

# Disappearance of Natalee Holloway

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**Natalee Holloway**



[Senior portrait](#) of Natalee Holloway in 2004

**Born** Natalee Ann Holloway  
October 21, 1986  
[Clinton, Mississippi](#), U.S.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Disappeared** May 30, 2005 (aged 18)  
[Oranjestad, Aruba](#), [Kingdom of the Netherlands](#)

**Status** Declared [dead in absentia](#)  
January 12, 2012<sup>[2]</sup>

<b>Residence</b>	<a href="#">Mountain Brook, Alabama</a>
<b>Education</b>	<a href="#">Mountain Brook High School</a>
<b>Height</b>	5 ft 4 in (1.63 m) <sup>[3]</sup>
<b>Weight</b>	110 lb (50 kg) <sup>[3]</sup>
<b>Parent(s)</b>	David Edward "Dave" Holloway <a href="#">Elizabeth Ann Reynolds "Beth" Holloway</a>

**Natalee Ann Holloway** (born October 21, 1986) was an American teenager who made international news after she vanished on May 30, 2005, while on a high school graduation trip to [Aruba](#), a Dutch island in the [Caribbean](#). At the time of her disappearance, Holloway lived in [Mountain Brook, Alabama](#); she graduated from [Mountain Brook High School](#) on May 24, 2005, shortly before the trip.<sup>[4]</sup> Her disappearance caused a [media sensation](#) in the United States<sup>[5]</sup>.

Holloway was scheduled to fly home on May 30, but she aroused suspicion when she failed to appear for her flight.<sup>[6]</sup> She was last seen by her classmates outside of [Carlos'n Charlie's](#), a restaurant and nightclub in [Oranjestad](#).<sup>[7]</sup> She was in a car with local residents [Joran van der Sloot](#) and brothers Deepak and Satish Kalpoe. When the three men were questioned, they said that they dropped off Holloway at her hotel and denied knowing what became of her.<sup>[8]</sup> Upon further investigation by authorities, Van der Sloot was arrested twice on suspicion of involvement in her disappearance and the Kalpoes were each arrested three times. Due to lack of evidence, the three suspects were released each time without being charged with a crime.<sup>[9][10]</sup>

With the assistance of hundreds of volunteers, Aruban investigators conducted an extensive search and rescue/recovery operation for Holloway. [Special Agents](#) from the [FBI](#),<sup>[11]</sup> fifty [Dutch soldiers](#) and three specially equipped [Dutch Air Force F-16](#) aircraft participated in the search.<sup>[12][13][14]</sup> In addition to the ground search, divers searched the ocean floor for Holloway's body.<sup>[15]</sup> Her remains were never found.<sup>[16][17][18]</sup> On December 18, 2007, Aruban prosecutors announced that the case would be closed without any charges made against the former suspects.<sup>[19][20]</sup> The Aruban prosecutor's office reopened the case on February 1, 2008, after receiving video footage of Van der Sloot under the influence of [marijuana](#). In the video, Van der Sloot said that Holloway died on the morning of May 30, 2005, and that a friend had disposed of her body.<sup>[21]</sup> Van der Sloot later denied that what he said was true, and in an interview with [Greta Van Susteren](#) (the contents of which he later retracted) said that he sold Holloway into slavery.<sup>[22]</sup>

Holloway's parents criticized Aruban police for a lack of progress in the investigation and interrogation of the three men who were last seen with their daughter. The family also called for a [boycott](#) of Aruba, which gained Alabama Governor [Bob Riley](#)'s support but failed to gain

widespread backing.<sup>[23][24]</sup> On January 12, 2012, Alabama judge Alan King declared Holloway [legally dead in absentia](#).<sup>[25]</sup>

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## Background[[edit](#)]



[Mountain Brook High School](#), where Holloway graduated just before her ill-fated trip to Aruba

Holloway was the first of two children born to David and [Elizabeth "Beth" Holloway](#) (1961–) in [Clinton, Mississippi](#).<sup>[u]</sup> Her parents divorced in 1993, and she and her younger brother Matthew were raised by their mother. In 2000, Beth married George "Jug" Twitty, a prominent Alabama

businessman, and the family moved to [Mountain Brook, Alabama](#).<sup>[26]</sup> Holloway graduated with honors from [Mountain Brook High School](#). She was a member of the [National Honor Society](#), the school [dance squad](#), and was a participant in other extracurricular activities.<sup>[27][28]</sup> Holloway was scheduled to attend the [University of Alabama](#) on a full scholarship,<sup>[29]</sup> where she planned to pursue a [pre-med track](#).<sup>[30]</sup> At the time of his daughter's disappearance, Dave Holloway was an insurance agent for [State Farm](#) in [Meridian, Mississippi](#), while Beth Twitty was employed by the [Mountain Brook School System](#).<sup>[26][31][32]</sup>

## Disappearance in Aruba[[edit](#)]

On Thursday, May 26, 2005, Holloway and 124 fellow graduates of Mountain Brook High School (located in a wealthy suburb of [Birmingham, Alabama](#)) arrived in Aruba for a five-day, unofficial graduation trip.<sup>[27][33]</sup> The teenagers were accompanied by seven chaperones.<sup>[34]</sup> According to teacher and chaperone Bob Plummer, the chaperones met with the students each day to make sure everything was fine.<sup>[35]</sup> Jodi Bearman, who organized the trip, stated, "the chaperones were not supposed to keep up with their every move."<sup>[34][36]</sup> [Police Commissioner Gerold Dompig](#) headed the investigation from mid-2005 until 2006. He described the behavior of the Mountain Brook students, stating that there was "wild partying, a lot of drinking, lots of room switching every night. We know the [Holiday Inn](#) told them they weren't welcome next year. Natalee, we know, she drank all day every day. We have statements she started every morning with cocktails—so much drinking that Natalee didn't show up for breakfast two mornings."<sup>[34]</sup> Two of Holloway's classmates, Liz Cain and Claire Fierman, "agreed that the drinking was kind of excessive."<sup>[37]</sup>

Holloway was last seen by her classmates around 1:30 a.m. on Monday, May 30 as she was leaving the Aruban bar and [nightclub Carlos'n Charlie's](#).<sup>[38]</sup><sup>[39]</sup> She left in a car with 17-year-old [Joran van der Sloot](#)—a [Dutch](#) honors student who was living in Aruba and attending the [International School of Aruba](#)—<sup>[40]</sup> and his two [Surinamese](#) friends, 21-year-old Deepak Kalpoe (the owner of the car)<sup>[41]</sup> and 18-year-old Satish Kalpoe.<sup>[41][9][42]</sup> Holloway had been scheduled to fly home later that day but did not appear for her return flight.<sup>[6]</sup> Her packed luggage and passport were found in her Holiday Inn room.<sup>[9][34]</sup> Aruban authorities initiated searches for Holloway throughout the island and surrounding waters but did not find her.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Investigation[[edit](#)]

