

August 20, 2012

Re: Relocation Services from North American Van Lines

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing this letter not only to WARN people about moving scams and "bad moving companies," but also to commend and thank North American Van Lines/Ralph's Transfer (local agent in Tucson, AZ) for all of their help, friendly service, and quick responsiveness—Jonathan Spurr and the NA Van Lines/Ralph's Transfer people are life savers! I am still in the midst of a legal and financial dispute with USA Relocation (aka Prestige Movers & Storage), but I'm now resting comfortably in my new home with all of my belongings, thanks to Jonathan and his NA Van Lines/Ralph's Transfer crew.

In April of this year, I solicited 12 estimates from various moving companies to relocate my goods/family from Tucson AZ to Houston TX. North American Van Lines was one of three companies that physically came to my house to review/inspect my household goods and provide a "visual estimate"; the other quotes were created via "inventory lists" dictated and reviewed over the phone. In the end, all of the quotes were relatively comparable, estimating the total weight of our goods to be around 13,000 to 15,000 pounds, and the cost to be in the range of \$5000 to \$8000. Making the mistake of assuming "all other factors were equal" (in terms of customer service, helpfulness, flexibility, cooperativeness, legal practices, etc.), we chose the least expensive estimate in the end—from Prestige Movers in Los Angeles, CA. Fast forwarding to the end of my nightmare: they fraudulently over-inflated my weight to be over 33,000 pounds at a cost of \$12,000!! When I flatly refused to accept the weight disparity (more than DOUBLE what 11 other estimates said?!), and further refused to pay this outrageous/fraudulent amount, Prestige immediately took my goods hostage at their warehouse in CA and demanded payment before they would even TELL me where they were located (I only had a PO Box address)! My husband and I were hung up on many times until "David" (the owner or supervisor—no one would ever tell me his full name or real title), told us on Friday, May 4 at 5:00 pm to "pick up your s%@t by 8:00 am on Monday or we're going to dispose of it." We obviously panicked and were in an impossible situation, as we were physically located in Houston, TX, not able to get to CA immediately to get our things, and had no way to transport them from their warehouse to any other location IF we COULD get to CA to retrieve them! We were between a rock and a hard place...

We were not only extremely upset and angry, but also petrified about what would happen to our goods—everything we owned on this planet was in Prestige Movers' possession and at risk of being destroyed or thrown away. We had no idea what to do, and then my husband remembered that while Jonathan Spurr from North American Van Lines/Ralph's Transfer was at our house giving us an estimate, he warned us of this exact scenario and said that they've had to "clean up other movers' messes many times." At that time, we disregarded it as, "that won't happen to us," and then we immediately realized that we needed that exact help from them immediately. We called Jonathan right then for advice and assistance and explained the situation to him; he went to work on a resolution right away. We literally hung up from talking to him at 5:30 pm (TX time) on Friday, May 4, and by 9:00 pm (TX time) that night, he had called back with all of the details to get our stuff back. He explained that he had a driver making

a delivery on Saturday in San Diego, CA who didn't have any load scheduled to bring back to Tucson; he had therefore arranged for him to spend the weekend in CA, pick up all of our goods from Prestige at 8:00 on Monday morning, and transport everything back to their Tucson warehouse for us (to be stored until we were ready to have it delivered to Houston). It was amazing! We immediately called and emailed the contacts as Prestige to explain the arrangements (it was two hours earlier in CA, and they were still answering their phones); *they were stunned*. They literally couldn't believe that we had been able to make such arrangements so quickly—they had fully expected us to say that we couldn't do anything BUT pay them the "ransom" and deal with their illegal/illicit ways! In fact, they were so stunned, that they took most of the day on Monday to FABRICATE a "cost invoice" for their ransom payment, as it's something that they obviously didn't do often, because people usually caved in. Once we received their so-called "invoice," it was full of fraudulent expenses and fees (we're still disputing this with the credit card company), and it was on a regular/plain piece of paper, with no company name/logo/address/letterhead, etc. on it! It was very obvious that this company normally operates outside of the law—especially when we checked the reviews online on yelp.com (we should have done that FIRST!). We found out that we are NOT the first/only people that they have extorted money from with their "bait and switch" tactics (provide a low estimate and then balloon the "real cost" later)—we just hope to be the last and put them out of business so others don't go through this type of situation in the future.

In the meantime, North American Van Lines/Ralph's Transfer went to their warehouse to collect and inventory all of our goods; they documented a lot of damaged property already, as Prestige had broken one of our bar stools, destroyed/crushed several boxes, bent our patio heaters into "tee pee" shapes, etc. Once they safely had all of our goods in their possession, they weighed everything on a certified scale...and found the total weight of all of our goods was only 10,600 pounds!! Prestige was trying to extort THREE TIMES the payment from me by falsely inflating the weight of my goods to over THREE TIMES the real weight!! Jonathan has since been very helpful in providing us with any/all information needed to be used in our legal and financial disputes with Prestige—we are very thankful and appreciative of his help in all of this.

We now have all of our household goods safely in our new home in TX, and we're starting to put this nightmare behind us—thanks to NA Van Lines/Ralph's Transfer and Jonathan Spurr. They literally saved our lives and sanity in all of this, and Jonathan has become a good friend to us now through so much communication and coordination—we *can't recommend him or his team enough*. Don't fall for the cheaper prices, as it's NOT CHEAPER in the end by any means. Our relocation has cost us more than double any of the original estimates now, as we've had to pay for the LA to Tucson move, as well as the Tucson to Houston move. Once again thanks to Jonathan and his team, they have been very understanding of this and have worked with us to keep the cost as low as possible, but this entire ordeal has been an "expensive" one—in more ways than one! We have most certainly learned an important lesson through all of this and will NEVER repeat this mistake; we will always choose a respected, trusted, NATIONAL moving company—not any small "cheap" groups—and will continue to sing praises to North American/Ralph's Transfer for all of their help with everything. There are no words to adequately

express our appreciation to them or our strong recommendation/praise of them to anyone/everyone who is looking for a moving company. You absolutely can't go wrong with them!

Sincerely,

Sandy Sprague