

# Buyer Beware!

## It's a Cruel, Cruel World and Bye, Bye Birdie!

by Shirley Jennings, Columbia Cross Roads, Pennsylvania

These are only a few of the sayings that people are telling me since the latter part of April when I borrowed money from some friends and we bought our first Rosey Bourkes along with a few pairs of finches, some Diamond Doves and a Bluehead Pionus from an importer. These dealings were all done over the phone with a

sweet talking gentleman who said we needed a minimum order of \$1200. After some pleading from me that my customers and I were all very eager to get the Rosey Bourkes and the Bluehead Pionus, he decided if our order came close we could deal.

The long awaited day in the middle of April 1992 came and the Rosey Bourkes, the Pionus, finches and doves were received by me at the airport in Big Flats, N.Y. I have never been so excited over anything. Not for long though. At the airport, upon looking in the shipping box, there were three dead finches and one Rosey Bourke with a crooked neck acting as if this was not her type of joy. One other Rosey Bourke sat in the corner of the box looking very sickly. (These birds, remember, are straight from an import quarantine station where I had supposed all birds should be healthy upon release). The airport attendant said he would put a note down that finches were dead and that two of the pink birds did not seem right.

The next morning I called the dealer and told him that not only were some finches dead on arrival, also some of the Rosey Bourkes, although very pretty, were not acting quite like I thought they should. They had slimy green droppings and were uncoordinated, the one with the crooked neck being the worst. He claimed that probably was due to the bird flying up and hitting her head causing it to have a sore neck. This was one excuse I had not thought of. No remarks as to what was wrong with the others only to say, "Let me know if any more die and I will try to make it right on the next order." Over the next three weeks I found myself having to call this dealer repeatedly to tell him that not only were the Rosey Bourkes dying but so were my baby red factor canaries. Needless to say, it was only a short time till this dealer was never in when I called and would not even take the time to return a call. Then I resorted to letters which also were unanswered. Also by this time my friends are getting uneasy over their investments. Of course, I don't dare sell any of my other birds because I

am not sure what was wrong with the new birds and I have a reputation to look out for.

Now even I have to say to myself, "Sucker you have been took." So here I am, four months later, about \$2500 deeper in debt and hopefully a lot wiser to the fact that dealers are not the place to buy birds from, especially if they also happen to be an importer. I will never be able to open my bird shop again because there does not seem to be any reputable dealers out there to buy from. Also all my finances went down the drain with a couple hundred dollars of phone calls trying to find out how to recoup some of my loss on the 4 dead Rosey Bourkes, 2 split to Rosey and Yellow Bourkes, 4 Zebra Finches, 4 Society Finches and 14 baby red factor canaries. At this point it looks as if the Department of Agriculture may have to come in and put down all the birds I have on my place. This would include all my cage birds and all my pheasant collection if the test they have run shows the results they suspect.

Some of the things I cannot understand about this whole situation is these birds came directly to me from the quarantine facilities. I received these birds the next day after release, according to the dealer. Now really, what good are these quarantine places if the dealers are allowed to sell birds in a sickly condition? My loss is so much greater than just my initial purchase price and the fact I also got sick after I had these birds in my care for a short time. My mental anguish was as bad as feeling sick due to the fact that I had waited 10 years to buy my first Rosey Bourke and have to watch them die knowing full well I will not be able to afford to buy any more on my small pension.

So now its "bye, bye" to my beautiful dream of having a Rosey of my own and no more "Buy, Buy Birdie" from import dealers. Please remember "BUYER BEWARE" whether it be from a dealer, importer or a pet store. It's really a "CRUEL, CRUEL WORLD OUT THERE." But for the grace of God making me realize these birds were sick, I might have sold some of these birds to a customer and spread the sickness.

P.S. This story is a true story that happened to me the spring of 1992. I hope you find you can use it to make people aware that this type of thing goes on more often than people know. ●

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