### Early investigation[[edit](#)]

Jug and Beth Twitty flew to Aruba with friends by private jet immediately following Holloway's May 30, 2005 missed flight.<sup>[8]</sup> Within four hours of landing in Aruba, the Twittys presented the Aruban police with the name and address of Van der Sloot as the person with whom Holloway left the nightclub.<sup>[8]</sup> Beth stated that Van der Sloot's full name was given to her by the night manager at the Holiday Inn, who supposedly recognized him on a videotape.<sup>[29]</sup> The Twittys and their friends went to the Van der Sloot home with two Aruban policemen to look for Holloway. Van der Sloot initially denied knowing Holloway's name, but he then told the following story, which was corroborated by Deepak Kalpoe, who was present in the house:<sup>[34]</sup> Van der Sloot

related that they drove Holloway to the [California Lighthouse](#) area of [Arashi Beach](#) because she wanted to see sharks; they later dropped Holloway off at her hotel at around 2:00 a.m.<sup>[43]</sup> According to Van der Sloot, Holloway fell down as she exited the car but refused his help.<sup>[43]</sup> He stated that as he and Kalpoe were driving away, Holloway was approached by a dark man in a black shirt similar to those worn by security guards.<sup>[43]</sup>



[Carlos'n Charlie's](#) in [Oranjestad, Aruba](#). The restaurant was the last place Holloway was seen by her classmates.

The search and rescue efforts for Holloway began immediately. Hundreds of volunteers from Aruba and the United States joined in the effort. During the first days of the search, the Aruban government gave thousands of civil servants the day off to participate in the rescue effort.<sup>[11]</sup> Fifty [Dutch marines](#) conducted an extensive search of the shoreline.<sup>[12]</sup> Aruban banks raised \$20,000 and provided other support to aid volunteer search teams.<sup>[14]</sup> Beth Twitty was provided with housing, initially at the Holiday Inn where she coincidentally stayed in the same room her daughter had occupied.<sup>[44]</sup> She subsequently stayed at the nearby [Wyndham Hotel](#)'s presidential suite.<sup>[34]</sup>

Reports indicated that Holloway did not appear on any nighttime [surveillance camera](#) footage of her hotel's lobby;<sup>[45]</sup> however, Beth Twitty has made varying statements as to whether the cameras were operational that night. According to an April 19, 2006 statement made by Twitty, the video cameras at the Holiday Inn were not functioning the night Holloway vanished.<sup>[45]</sup> Twitty has made other statements indicating that they were working, and has stated so in her book.<sup>[46][47]</sup> Police Commissioner Jan van der Straten—the initial head of the investigation until his 2005 retirement—said that Holloway did not have to go through the lobby to return to her room.<sup>[48]</sup>

The search for physical evidence was extensive and subject to occasional false leads; for example, a possible blood sample taken from Deepak Kalpoe's car was tested but determined not to be blood.<sup>[49]</sup>

From the early days of the investigation, American law enforcement participated in wide-ranging involvement in the case. [United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice](#) stated to reporters that the U.S. was in constant contact with Aruban authorities. Another [State Department](#) official indicated, "Substantial resources are being applied to this as they [Aruba officials] continue to ask for more."<sup>[50]</sup>

**2005 arrests of multiple suspects**[\[edit\]](#)

On June 5, Aruban police detained Nick John and Abraham Jones, former [security guards](#)<sup>[51]</sup> from the nearby Allegro Hotel<sup>[7]</sup> (which was then closed for renovation)<sup>[52]</sup> on suspicion of murder and kidnapping.<sup>[53]</sup> Authorities have never officially disclosed the reason for their arrests, but according to news accounts, statements made by Van der Sloot and Kalpoe may have been a factor in the arrests of John and Jones.<sup>[54][55]</sup> Reports also indicated that the two former guards were known for cruising hotels to [pick up women](#), and at least one of them had a prior incident with law enforcement.<sup>[56]</sup> John and Jones were released on June 13 without being charged.<sup>[41]</sup>



Mug shot of [Joran van der Sloot](#), June 2005

On June 9, 2005, Van der Sloot and the Kalpoe brothers were arrested on suspicion of kidnapping and murdering Holloway.<sup>[57]</sup> Aruban law allows for investigators to make an arrest based on serious suspicion. In order to continue holding the suspect in custody, an increasing evidential burden must be met at periodic reviews.<sup>[53][58]</sup> According to Aruba police corps chief Gerald Dompig, the focus of the investigation centered on these three suspects from the "get-go".<sup>[37]</sup> Dompig stated that close observation of the three men began three days after Holloway was reported missing, and the investigation included surveillance, telephone wire taps, and even monitoring of their e-mail.<sup>[37]</sup> Dompig indicated that pressure from Holloway's family caused the police to prematurely stop their surveillance and detain the three suspects.<sup>[37]</sup>

As the investigation continued, David Cruz—spokesman for the Aruban Minister of Justice—falsely indicated on June 11 that Natalee Holloway was dead and authorities knew the location of her body.<sup>[59]</sup> Cruz later retracted the statement, saying he was a victim of a "misinformation campaign."<sup>[59]</sup> That evening, Dompig alleged to the [Associated Press](#) that one of the detained young men admitted "something bad happened" to Holloway after the suspects took her to the beach, and that the suspect was leading police to the scene.<sup>[59]</sup> The next morning, prosecution spokeswoman Vivian van der Biezen refused to confirm or deny the allegation, simply stating that the investigation was at a "very crucial, very important moment."<sup>[59]</sup>

On Friday, June 17, a sixth person later identified as [disc jockey](#) Steve Gregory Croes was also arrested. Police Superintendent Jan van der Straaten told the media that "Croes was detained based on information from one of the other three detainees."<sup>[36]</sup> On June 22, Aruban police detained Joran's father Paulus van der Sloot for questioning; Paulus was arrested that same day. Both Paulus van der Sloot and Croes were ordered to be released on June 26.<sup>[41]</sup>



During this period, the suspects who had been detained changed their stories.<sup>[41]</sup> All three suspects indicated that Van der Sloot and Holloway were dropped off at the [Marriott Hotel](#) beach near the fishermen's huts. Van der Sloot stated that he did not harm Holloway, but left her on the beach.<sup>[60]</sup> According to Satish Kalpoe's attorney, David Kock, Van der Sloot called Deepak Kalpoe to tell the latter that he was walking home, and sent him a text message forty minutes later.<sup>[41]</sup>

At some time during the interrogation, Van der Sloot detailed a third account that he was dropped off at home and Holloway was driven off by the Kalpoe brothers.<sup>[34]</sup> Dompig discounted the story, stating:

This latest story [came] when [Van der Sloot] saw the other guys, the Kalpoes, were kind of finger-pointing in his direction, and he wanted to screw them also, by saying he was dropped off. But that story doesn't check out at all. He just wanted to screw Deepak. They had great arguments about this in front of the judge. Because their stories didn't match. This girl, she was from Alabama, she's not going to stay in the car with two black kids. We believe the second story, that they were dropped off by the Marriott.<sup>[34]</sup>

