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John Rolfe

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I need some legal advice

A ticket to tragedy

Much loved french bulldog dies in a cage at airport



Lost companion: Belinda McClory and Jon Hewitt with Kransky, who died at Sydney Airport before boarding a flight to Frankfurt

Rosemarie Lentini

WORRIED their french bulldog Kransky wouldn't survive a flight from Sydney to Frankfurt, Jon Hewitt and Belinda McClory hired "animal travel specialists" to oversee their pet's relocation.

They needn't have bothered: Kransky died in the cargo holding area at Sydney Airport before the plane left.

In December, Mr Hewitt paid Animal Travel \$2297 in advance to manage all aspects of his six-year-old dog's Malaysia Airlines flight to Frankfurt, including export fees and paperwork.

Mr Hewitt was reluctant to hire a private company but other bulldog owners "highly recommended" Animal Travel and the company said on its website that "safety and comfort is always our highest priority".

Mr Hewitt and his dog were booked on the same flight on February 1.

Animal Travel's driver Ken Hammond picked up Kransky from Mr Hewitt's house in Kings Cross just before 9am.

He took Kransky for a walk and a final veterinary check — he was in good health — before dropping him off at

Malaysia Airlines' MASKargo freight terminal at Sydney Airport at about 12.30pm.

That was the last time Kransky was seen alive.

A MASKargo representative called Mr Hewitt after 3pm, when he was boarding his flight, with the bad news.

"We're devastated. Kransky was my constant companion. Yes, he was a dog, but he was as important as a child to me," Mr Hewitt said.

Mr Hewitt, who missed his flight, thinks Kransky died of heat stroke, a common cause of death among the breed.

This hasn't been confirmed because Kransky's body was

cremated before an autopsy could be conducted.

Animal Travel declined to take responsibility because Kransky died in the airport's cargo area, not in the company's direct care.

"The dog was handed over to the airline three hours prior to departure," international relocations manager Narelle Hammond said.

"What happens there, once we hand [the pet] over to the airline — we are not responsible for what happens when they take responsibility for the dog."

I asked Ms Hammond if she would offer Mr Hewitt a

refund, given his dog never arrived in Germany as per the contract. She agreed.

A Malaysia Airlines spokeswoman would not "speculate" on the case, but offered this comment: "Kransky, together with two other animals, were delivered by Animal Travel to Toll/Dnata [logistics/cargo operator] at Mascot, for customs and quarantine processing before being placed on board our aircraft."

"We are now aware that Kransky perished while in Toll's custody and care, before he was due to be loaded on to our aircraft."

Planner ignored wishes

CLAIR asks: When I received an inheritance in 2008 my lawyer referred me, unasked, to a financial planner. I told them I wanted the money in two to three years to buy a unit. I commenced to lose money until I had lost one fifth of my inheritance and I gave orders for the account to be closed. However, about one quarter of what was left remained frozen. I have received a letter telling me the maturity date is March 2014. How could the planner disregard my express wishes? I am now nearly 60 and it doesn't look as if I will ever be able to make up the loss.

Have your legal queries answered on our blog with Maurice Blackburn legal expert Rebecca Gilsenan at noon today



REBECCA says: Your financial adviser may have breached a number of legal requirements, one of which is that they give advice that takes into account the client's circumstances, including their financial objectives and timeframe. They also may have been negligent through failing to assess your risk profile properly. If your adviser is licensed, there are additional requirements and the licensee could be liable for loss suffered as a result of you relying on the advice. To pursue this, either get legal advice or pursue it through the Financial Ombudsman Service.

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