



Press Release

OPERATION: Fowl Play

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA – January 26, 2009 – While last weekend’s Great Alaska Beer & Barley Wine Festival (GABBF) drew record crowds in all three sessions, another adventure was hatching—one involving a very rubber chicken and the man who loves her. Phil Farrell, aka El Hombre de Pollo, is an avid fest-goer who travels the globe in search of good beer and the guaranteed good times that ensue. Farrell’s consummate companion is his paparazzi-seeking pal, RC. Since RC’s arrival onto The Beer Scene, there are very few fest photos—anywhere—in which RC is not represented. She is a great sport, a die-hard traveler, and a selfless model. But at the end of any given day, she’s still a chicken.

The Great Alaska Rubber Chicken Caper was master-minded by Midnight Sun Brewing Company’s fowl-minded President and Head Prankster Mark Staples. The “big picture” plan was conspired at MSBC headquarters in South Anchorage on Friday afternoon with Mark’s partner-in-life-and-crime, Barb Miller, originating the ransom note. “Operation: Fowl Play” involved stealing the chicken, replacing it with the ransom note, then toying with its owner—the infamous brewfest regular Phil Farrell—until the chicken could be safely returned before close-of-fest on Saturday evening.

Staples herded up some additional accomplices along the way. At the post-fest industry party at Café Amsterdam on Friday night, MSBC Head Brewer, Gabe Fletcher, performed the initial step—stealing the chicken. This resulted in an extremely distraught Farrell. Farrell repeated pecked around for information—do you have my chicken, did you see my chicken, did you see someone with my chicken, do you think [Celebrator’s] Tom Dalldorf took my chicken? His fervent inquiries were met with surprise, laughter and/or indifference. To calm his nerves, he convinced himself that Dalldorf *accidentally* took his chicken.

During GABBF’s Saturday afternoon Connoisseur Session, Farrell jumped up onto the stage and pleaded for the safe return of his beloved rubber chicken. Most of the crowd was clueless but we knew we had a caper to complete. A few minutes later a preferred-not-to-named fest-goer handed Farrell the ransom note. The note instructed Farrell to call a local phone number if he wanted to save his pal from a pot of soup. Immediately, Staples’ cell phone rang. He let it go to voice mail. The message? A deep gravelly voice said: If you ever want to see your chicken again, come to the Awards Ceremony.

We anxiously waited for the barley wine awards to be announced. When the winners descended the stage, Mark jumped up behind the microphone and drew the crowd’s attention. “Yes, we believe the chicken has been found.” He removed his jacket and spun around to reveal the bird duct taped to his back. The crowd cackled. Farrell rushed the stage to carefully untape his not-so-feathered friend and all became right in his world once again.

When asked about the details of the plot, Staples replied, “I had an overall scheme but when things started happening so fast, I just winged it.”