Following hearings before a judge, Deepak and Satish Kalpoe were released on Monday, July 4, but Van der Sloot was detained for an additional sixty days.<sup>[61]</sup>

### **Continued search, suspects rearrested and released again**[\[edit\]](#)



[Dutch Marines](#) searching for Holloway near the [California Lighthouse](#)

On July 4, the Royal Netherlands Air Force deployed three F-16 aircraft equipped with [infrared](#) sensors to aid in the search, but the results came up empty.<sup>[11][13]</sup> In March 2006 it was reported that satellite photos were being compared with photographs taken more recently (presumably from the F-16s) in an attempt to find unexpected shifts of ground that might be Holloway's grave.<sup>[62]</sup>

After an individual ("the gardener"<sup>[63]</sup>) came forward, a small pond near the Aruba Racquet Club close to the Marriott Hotel beach was partly drained between July 27 and 30, 2005. According to Jug Twitty, the gardener claimed to have seen Joran van der Sloot attempting to hide his face as he drove into the Racquet Club with the two Kalpoe brothers on the very early morning of May 30 between 2:30 a.m. and 3:00 a.m.<sup>[64]</sup> [Nancy Grace](#) described the gardener as "the man whose testimony cracks the case wide open".<sup>[65]</sup> Another person, "the jogger",<sup>[34]</sup> claimed to have seen

men burying a blonde-haired woman in a [landfill](#) during the afternoon of May 30.<sup>[66]</sup> The police had searched the landfill in the days following Holloway's disappearance.<sup>[66]</sup> After the jogger's statements, the landfill was searched three more times; the FBI used [cadaver dogs](#) to assist in the recovery operation.<sup>[67]</sup> The searches were fruitless.<sup>[34]</sup>

Following Holloway's disappearance on May 30, 2005, the family offered \$175,000 and donors offered \$50,000 for her safe return.<sup>[28]</sup> Two months later, the reward for Holloway's safe return was increased from \$200,000 to \$1,000,000, with a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the location of her remains.<sup>[68]</sup> In August 2005, the reward for information leading to her corpse was increased from \$100,000 to \$250,000.<sup>[69]</sup>

The FBI announced that Aruban authorities had provided its agency with documents, suspect interviews, and other evidence. Investigators found a piece of [duct tape](#) with strands of blond hair attached to it; the samples were tested at a Dutch lab. A group from the Aruban police and prosecutor's office then traveled to the FBI central laboratory at [Quantico, Virginia](#) to consult with American investigators. The hair samples were then tested a second time.<sup>[68][70]</sup> The FBI announced that the hair samples did not belong to Holloway.<sup>[71]</sup>

The Kalpoe brothers were rearrested on August 26 along with another new suspect, 21-year-old Freddy Arambatzis.<sup>[15]</sup> Arambatzis' lawyer said that his client was suspected of taking photographs of an underage girl and having physical contact with the same girl; this incident allegedly occurred before the Holloway disappearance. Arambatzis's friends Van der Sloot and the Kalpoe brothers were supposedly involved in the incident. Van der Sloot's mother, Anita van der Sloot, stated, "It's a desperate attempt to get the boys to talk. But there is nothing to talk about."<sup>[72]</sup> While no public explanation was then made for the Kalpoe rearrests, Dompig later said that it was an unsuccessful attempt to pressure the Kalpoe brothers into confessing.<sup>[34]</sup>

On September 3, 2005—despite the attempts of the prosecution to keep them in custody—all four of the detained suspects were released by a judge on the condition that they remain available to police.<sup>[73]</sup> On September 14, all restrictions on them were removed by the [Combined Appeals Court of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba](#).<sup>[74]</sup>

In the months following his release, Van der Sloot gave several interviews that expanded upon his version of events, most notably a lengthy interview with [Fox News](#) that aired over three nights in March 2006. During the interview, Van der Sloot indicated that Holloway wanted to have sex with him, but he did not because he didn't have a [condom](#).<sup>[75]</sup> Van der Sloot stated that Holloway wanted them to stay on the beach, but that he had to go to school in the morning. According to Van der Sloot, he was picked up by Satish Kalpoe at about 3:00 am and left Holloway sitting on the beach.<sup>[76]</sup> In August 2005, David Kock, Satish Kalpoe's attorney, stated that his client had gone to sleep, and had not returned to drive Van der Sloot home.<sup>[77]</sup> Van der Sloot stated that he was somewhat ashamed to have left a young woman alone on the beach, albeit by her own request, and related that he was not truthful at first because he was convinced that Holloway would soon turn up.<sup>[76]</sup>

In January 2006, The FBI and Aruban authorities interviewed—or in some cases, re-interviewed—several of Holloway's fellow classmates in Alabama.<sup>[78]</sup> On January 17, 2006,



Aruban police searched for Holloway's body in sand dunes on the northwest coast of Aruba as well as areas close by the Marriott beach.<sup>[79]</sup> Additional searches took place in March and April 2006, without result.<sup>[37]</sup>

Shortly before leaving the case, Dompig was interviewed by [CBS](#) correspondent Troy Roberts; the interview was broadcast on March 25, 2006. In that interview, Dompig stated that he believed Holloway probably died from alcohol and/or drug poisoning, was not murdered, and that someone later hid her body. Dompig also stated that Aruba had spent about \$3 million on the investigation, which was about 40% of the police operational budget.<sup>[37]</sup> Dompig indicated that there was evidence that points to possession (though not necessarily use) of drugs by Holloway.<sup>[17][80]</sup> Members of Holloway's family have denied that she used drugs.<sup>[81]</sup>

On April 11, 2006, Dave Holloway published his book—co-authored with R. Stephanie Good and [Larry Garrison](#)—*[Aruba: The Tragic Untold Story of Natalee Holloway and Corruption in Paradise](#)*, that recounted the search for his daughter.<sup>[26][82]</sup>

## **2006 arrest of new suspects; the Dutch take over the investigation**[\[edit\]](#)

On April 15, 2006, Geoffrey von Cromvoirt was arrested by Aruban authorities on suspicion of criminal offenses related to dealing in [illegal narcotics](#) which, according to the prosecutor, might have been related to the disappearance of Holloway.<sup>[83]</sup> At his first court appearance, his detention was extended for eight days. However, Von Cromvoirt was released on April 25, 2006.<sup>[84]</sup> In addition, another individual with initials "A.B." was arrested on April 22, 2006, but was released the same day.<sup>[84]</sup>

On May 17, 2006, another suspect, Guido Wever (the son of a former Aruban politician) was detained in the Netherlands on suspicion of assisting in the abducting, battering, and killing of Holloway.<sup>[85]</sup> Wever was questioned for six days in [Utrecht](#). Aruban prosecutors initially sought his transfer to the island, but he was instead released by agreement between the prosecutor and Wever's attorney.<sup>[86]</sup>

