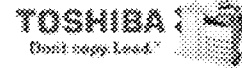




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## Spring Break Is A Legal Specialty For Ben Bollinger

**Florida Lawyer Enjoys  
A Spike in His Business;  
Defendants in Flip-Flops**

By SUSAN WARREN  
March 17, 2007; Page A1

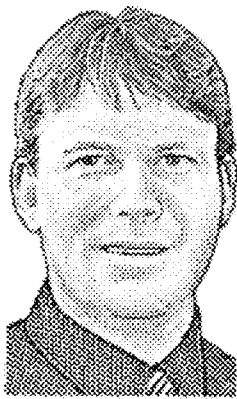
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PANAMA CITY, Fla. -- This time of year, defense lawyer Ben Bollinger likes to stick close to his office between noon and 2 every afternoon. That's when the spring breakers begin to call from jail.

Free of classes and heading south to bask in the sun, tens of thousands of hard-partying youths are pouring into this tiny Gulf Coast resort town for their annual spring fling, crowding beaches, bars -- and courtrooms.



Ben Bollinger

In March and early April, hundreds of youths are arrested or issued citations for minor crimes such as underage drinking, balcony-climbing or public nudity. Sometimes sheepish, sometimes defiant, and almost always hung over, spring breakers parade through the courtrooms of the country's hottest party towns in swimsuits and flip-flops to answer to judges for their drunken misdeeds, praying that their parents don't find out.

A native of Panama City, one of the top spring-break destinations, Mr. Bollinger has been defending wayward breakers since he graduated from law school 10 years ago. At the age of 36, he can still relate to the kids. "I don't think of myself as a lawyer, I'm a redneck with an education," he says with a Southern drawl. "They come down here and act stupid and get into a little bit of trouble. I could be in their same shoes."

He advertises a 24-hour hotline so the newly arrested can reach him in the middle of the night. He runs ads during "Club Hour" on Beach TV, the local round-the-clock tourist channel, where he dispenses advice on how to stay out of trouble. "When they start reading you your rights," he cautions, "it's gotten serious."

Mr. Bollinger is among a handful of criminal defense attorneys who have developed a microspecialty in spring-break offenses. In South Padre Island, Texas, attorney Mike McNamara, a professed "major beach bum," posts fliers with the slogan, "Got drunk? Got caught? Call Mike."

