

2 linked to Holloway case to be freed

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ORANJESTAD, Aruba --

A judge on Friday ordered the release of two brothers suspected in the disappearance of American teenager Natalee Holloway, ruling that the evidence wasn't strong enough to continue holding them, a prosecutor said.

Satish and Deepak Kalpoe, who were re-arrested in the case for a third time last week, were to be released from jail by Saturday.

Prosecutor Dop Kruimel said her office hasn't decided whether to appeal the decision to release the men.

"We are very pleased," said Hose Figaroa, Deepak Kalpoe's attorney. "There is not enough evidence to keep him locked up. Our opinion was finally heard."

The two brothers and a third suspect who remains in jail, Joran van der Sloot, were the last known people to see Holloway alive before she vanished on May 30, 2005, hours before she was scheduled to return home to Alabama with fellow high school classmates celebrating their graduation.

A friend of the girl's mother, Beth Twitty, who traveled to Aruba with her this week said Twitty was upset by the decision.

"She was getting her life back to normal before all this happened," Carol Standiser said. "It would have been better to let things go the way they were going."

The three suspects were re-arrested on Nov. 21 on suspicion of involvement in Holloway's death. Authorities said they had "new incriminating evidence," but defense attorneys complained that the new material amounted to little more than misunderstandings in the suspects' recorded conversations.

The 18-year-old girl from Mountain Brook, Ala., was last seen leaving a bar with the three suspects. All of them have denied having any role in her disappearance.

No trace of Holloway has been found despite extensive searches. Prosecutors have said they have evidence that she is dead. Their statement Friday said the evidence provides grounds to suspect the men were involved in covering up a crime committed or the disposing of a corpse.

But the judge ruled in the closed-door session that the evidence was not strong enough to warrant holding the suspects on suspicion of involvement in a crime such as manslaughter or assault.

Van der Sloot's mother said Friday that she was happy for the Kalpoe brothers but did not know whether the rulings mean anything for her son's case.

"I'm happy that something is happening," Anita van der Sloot said.

The Kalpoe brothers - Satish is 21, Deepak, 24 - were arrested in Aruba. Van der Sloot was arrested in the Netherlands, where he has been attending college, and flew to the Dutch Caribbean island.

Since the disappearance, about 10 people have been arrested but nobody has been formally charged.

In April, investigators from the Netherlands dug around the home of van der Sloot's family for two days without revealing what prompted the search. Investigators said they visited the Kalpoe's home for an "inspection" in May without revealing details.

Dave Holloway, the girl's father, has said he plans to relaunch a search for evidence of his daughter's remains in deep waters off Aruba after police re-arrested the suspects.