At Aruba's request, the Netherlands took over the investigation. Following receipt of extensive case documentation in [Rotterdam](#), a team of the [Dutch National Police](#) started work on the case in September 2006.<sup>[87]</sup> On April 16, 2007, a combined Aruban–Dutch team began pursuing the investigation in Aruba.<sup>[87]</sup>

## **Book, search, and inspection**[\[edit\]](#)

A book by Joran van der Sloot and reporter Zvezdana Vukojevic, *[De zaak Natalee Holloway](#)* (*The Case of Natalee Holloway*) was published in Dutch in April 2007.<sup>[88]</sup> In the book, Van der Sloot gives his perspective of the night Holloway disappeared and the media frenzy that followed. He admits and apologizes for his initial untruths, but maintains his innocence.<sup>[89]</sup>

On April 27, 2007, a new search involving approximately twenty investigators was launched at the Van der Sloot family residence in Aruba.<sup>[90][91]</sup> Dutch authorities searched the yard and surrounding area, using shovels and thin metal rods to penetrate the dirt.<sup>[90]</sup> Prosecution

spokeswoman Van der Biezen stated, "The investigation has never stopped and the Dutch authorities are completely reviewing the case for new indications."<sup>[90]</sup> A statement from the prosecutor's office related, "The team has indications that justify a more thorough search."<sup>[90]</sup> Investigators did not comment on what prompted the new search,<sup>[90]</sup> except that it was not related to Van der Sloot's book.<sup>[87]</sup> According to Paulus van der Sloot, "nothing suspicious" was found, and all that was seized were diary entries of him and his wife, and his personal computer—which was subsequently returned.<sup>[92]</sup>

According to [Jossy Mansur](#), managing editor of Aruba's *Diario* newspaper, investigators were following up on statements made during early suspect interrogations regarding calls made and emails sent between the Kalpoe brothers and Joran van der Sloot. He also said investigators could be seen examining a laptop at the house.<sup>[93]</sup>

On May 12, 2007, the Kalpoe family home was subject to an "inspection".<sup>[94]</sup> The two brothers were detained for about an hour upon objecting to the entry by police and Dutch investigators, but were released when the authorities left.<sup>[94][95]</sup> According to Kock, the brothers objected to the search because officials did not show them an order justifying the intrusion. A statement from Van der Biezen did not mention what, if anything, officials were searching for, but indicated nothing was removed from the home.<sup>[94][95]</sup> A subsequent statement from Het Openbaar Ministerie van Aruba (the Aruban prosecutor's office) indicated that the purpose of the visit was to "get a better image of the place or circumstances where an offense may have been committed and to understand the chain of events leading to the offense."<sup>[96][97]</sup>

## 2007 rearrests and re-releases<sup>[edit]</sup>

Aruban investigators cited what was described as newly discovered evidence, and Joran van der Sloot and the Kalpoe brothers were rearrested November 21, 2007, on suspicion of involvement in "[manslaughter](#) and causing serious bodily harm that resulted in the death of Holloway."<sup>[100]</sup> Van der Sloot was detained by Dutch authorities in the Netherlands, while the Kalpoe brothers were detained in Aruba.<sup>[100]</sup> Van der Sloot returned to Aruba and was incarcerated.<sup>[100]</sup>

In November 2007, Dave Holloway announced a new search for his daughter that probed the sea beyond the original 330-foot (100 m) depths in which earlier searches had taken place.<sup>[98]</sup> That search involved a vessel called the *Persistence* and was abandoned due to lack of funds at the end of February 2008, when nothing of significance was found.<sup>[99]</sup>

On November 30, 2007, a judge ordered the release of Satish and Deepak Kalpoe, despite attempts by the prosecution to extend their detention.<sup>[100][101]</sup> The two brothers were released on the following day.<sup>[102]</sup> The prosecution appealed the Kalpoes' release. That appeal was denied on December 5, 2007, with the court writing, "Notwithstanding expensive and lengthy investigations on her disappearance and on people who could be involved, the file against the suspect does not contain direct indications that Natalee passed away due to a violent crime."<sup>[103]</sup> Van der Sloot was released without charge on December 7, 2007, due to lack of evidence implicating him as well as a lack of evidence that Holloway died as the result of a violent crime. The prosecution indicated it would not appeal.<sup>[104]</sup>

On December 18, 2007, prosecutor Hans Mos officially declared the case closed, and that no charges would be filed due to lack of evidence.<sup>[105][106]</sup> The prosecution indicated a continuing interest in the Kalpoes and Joran van der Sloot (though they legally ceased to be suspects), and alleged that one of the three, in a chat room message, had stated that Holloway was dead. This was hotly contested by Deepak Kalpoe's attorney, who stated that the prosecution, in translating from [Papiamento](#) to Dutch, had misconstrued a reference to a teacher who had drowned as one to Holloway.<sup>[107]</sup> Attorney Ronald Wix also stated, "Unless (Mos) finds a body in the bathroom of one of these kids, there's no way in hell they can arrest them anymore."<sup>[108]</sup>

## **Secret cameras, statements, and stories**[\[edit\]](#)

On January 31, 2008, Dutch crime reporter [Peter R. de Vries](#) claimed that he had solved the Holloway case.<sup>[109]</sup> De Vries stated that he would tell all on a special television program on Dutch TV on February 3. Beth Twitty's attorney, John Q. Kelly, told [ABC News](#) that he had little faith that the supposed evidence would prove pivotal to the case of her daughter and suggested that it would be quickly debunked.<sup>[109]</sup>

On February 1, the Dutch media reported that Joran van der Sloot made a confession regarding the disappearance of Natalee Holloway. Later that day, Van der Sloot stated that he was telling the individual what he wanted to hear, and that he had no role in her disappearance.<sup>[110]</sup> That same day, the Aruba prosecutor's office announced the reopening of the case.<sup>[21]</sup>

The broadcast aired February 3, 2008. The broadcast included excerpts from footage recorded from hidden cameras and microphones in the vehicle of [Patrick van der Eem](#), a Dutch businessman and ex-convict<sup>[111]</sup> who gained Van der Sloot's confidence. Van der Sloot was seen smoking [marijuana](#)<sup>[112]</sup> and stating that he was with Holloway when she began convulsively shaking, then became unresponsive. Van der Sloot stated that he attempted to revive her, without success. He said that he called a friend, who told Van der Sloot to go home and who disposed of the body.<sup>[113]</sup> An individual reputed to be this friend, identified in the broadcast as Daury, has denied Van der Sloot's account, indicating that he was then in [Rotterdam](#) at school.<sup>[114]</sup>

The Aruban prosecutor's office attempted to obtain an arrest warrant for Van der Sloot based on the tapes; however, a judge denied the request.<sup>[115]</sup> The prosecutor appealed the denial, but the appeal failed on February 14, 2008.<sup>[116]</sup> The appeals court held that the statements on the tape were inconsistent with evidence in the case and were insufficient to hold Van der Sloot.<sup>[117]</sup>

