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Emotional reunion with missing children



Brad Patterson gives his daughters, Jennifer (left) and Michelle, kisses and hugs after being reunited at the Robertson County Jail.

Banner photos by Ed Rode

Search ends in reunions; couple jailed

By Toni Dew
Banner Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD — Matthew Dollar turns 3 today, but his parents won't be able to help him celebrate because they are in the Robertson County jail facing possible kidnapping charges involving their four other children.

A yearlong search for the children allegedly abducted by their parents in Florida last June, ended Tuesday night in a small market in Ridgeway on the Robertson/Davidson county border.

A Texas-based searcher for missing children tracked the couple to Tennessee after seeing the abducted children's grandparents dial a Robertson County telephone number while under surveillance in Florida.

Police say Ronald Dollar — also known here as Ronald Dallorn of Lake Road — took his two sons from his ex-wife, Donna Rucker, last June when they were visiting him in Tampa, Fla.



Ronald Dollar
In Robertson jail

Ronald Dollar's present wife, Robin Dollar — also using the alias Robin Dallorn — was also arrested for allegedly fleeing the Sunshine State with her two daughters who were visiting her as part of a divorce settlement with her ex-husband, Brad Patterson, a California resident.



Exhausted after his long trauma and reunion with his mother, Donna Tucker, David Dollar rests on his mom's lap.

Ronald Dollar is wanted in Florida for concealing a child. Robin Dollar is wanted in California for child abduction.

Both remain in the Robertson County jail under \$25,000 bonds.

awaiting a June 10 court date. They were charged here with being fugitives from justice. Any other charges surrounding the

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Parents' search ends in reunion, abduction charges

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alleged abduction of the children would have been filed in the states where they occurred, officials said.

"I was actually beginning to think I'd never see them again," a teary-eyed Brad Patterson said moments after being reunited with his daughters Michelle Patterson, 11, and Jennifer Patterson, 8.

Robertson County Sheriff Ted Emery and Chief Deputy Gene Bollinger learned Tuesday that a Texas man, Mark Miller, had traced the couple from Florida to Tennessee where they have lived since about the first of the year.

After leaving Florida, the family had stopped in Arkansas, West Virginia and several other states before landing in Tennessee, officials said.

With Miller's help, authorities found Robin Dollar sitting in her car in Greenbrier late Tuesday afternoon. Officials watched the woman until she met her husband, Ronald Dollar, who followed her from Greenbrier to an IGA Market in Ridgeway. All five children — including Joshua Dollar, 7, and his brother David, 9, — were present.

There Emery and Bollinger descended upon the Dollars and their confused, frightened children.

"We just surprised them before they really knew what happened," Bollinger said, explaining that the couple did not resist arrest.

Miller arrived on the scene with the boys' mother, Donna Rucker.

"When I got there it was right after everything happened," the mother said. "They were crying. They were scared. I just showed them that it was scary for me, too."

Donna Rucker called Miller last year while trying to get help from several other missing children's organizations.

Miller, founder of the Houston-based American Association for Lost Children Inc., and his volunteers began investigating the Dollars' Florida family and friends in December.

A few days ago, Miller got the break he needed when he and a co-worker, Buddy Hall, followed Robin Dollar's parents to a public telephone in Florida.

"We were the key," Miller said jubilantly. "We followed them in Orlando this past weekend and watched her and her husband go to a pay phone and call a number."

While Miller was in an adjoining telephone booth trying to cause a distraction, Buddy Hall, one of his volunteer workers stood

behind Robin Dollar's parents and saw the number they dialed.

Through some "contacts," Miller said, he was able to match an address with the telephone number and by Tuesday he and Donna Rucker were on their way to Tennessee.

"It led us right here," Miller said. "We went by the address they called to. We went by the house this afternoon and verified they were there and then we notified police."

Donna Rucker and Ronald Dollar were married for eight years before divorcing four years ago.

The wife had custody of the children and the husband saw them every other weekend, half of the holidays and part of the summer, usually from June 17 to July 15, Donna Rucker said.

"About July 13 or 14 my husband didn't call me to confirm the flight they were going to be flying back on," Donna Rucker said. "Usually he called and let me know what flight. I knew that he wasn't bringing them back then."

Through people who knew Brad Patterson, the woman got his number and called California to warn him that his daughters might not be coming home.

"She (Robin Dollar) had her kids on visitation, too. Her kids weren't due back until Aug. 25. I told him my kids didn't return and I believed that they took them," Donna Rucker explained. "As soon as mine were (gone) he knew his were."

Brad Patterson, married for seven years to Robin Dollar before divorcing in April 1985, arrived at the Robertson County jail around 11:30 p.m. Tuesday from California.

"Hi, Daddy," his 11-year-old daughter Michelle Patterson said matter-of-factly. The girl and her 8-year-old sister Jennifer Patterson wrapped their arms around their tearful father's waist.

"Do we have to go back to school, Dad?" Michelle asked.

"No, not until fall," he replied.

The children were enrolled in Greenbrier Middle School and Greenbrier Elementary School.

Then gently changing the subject, Patterson said, "I tried to find you."

"Where did you look?" Michelle asked.

"Everywhere," Patterson sighed. "It's hard to find somebody when they don't want to be found."

And Ronald Dollar didn't want to be found, he admitted while in custody as a fugitive from justice at the Robertson County Sheriff's Department.

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