

### **AN APOLOGY FROM THE 'RUNAWAY COLUMNIST'**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the media. My name is J. Barnyard Blatherington, and I am the attorney, spiritual counselor and part-time ukulele instructor for Dick Yarbrough, the modest and much-beloved newspaper columnist who recently ran away for no apparent reason before suddenly showing up again on the arms of a knockout police babe.

First off, I'm sorry we are late in getting this statement to you. Frankly, we were not aware that you folks in the media were going to devote so much interest to the Jennifer Wilbanks story. I realize that she, too, disappeared right before her wedding and showed up in Albuquerque, which I believe is somewhere around North Dakota. However, we were surprised you gave her so much time and attention since you were so deeply involved in a major investigative effort with national security implications — trying to identify the fat guy holding the umbrella for that pathetic little dweeb, Michael Jackson.

Let me start by saying that Mr. Yarbrough wants everyone to know that he was not kidnapped by a white guy and a one-armed, height-challenged Hispanic lesbian, as he had originally claimed. Therefore, he wishes to sincerely apologize to all the white guys in the world.

My client wants also to state emphatically that his disappearance has nothing to do with cold feet about his marriage. In fact, he told me — and this is a direct quote — “Barnyard, I do not have cold feet, but the Woman Who Shares My Name has a pair of tootsies that would freeze a polar bear dead in his.” I counseled him not to say that, since he runs a very real risk of having broccoli shoved up his nose.

Mr. Yarbrough would like to beg forgiveness of those who were upset over some comments in his recent column about the South. He has asked me to relate to you that he didn't know what he was doing, which should come as some comfort to his detractors who have been saying that for years. He is truly grieved that someone from California was incensed over his statement that Californians say “like” all the time while Rollerblading on their skateboards. Like, he feels real bummed about that, dude.

He also has asked me to apologize on his behalf to all the Yankees who thought he was making fun of them. Mr. Yarbrough is sympathetic to the fact that our friends north of the Mason-Dixon line live in snow up to their navels for ten months of the year, which tends to freeze their sense of humor — if they ever had one in the first place.

My client wants you to try and understand the pressure he is under to come up with an extremely humorous and thought-provoking column week after week after week. To again quote Mr. Yarbrough, “There is no question that I succeed beyond anyone's wildest imagination every week, but being a creative genius makes my head hurt and my nose run and sometimes I just have to chuck all the fame and adoration and flee to Albuquerque, which I believe is somewhere around North Dakota.” He is hopeful that his readers will come to appreciate that being a modest and much-beloved columnist is no walk in the park and cut him a little slack when he says smart-alecky stuff, rare as those occasions might be.

Mr. Yarbrough has asked me to thank the hoards of people who combed the state looking for him. Since he is in such an extremely delicate state at the moment, I haven't had the courage to tell him that it wasn't exactly a “hoard.” In fact, it was just two winos from downtown Atlanta who looked in a couple of trash bins. They didn't find my client, but they did stumble across a half-empty bottle of Thunderbird wine, so it wasn't a total waste of time.

Please understand that Mr. Yarbrough won't be available to answer your questions anytime soon. He just met a one-armed, height-challenged Hispanic lesbian, and they have run away to Albuquerque, which I believe is somewhere around North Dakota.