On February 8, 2008, Van der Sloot met with Aruban investigators in the Netherlands. Van der Sloot denied that what he said on the tape was true, stating that he was under the influence of marijuana at the time. Van der Sloot indicated that he still maintains that he left Holloway behind on the beach.<sup>[111]</sup>

In March 2008, news reports indicated that the tables had been turned on Van der Eem, who himself was secretly taped after giving an interview for Aruban TV. Van der Eem, under the impression that cameras had been turned off, kept talking. Van der Eem disclosed that he had been a friend of Van der Sloot for years (contradicting his statement on the De Vries show that he had met Van der Sloot in 2007), that he expects to become a millionaire through his

involvement in the Holloway case, and that he knew the person who supposedly disposed of Holloway's body—and that Van der Sloot had asked him for two thousand [euros](#) to buy the man's silence. According to Dutch news service [ANP](#), Van der Eem, who had already signed a book deal, "was furious" after learning of the taping, and "threatened" the interviewer, who sought legal advice.<sup>[118]</sup> Van der Eem's book *Overboord* (*Overboard*),<sup>[119]</sup> co-written with E.E. Byars, was released (in [Dutch](#)) on June 25, 2008.<sup>[120]</sup> Van der Eem was arrested on December 13, 2008 in the Netherlands for allegedly hitting his girlfriend with a crowbar and engaging in risky driving behavior while fleeing police.<sup>[121]</sup>

The De Vries broadcast was discussed in a seminar by Dutch legal [psychologist Willem Albert Wagenaar](#), who indicated that the statements did not constitute a confession. Wagenaar criticized De Vries for broadcasting the material, stating that the broadcast made it harder to obtain a conviction, and had De Vries turned over the material to the authorities without broadcasting it, they would have held "all the trumps" in questioning Van der Sloot. Wagenaar opined that not only was the case not solved, it was not even clear that a crime had been committed. Professor Crisje Brants, in the same seminar, also criticized De Vries's methods.<sup>[122]</sup>

On November 24, 2008, [Fox News](#) aired an interview with Van der Sloot in which he alleged that he sold Holloway into [sexual slavery](#), receiving money both when Holloway was taken, and later on to keep quiet. Van der Sloot also alleged that his father paid off two police officers who had learned that Holloway was taken to [Venezuela](#). Van der Sloot later retracted the statements made in the interview.<sup>[123]</sup> The show also aired part of an audio recording provided by Van der Sloot, which he alleged is a phone conversation between him and his father, in which the father displays knowledge of his son's purported involvement in human trafficking. According to Mos, this voice heard on the recording is not that of Paulus van der Sloot—the Dutch newspaper [De Telegraaf](#) reports that the 'father's' voice is almost certainly that of Joran van der Sloot himself, trying to speak in a lower tone.<sup>[123]</sup> Paulus van der Sloot died of a heart attack on February 10, 2010.<sup>[124]</sup>

On March 20, 2009, Dave Holloway transported a search dog to Aruba to search a small [reservoir](#) in the northern part of the island. The reservoir was previously identified by a supposed witness as a possible location of Natalee's remains. Aruban authorities indicated that they had no new information in the case, but that Holloway had been given permission to conduct the search.<sup>[125]</sup>

On February 23, 2010, it was reported that Joran van der Sloot had stated in an interview (first offered to [RTL Group](#) in 2009) that he had disposed of Holloway's body in a [marsh](#) on Aruba. New chief prosecutor Peter Blanken indicated that authorities had investigated the latest story, and had dismissed it. Blanken stated that "The locations, names, and times he gave just did not make sense."<sup>[126]</sup>

In March 2010, underwater searches were conducted by Aruban authorities after an American couple reported<sup>[127]</sup> that they were snorkeling when they photographed what they thought might be human skeletal remains, possibly those of Holloway. Aruban authorities sent divers to investigate, but no remains were ever recovered.<sup>[128]</sup>

## Van der Sloot's extortion of money from Holloway's family[[edit](#)]

On March 29, 2010, Van der Sloot contacted John Q. Kelly—Beth Twitty's legal representative—with an offer to reveal the location of Holloway's body and the circumstances surrounding her death, if he were given advance of [US\\$25,000](#) against a total of \$250,000.<sup>[129]</sup> After Kelly notified the [FBI](#), they arranged to proceed with the transaction.<sup>[130][131]</sup> On May 10, Van der Sloot had a \$15,000 [wire](#) transferred to his account in the Netherlands, following the receipt of \$10,000 in cash that was videotaped by undercover investigators in Aruba.<sup>[132]</sup> Authorities stated that the information that he provided in return was false because the house in which he said Holloway's body was located had not yet been built at the time of her disappearance.<sup>[133]</sup> On June 3, Van der Sloot was charged in the [U.S. District Court of Northern Alabama](#) with [extortion](#) and [wire fraud](#).<sup>[134]</sup> [U.S. Attorney Joyce White Vance](#) obtained an [arrest warrant](#) and transmitted it to [Interpol](#).<sup>[135][136]</sup> On June 30, Van der Sloot was indicted on the charges.<sup>[137]</sup>

At the request of the [U.S. Justice Department](#), authorities conducted a June 4 raid and confiscated items from two homes in the Netherlands. One of the homes belonged to reporter [Jaap Amesz](#), who had previously interviewed Van der Sloot and claimed knowledge of criminal activities by Van der Sloot.<sup>[138]</sup> Aruban investigators used information gathered from the extortion case to launch a new search at a beach, but no new evidence was found.<sup>[139]</sup> Dave Holloway returned to Aruba on June 14 to pursue possible new clues.<sup>[140]</sup>

A January 4, 2017 article reveals Van Der Sloot's latest confession. Holloway's father classified the convicted killer's confession as "an obvious publicity stunt unworthy of belief."<sup>[141]</sup> Recorded on a hidden camera, investigators most recent hit reveals van der Sloot's confession. He went on to tell the reporter that he thought the case overall was handled terribly by the police. The reporter responded by asking if he was talking about the Natalee Holloway case. Van Der Sloot responded, "Yes, this is also where I am guilty and I accept everything that I have done."<sup>[141]</sup> The felon admits to his fabricated stories in the past but insists that his new 2017 twist of murdering Holloway is true. Investigators have yet to find physical evidence, but Holloway's father concludes "We've done a lot of searching and things like that, but the ocean has a tendency to take care of things. I would say most likely we won't find her, but I never say never."<sup>[141]</sup> Holloway's recent exposure has been trending worldwide. Recent disputes have popularized because of the release of Holloway's accused killers recent confession. Articles have criticized the resurfacing of the case due to Huffington Posts exposure of Van der Sloot's words classifying the article as "Elizabeth Smart or Natalee Holloway treatment."<sup>[142]</sup>

