

Goldberg vocal on Vick in rousing 'View' debut

NEW YORK (AP) - So much for the sedate alternative to Rosie O'Donnell on "The View."

Whoopi Goldberg, on her first day on the daytime chat show Tuesday, commented about football star Michael Vick in his dogfighting case.

Goldberg said that "from where he comes from" in the South, dogfighting isn't that unusual.

"It's like cockfighting in Puerto Rico," she said. "There are certain things that are indicative to certain parts of the country."

The Atlanta Falcons quarterback pleaded guilty to federal dogfighting charges last week, admitting that he provided money for a dogfighting ring that operated on his Virginia property and helped kill six or eight pit bulls. Vick grew up in Newport News, Va. Goldberg was selected by series creator Barbara Walters to replace



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O'Donnell, whose stormy tenure on the ABC program lasted less than a year.

In the Vick discussion, Goldberg served notice that she won't shy away from controversy.

Co-host Joy Behar looked horrified at Goldberg. "How about dog torture and dog murdering?" Behar asked.

For many people, dogs are sport, Goldberg replied, and it appeared it took awhile for Vick to realize that he was up against serious charges.

"I just thought it was interesting, because it seemed like a light went off in his head when he realized this was something that the entire country didn't appreciate," she said.

Vick has been suspended indefinitely by the National Football League and will be sentenced on the dogfighting charges in December. He apologized and asked for forgiveness upon entering his plea in federal court last week.

Houston, Brown in child tiff

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) - Bobby Brown went to court recently to seek custody of his and Whitney Houston's teenage daughter.

Brown and his attorney asked Orange County Superior Court to dismiss a default judgment issued in December that granted Houston sole custody of 14-year-old Bobbi Kristina.

Brown wasn't given enough time to respond to Houston's divorce filings, his attorney Stacy D. Phillips said: "He didn't have his day in court."

Judge Claudia Silbar ordered Brown and Houston to argue their case at an Oct. 22 hearing before she decides who will get custody.

"I cannot determine credibility on paperwork," Silbar said. "This really boils down to credibility."

Houston's attorney, Stephen Kolodny, said that Brown can contest the custody award or make arrangements to visit his daughter, but

that he can't change the divorce judgment.

In court filings released last week, Brown claimed that Houston has kept him from seeing their daughter and that he deserved custody because he had been her primary caretaker.

"I just miss my daughter," Brown told People.com. "The goal is to see her a lot more and to be involved in the decision making in her life, the places she goes, the people she hangs out with. All of that."

Houston and Brown wed in 1992, when she was at the height of her fame as a Grammy-winning superstar known for such hits as "I Will Always Love You."

Brown, a former member of New Edition, gained solo fame with singles such as "Don't Be Cruel" and "My Prerogative."

During their 14-year marriage, Brown was arrested for drugs and alcohol, and Houston twice entered drug rehab programs.

Dogs sniff out DVD counterfeits

NEW YORK (AP) - There's no need to fear — unless you bootleg DVDs.

The movie industry's real-life "Underdogs" — two specially trained black Labradors — have sniffed out a large inventory of knockoff discs in the New York City borough of Queens, the district attorney's office said recently. The dogs, named Lucky and Flo, participated in a probe resulting in raids on three retail outlets where investigators discovered thousands of hidden DVDs.

Titles included "The Simpsons Movie," "The Bourne Ultimatum" and "Underdog," the film inspired by a cartoon superhero beagle. Three people were arrested and charged with trademark counterfeiting.

Lucky and Flo are sponsored by the Motion Picture Association of America, and are trained to identify discs by the scent of chemicals.

"Man's best friend has become a DVD

counterfeiter's worst nightmare," Queens District Attorney Richard Brown said in a statement.

It was their first assignment in the U.S., following a successful assignment in Malaysia in March. During that stint — dubbed Operation Double Trouble — they helped unearth nearly 1.9 million DVDs, three DVD replicating machines and 97 compact disc burners, worth \$6 million. Twenty-six people were arrested on copyright violations.

The operations were so successful that Malaysian movie pirates were reported to have placed a bounty of \$29,000 on the dogs, prompting them to be kept under close guard.

Movie studios in the U.S. lost \$6.1 billion to worldwide piracy in 2005, of which the Asia-Pacific region accounted for \$1.2 billion and the United States for \$1.3 billion, according to the Motion Picture Association of America.

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