," some of the new feedback can be seen.

"A company brags about positive yelp reviews while at the same time not allowing negative reviews through a contractual non-disparagement agreement?" Jim M. wrote.

“I know someone who had a very unhappy experience with this company, but s/he is too fearful of being sued by them for posting the story on Yelp that I told her I’d do it for him (her),” Goood Lookin’ C.

Seems like Prestigious Pets would have fared better publicly if they had just let sleeping dogs lie.

In November, [JD Journal](#) reported that senators are working to protect Yelp reviewers like the Duchouquettes from retaliation. The Senate Commerce Committee had met to give states and the Federal Trade Commission the power to stop non-disparagement clauses, but so far, their work is still pending.

“These gag provisions are egregious from a consumer protection standpoint, but they’re also doing harm to our Internet ecosystem,” Chairman John Thune (R-South Dakota) had said.

Source: [Dallas Morning News](#)

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