## Stephany Flores is killed by Joran van der Sloot in Peru[[edit](#)]

On May 30, 2010—five years to the day after Holloway's disappearance—[Stephany Flores Ramírez](#), a 21-year-old business student, was reported missing in [Lima, Peru](#). She was found dead three days later in a hotel room registered in Van der Sloot's name.<sup>[143]</sup> On June 3, Van der Sloot was arrested in [Chile](#) on a murder charge and [extradited](#) to Peru the next day.<sup>[144]</sup> On June 7, 2010, Peruvian authorities said that Van der Sloot confessed to killing Flores after he lost his temper because she accessed his laptop without permission and found information linking him to the disappearance of Holloway.<sup>[145]</sup> Police chief César Guardia related that Van der Sloot told

Peruvian police that he knew where Holloway's body was and offered to help Aruban authorities find it.<sup>[130][146]</sup> However, Guardia stated that the interrogation was limited to their case in Peru, and that questions about Holloway's disappearance were avoided.<sup>[147]</sup> On June 11, Van der Sloot was charged in Lima Superior Court with [first-degree murder](#) and [robbery](#).<sup>[148]</sup> On June 15, Aruban and Peruvian authorities announced an agreement to cooperate and allow investigators from Aruba to interview Van der Sloot at [Miguel Castro Castro](#) prison in Peru.<sup>[149]</sup> In a September 2010 interview from the prison, Van der Sloot reportedly admitted to the extortion plot, stating: "I wanted to get back at Natalee's family—her parents have been making my life tough for five years."<sup>[150]</sup> On January 11, 2012, Van der Sloot pleaded guilty to murdering Ramírez<sup>[18]</sup> and was sentenced to 28 years in prison.<sup>[151]</sup>

On November 12, 2010, tourists found a jawbone on an Aruban beach near the Phoenix Hotel and Bubali Swamp.<sup>[152]</sup> Aruban prosecutor Peter Blanken stated that a preliminary examination by a forensic expert on the island determined that the bone was from a young woman.<sup>[153]</sup> A part of the bone was sent to [The Hague](#) for testing by the [Netherlands Forensic Institute](#).<sup>[153][154]</sup> On November 23, 2010, Aruba Solicitor-General Taco Stein announced that—based on dental records—the jawbone was not from Holloway, and it was not even possible to determine whether it had come from a man or woman.<sup>[155]</sup>

## **Holloway declared legally dead<sup>[edit]</sup>**

In June 2011—six years after Natalee's disappearance—Dave Holloway filed a petition with the Alabama courts seeking to have his daughter declared legally dead. The papers were served on Beth Twitty, his former wife, who announced her intention to oppose the petition.<sup>[156]</sup> A hearing was held on September 23, 2011, at which time Probate Judge Alan King ruled that Dave Holloway had met the requirements for a legal presumption of death.<sup>[157]</sup> On January 12, 2012, a second hearing was held, after which Judge King signed the order declaring Natalee Holloway to be dead.<sup>[18]</sup>

## **Beth Twitty's involvement in the aftermath of her daughter's disappearance<sup>[edit]</sup>**

Twitty has alleged in televised interviews that Joran van der Sloot and the Kalpoe brothers know more than they have told, and that at least one of them sexually assaulted or raped her daughter.<sup>[158]</sup> Twitty stated that she received copies of police statements stating that Van der Sloot admitted having sex with Holloway at his home and described intimate details of her. She has never released copies of the alleged statement, though she characterizes them as admissions of "sexual assault" and Vinda de Sousa, former Holloway–Twitty family Aruban attorney, has indicated that no such admission was made.<sup>[159]</sup> In addition, Dompig denied that any such statement was made, stating that Van der Sloot and the Kalpoe brothers consistently denied having sex with Holloway.<sup>[160]</sup>

On June 12, 2005, three days after the arrest of Van der Sloot and the Kalpoe brothers, and in response to a nationally televised address by Aruba Prime Minister [Nelson Oduber](#) reaffirming Aruba's commitment to solving the case, Twitty stated, "I'm not getting any answers."<sup>[161]</sup> She



added, "I don't feel any further along than the day I got here."<sup>[161]</sup> Twitty stated that her complaints were not addressed specifically at the Aruban government, but arose from frustration at not knowing what happened to her daughter.<sup>[161]</sup>

On July 5, 2005, following the initial release of the Kalpoe brothers, Twitty alleged, "Two suspects were released yesterday who were involved in a violent crime against my daughter,"<sup>[14]</sup> and referred to the Kalpoe brothers as "criminals".<sup>[58]</sup> A demonstration involving about two hundred Arubans took place that evening outside the courthouse in Oranjestad in anger over Twitty's remarks, with signs reading "Innocent until proven guilty" and "Respect our Dutch laws or go home."<sup>[58][162]</sup> Satish Kalpoe's attorney threatened legal action over Twitty's allegations, which he described as "prejudicial, inflammatory, libelous, and totally outrageous." On July 8, 2005, Twitty read a statement that said her remarks were fueled by "despair and frustration" and that she "apologize[d] to the Aruban people and to the Aruban authorities if I or my family offended you in any way."<sup>[162]</sup>

Twitty was criticized for her focus on Van der Sloot and the Kalpoe brothers, to the exclusion of any other theory as to what happened to her daughter. According to the lawsuit filed by the Kalpoe brothers, she has (on various television programs) repeatedly accused them, and Van der Sloot, of "sexual assault" and "gang rape" of her daughter.<sup>[163][164]</sup>

Twitty was also criticized for making what were deemed to have been inconsistent and contradictory statements—for example, as to whether there were operating surveillance cameras at the Holiday Inn. According to Julia Renfro, the U.S. born editor of the Aruban tourist oriented newspaper *Aruba Today* who befriended Twitty in the early days of the investigation, Twitty pandered to [tabloid television](#) and her "behavior was odd from the get-go."<sup>[11]</sup> Renfro noted that "Twitty immediately concluded that her daughter had been [kidnapped](#) and made no effort to check hospitals or police,"<sup>[165]</sup> adding that within a couple of days, after fixing responsibility on Joran van der Sloot, Twitty "was telling TV interviewers that she knew her daughter had been gang-raped and [murdered](#)."<sup>[165]</sup>

Her book [\*Loving Natalee: A Mother's Testament of Hope and Faith\*](#),<sup>[47]</sup> was published on October 2, 2007 under the name "Beth Holloway," which she resumed using following her December 2006 divorce from Jug Twitty.<sup>[47][166]</sup>

What we want is, we want justice. And you know—and we have to recognize the fact that, you know, this crime has been committed on the island of Aruba, and we know the perpetrators. We know it's these suspects, Deepak and Satish Kalpoe and Joran Van Der Sloot. And you know, we just have to, though, keep going, Nancy, because the only way we will get justice for Natalee is if we do keep going. I mean, if we give up, absolutely nothing will happen. Nothing.

