

# Owner of lost pet says reviews on dog-sitting app don't guarantee anything, MIKE LLOYD, CITYNEWS 1130, SEP 9, 2019



## SUMMARY

Sami the dog ran away on Friday while under the care of a dog-sitter hired through an app, family says

Family claims the sitter was neglectful and didn't follow instructions while watching Sami  
The sitter has apparently stopped answering the family's calls and messages

UPDATE: Sami has been found safe. [Read the latest here.](#)

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – A family in Vancouver is desperate to find their dog, which is lost and running scared, claiming a neglectful sitter they hired through an app didn't follow instructions and then stopped answering their calls and messages.

“Our hearts are broken. We just want to bring her home,” says a tearful Shannon Lercher.

She has hardly slept since Friday when they dropped Sami — a two year old Shepherd-Rhodesian Ridgeback cross — with a man they found through the app Rover.

“We specifically were looking for someone who said they had a fenced yard, we were looking for someone who had their own large dog and he seemed like a friendly guy,” she tells NEWS 1130, noting that his online reviews were positive.

“When my partner went to the house and realized his fence was not as advertised, the one piece of instruction he was given was not to have her offleash in the yard because it was an unfamiliar space.”

Lercher believes Sami was let outside and then ran away within two hours of being dropped off, but says the man — whose Rover profile has apparently been taken down — has refused to provide any details about what happened to her or to animal control.

Lercher says it wasn't until late that night that they were told Sami had run off and shortly after that, the sitter cut off communication.

She quickly flew back into town but, despite repeated knocking, she says they man refused to answer his door, at one point calling police when her family gathered at the house.

“The police quickly realized the situation when our children were crying and the grandparents were there along with our friends trying to get some answers,” she explains.

“We could understand if it was a mistake — accidents happen — and if he told us right away” Lercher tearfully says. “But that’s not what happened and this entire situation has been so traumatic for our entire family because of all the lies.”

Family and many friends have been searching for the dog, which has been spotted a number of times in south and east Vancouver over the weekend, but Sami is easily frightened and runs from strangers.

“She was last seen yesterday at about 51st Avenue and Victoria Drive at about 2:15pm. She’s run a long way, anywhere between 28th and St. Albert and 41st and Knight. She’s crossed some major streets,” Lercher worries.

“If anything, we thought because she was in someone’s home it would be a more comfortable space for her than being in a frightening kennel. We put her comfort before her safety,” she sobs.

“Really we just have a warning for people that when they are hiring people to watch their animals, just because someone says they are a good person doesn’t necessarily mean they are going to take good care of your pets. He lost her and didn’t tells us for so long and then refused to provide information that would help find her. Now it has been days and by all accounts she is terrified and won’t let anyone approach her.”

Lercher says they have filed a complaint with the company that runs the app and they plan to deal with the sitter as soon as possible, but their priority right now is to find Sami.

“The way that this has played out is just morally incomprehensible. The lack of decency... our family is so traumatized.”

Lercher requests that anyone who thinks they have spotted Sami, who is wearing a black harness and a collar with ID tags, not to attempt to grab her but to keep her within sight and call the City of Vancouver at 311.

“We feel so guilty. We’ve never used an app like this because we’ve always had people we know look after her and we just feel so culpable and so stupid. His most recent review was from the day we dropped her off and it was five stars. But what does that mean? That’s the message. How do you really know?”

Olympia, Washington-based Rover confirms the walker’s profile has been pulled, and that he is not longer allowed to offer his services through their platform. It is helping in the search for the dog and offering a reward for her return.