— *Beth Holloway*<sup>[167]</sup>

Following the airing of the De Vries program, Beth Holloway adhered to the position that the tapes represented the way events transpired and told the [New York Post](#) that she believed her daughter might still be alive if Van der Sloot had called for help. She contended that Van der Sloot dumped Holloway's body, possibly alive, into the [Caribbean](#).<sup>[168]</sup> Twitty also alleged that the

person Joran van der Sloot supposedly called that evening was his father, Paulus, who, according to Holloway, "orchestrated what to do next."<sup>[169]</sup> She and Dave Holloway alleged that Joran van der Sloot was receiving "special legal favors."<sup>[169]</sup> After the court decision not to rearrest Van der Sloot was affirmed, Beth Holloway stated, "I think that what I do take comfort in, his life is a living hell,"<sup>[170]</sup> later adding, "I'd be good with a [Midnight Express](#) prison anywhere for Joran."<sup>[171]</sup>

In response to her daughter's disappearance, Beth Holloway founded the International Safe Travels Foundation,<sup>[172]</sup> a [non-profit organization](#) designed "to inform and educate the public to help them travel more safely as they travel internationally."<sup>[173]</sup> She has marketed herself as a for-fee speaker through the Nashville Speakers Bureau.<sup>[174]</sup> In April 2010, Holloway announced plans for a service called "Mayday 360", to intervene immediately when young people get into trouble overseas. She stated that if necessary, former federal agents with specific knowledge of a country could be dispatched there.<sup>[175]</sup> In May 2010, she announced that the Natalee Holloway Resource Center would open at the [National Museum of Crime & Punishment](#). Located in [Washington, D.C.](#), the center opened on June 8 to aid families of missing persons.<sup>[176]</sup>

Though Beth Holloway made television appearances as new developments arose in the case, she was under FBI direction not to discuss her daughter's case or that of [Stephany Flores](#).<sup>[177]</sup>

## Criticism of the investigation<sup>[edit]</sup>



A young woman leaves a message on a prayer wall erected in support of Holloway

The Twittys and their supporters criticized a perceived lack of progress by Aruban police.<sup>[178][179]</sup> The Twittys' own actions in Aruba were also criticized, and the Twittys were accused of actively stifling any evidence that might impugn Holloway's character by asking her fellow students to remain silent about the case and using their access to the media to push their own version of events. The Twittys denied this.<sup>[134]</sup>

While the Twittys initially discouraged a travel boycott of Aruba, this changed by September 2005. Beth Twitty urged that persons not travel to Aruba and other Dutch territories because of what she stated were tourist safety issues. In a November 8, 2005 news conference, Alabama [Governor Bob Riley](#) and the Twittys urged Alabamians and others to boycott Aruba.<sup>[23]</sup> Riley also wrote to other United States governors seeking their support—the governors of Georgia and Arkansas eventually joined in the call for boycott. The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, city council voted to ask the governor of Pennsylvania to call for a boycott.<sup>[180]</sup> The governor did not join in the call for a boycott, and no federal support was given.<sup>[23][24]</sup>

The boycott was supported by some of Alabama's Congressional delegation, including both senators and Congressman [Spencer Bachus](#) (R-AL), who represents Mountain Brook. Senator [Richard Shelby](#) (R-AL) voiced his support for the boycott in a letter to the [American Society of Travel Agents](#).<sup>[181]</sup> Shelby stated, "For the safety, security and well-being of our citizens, I do not believe that we can trust that we will be protected while in Aruba."<sup>[181]</sup> Prime Minister Oduber stated that Aruban investigators have done their best to solve the mystery, and responded to the call for boycott, "This is a preposterous and irresponsible act. We are not guerillas. We are not terrorists. We don't pose a threat to the United States, nor to Alabama."<sup>[182]</sup>

Members of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association, the Aruba Tourism Authority, the Aruba Hospitality and Security Foundation, the Aruban Chamber of Commerce and government figures, including Public Relations Representative Ruben Trapenberg, formed an "Aruba Strategic Communications Task Force" to respond collectively to what they perceived to be unfounded and/or negative portrayals of the island.<sup>[183]</sup> The group issued press releases and sent representatives to appear in news media. They joined the Aruban government in opposing the calls for a boycott of the island.<sup>[134]</sup>

### **Skeeters tape and Dr. Phil; lawsuits[[edit](#)]**

On September 15, 2005, the [Dr. Phil](#) television show showed parts of a hidden camera interview with Deepak Kalpoe in which Kalpoe seems to answer "She did. You'd be surprised how easy it was" to a suggestion that Holloway had sex with all three men.<sup>[158]</sup> The taping had been instigated by Jamie Skeeters, a private investigator. When the tape was broadcast, news reports indicated an expectation of a rearrest, which Dompig termed a "strong possibility" if the tapes were legitimate.<sup>[160]</sup>

Aruban police subsequently provided a fuller version of the relevant part of the tape in which Kalpoe's response differed from the [Dr. Phil](#) version, apparently due to editing that may have altered the meaning of what was said.<sup>[184]</sup> An unofficial Aruban affiliated spokesperson and commentator on the case said videotape showed that Kalpoe had shaken his head and said "No, she didn't.", thereby denying that Holloway had sex with him and the other two men. According to an [MSNBC](#) report, the crucial words are inaudible, and presenter Rita Cosby questioned if it could be substantiated that Kalpoe had ever made the statements attributed to him in the [Dr. Phil](#) version's transcript of the secret recording.<sup>[185]</sup>

In December 2006, the Kalpoes filed a slander and libel suit against Dr. Phil and Skeeters (who died in January 2007)<sup>[111]</sup> in Los Angeles.<sup>[186]</sup> Beth Twitty and Dave Holloway responded by filing a wrongful death lawsuit against the Kalpoes in the same venue. The wrongful death suit was dismissed for lack of personal jurisdiction on June 1, 2007;<sup>[186]</sup> the libel and slander case was initially set for trial on October 12, 2011<sup>[187]</sup> but was later set for April 2015.<sup>[188]</sup> An earlier lawsuit had been filed in New York City by the parents against Paulus and Joran van der Sloot and served on them on a visit to New York. The case had been dismissed in August 2006 as filed in an inconvenient forum.<sup>[189]</sup>

On November 10, 2005, Paulus van der Sloot won an unjust detention action against the Aruban government, clearing him as a suspect and allowing him to retain his government contract.<sup>[74]</sup> The

elder Van der Sloot then brought a second action, seeking monetary damages for himself and his family because of his false arrest.<sup>[190][191]</sup> The action was initially successful, but the award of damages was reversed on appeal.<sup>[192]</sup>

### **Amigoe article**[\[edit\]](#)

The *Amigoe* reported on interviews with Renfro and Dompig in which they said that Aruban authorities had been systematically obstructed in their investigation by U.S. officials. They also said that within a day of Holloway being reported missing, a [medjet](#), unauthorized by Aruban authorities, had arrived on Aruba and had remained for several days for the purpose of covertly taking Holloway off the island without notifying local authorities.<sup>[193]</sup> Renfro also said she and Beth Twitty received a phone call from an unknown woman on June 2, 2005 asking for money in return for her giving Holloway's location, and asserting that Holloway was unwilling to return to her mother. According to Renfro, she and another American went to a drug house where Holloway supposedly was, bringing money, but found that Jug Twitty had already been to the area, spreading "a lot of uproar and panic in the direct vicinity," and nothing could be accomplished.<sup>[193]</sup> The Twittys disputed Renfro's accounts, Beth describing Renfro as "a witch."<sup>[34]</sup>

### **Film adaptation**[\[edit\]](#)

*Main article:* [Natalee Holloway \(film\)](#)

On April 19, 2009, [Lifetime Movie Network](#) aired *Natalee Holloway*, a [television film](#) based on Beth Holloway's book *Loving Natalee*.<sup>[194]</sup> Starring [Tracy Pollan](#) as Beth Holloway-Twitty, [Grant Show](#) as George "Jug" Twitty, [Amy Gumenick](#) as Natalee Holloway and Jacques Strydom as Joran van der Sloot, the film retells events leading up to the night of Holloway's disappearance in 2005, and the ensuing investigation in the aftermath. It was shot in South Africa.<sup>[195]</sup>

The movie stages re-creations of various scenarios, based on the testimony of key players and suspects, including Van der Sloot. The broadcast of the film attracted 3.2 million viewers, garnering the highest [television ratings](#) in the network's 11-year history.<sup>[196]</sup> Although it set ratings records for Lifetime, the movie received mixed reviews from critics. Alec Harvey of *[The Birmingham News](#)* called the movie "sloppy and uneven, a forgettable look at the tragedy that consumed the nation's attention for months."<sup>[197]</sup> However, Jake Meaney of *[PopMatters](#)* found the film to be surprisingly "calm and levelheaded", and praised Tracy Pollan's portrayal of Holloway's mother.<sup>[198]</sup> A follow up film, *[Justice for Natalee Holloway](#)*, aired in mid-2011 on the Lifetime Movie Network. This film picks up in 2010, on the five year anniversary of Natalee's disappearance. It continues to center on the investigation and what exactly happened to the Alabama teen.

### **Media coverage**[\[edit\]](#)



[News crews](#) covering the Holloway disappearance, June 10, 2005

[U.S. television networks](#) devoted much air time to the search for Holloway, the investigation of her disappearance, and rumors surrounding the case. [Greta Van Susteren](#), host of [Fox News Channel](#)'s *On the Record*, and [Nancy Grace](#) on her eponymous [Headline News](#) program were among the most prominent television personalities to devote time to the incident. Van Susteren's almost continuous coverage of the story caused *On the Record* to get its best ratings to date,<sup>[199]</sup> while Grace's show became the cornerstone of the new "Headline Prime" block on Headline News, which ran two episodes (a live show and a repeat) every night during prime-time. As the case wore on, much of the attention was given to Beth Twitty and her statements.<sup>[200]</sup> Aruban government spokesman Ruben Trapenberg stated, "The case is under a microscope, and the world is watching."<sup>[44]</sup>

The saturation of coverage triggered a backlash among some critics who argued that such extensive media attention validates the "[missing white woman syndrome](#)" theory, which argues that missing person cases involving [white](#) women and girls receive disproportionately more attention in the media compared with cases involving white males or people of color. [CNN](#) ran a segment criticizing the amount of coverage their competitors gave to the story despite what they characterized as a lack of new items to report, with CNN news anchor [Anderson Cooper](#) calling the coverage "downright ridiculous".<sup>[201]</sup>

Early in the case, political commentator and columnist [Arianna Huffington](#) wrote, "If you were to get your news only from television, you'd think the top issue facing our country right now is an 18-year-old girl named Natalee who went missing in Aruba. Every time one of these stories comes up, like, say, [Michael Jackson](#), when it's finally over I think, what a relief, now we can get back to real news. But we never do."<sup>[51]</sup>

In March 2008, [El Diario](#) commented, "But if doubts persist about cases involving missing [Latinos](#), there are reasons why. These cases rarely receive the attention and resources we see given to other missing persons. The English language media, for example, appear to be focused on the stories of missing white women, such as with the disappearance of Natalee Holloway in Aruba. Cases of missing Latino and [African American](#) women often remain faceless, if and when they are even covered."<sup>[202]</sup>

[CBS](#) senior journalist Danna Walker stated, "There is criticism that it is only a story because she is a pretty blonde—and white—and it is criticism that journalists are taking to heart and looking

elsewhere for other stories. But it is a big story because it is an American girl who went off on an adventure and didn't come back. It is a huge mystery, it is something people can identify with."<sup>[5]</sup>

[Good Morning America](#) anchor [Chris Cuomo](#) was unapologetic of his program's extensive coverage of the Holloway case. "I don't believe it's my role to judge what people want to watch ... If they say, 'I want to know what happened to this girl' ... I want to help them find out."<sup>[203]</sup>

Holloway's family, however, took the opposite approach and criticized the lessening of coverage of the young woman's disappearance due to a shift in news priority when [Hurricane Katrina](#) struck on August 23, 2005. The saturation coverage of Holloway's disappearance was finally eclipsed by the hurricane.<sup>[163][204]</sup> Beth Twitty and Dave Holloway alleged that Aruba took advantage of the extensive coverage of the hurricane to release the suspects.<sup>[163]</sup> However, the deadline for judicial review of Joran van der Sloot's detention was set long before the hurricane.<sup>[74]</sup>

Dave Holloway lamented in his book:

Hurricane Katrina had left the door open for the boys to be sent on their way with little publicity and few restrictions because it took the world's focus off of Natalee, but only for a brief time. The huge amount of publicity had waned and, during that time of quiet for us, Joran and the Kalpoe brothers were sent home ... All of the news shows that had followed our every move only a day before had now become fixated on the next big ratings grabber: the victims of Hurricane Katrina.<sup>[204]</sup>

## See also<sup>[[edit](#)]</sup>

- [List of people who disappeared mysteriously](#)

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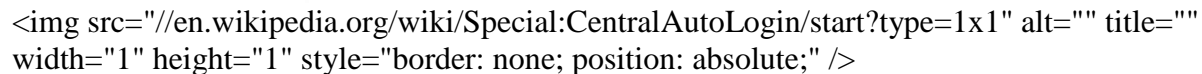
- [Natalee Holloway Resource Center](#) at the [National Museum of Crime & Punishment](#)
- [Summary of Aruban judicial system](#) at Aruba.com (mirrored by the [Internet Archive](#))

## Video

- [Natalee Holloway reenactment](#) at the [Aruba Police Force](#) (in Dutch)
- [Skeeters interview with Deepak Kalpoe](#) at Scrux.com
- [Documentary about the case](#) based on the police files

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