

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending June 19, 2010

Aruba – U.S. Media Returns to Cover Van Der Sloot Case

Aruba's chief prosecutor Blanken told the media last week that he is not aware of Joran van der Sloot's alleged statement in Peru in which he said he was willing to tell Aruban authorities where the body of missing American teenager Natalee Holloway is. NBC News - citing police sources - reported that Van der Sloot is now willing to tell authorities in Aruba where to find Holloway's remains. The network did not provide further details. "It could be interesting if it is true," Blanken said, while adding a note of caution about Van der Sloot's history of false statements. He said his office was trying to get into contact with Peruvian police to get more information, but said they had been unsuccessful as of Friday morning. CNN and NBC correspondents have reportedly arrived on Aruba. The U.S. media seem to be interested in an interview with Joran's mother, Anita van der Sloot. (Various media)

Curacao – USS Memphis Arrives For a Brief R&R Visit

The U.S. submarine USS Memphis has arrived on Curacao for a brief visit. The crew is looking forward to enjoying rest and relaxation opportunities. The submarine will depart on Tuesday. (Various media)

Curacao – FCCA Caribbean Platinum Cruise Conference Started

Curaçao Ports Authority (CPA) is the host of Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Platinum Conference from June 14-17. The FCCA Conference expects participation from the nautical and cruise business sectors. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

Antilles - Minister Jacoba Pleased With Trafficking in Persons Report

Antillean Justice Minister Magali Jacoba said she is pleased with the trafficking in persons progress made throughout the Netherlands Antilles in a reaction to the release of the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report by the U.S. State Department on Monday. "The Netherlands Antilles was listed on the 2009 watch list, because we did not do enough, by U.S. standards, to combat trafficking in persons," the minister said in a statement.

The 2010 TIP report classifies the Netherlands Antilles as a "Tier 2" country, meaning that although the Netherlands Antilles does not fully meet all the minimum requirements, the islands are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards. The report explains that the Antilles has been tougher on human traffickers and it also suggests legislative ways to deter crime. (Various media)

Aruba – Minister Winklaar: Visit to the U.S. Successful

Aruban Minister of Economical Affairs, Social Affairs, and Culture Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar met in Washington, DC with Walter P. Bastian, Deputy Assistant Secretary for

the Western Hemisphere U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration. Mr. Bastian is responsible for developing programs, policies and strategies designed to strengthen the United States' commercial position in the Western Hemisphere. They discussed Aruban commercial and investment opportunities. Also, Minister Winklaar met at U.S. State Department with EEB/FO Bureau PDAS Anna Borg to discuss WTO issues and to improve the great bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Aruba. (La Prensa)

Curacao/Aruba – Venezuelan Coast Guard Participates in Exercise

The Venezuelan Coast Guard is here to participate in the joint Coast Guard exercise "Open Eyes". The objective of the exercise is to improve the mutual relations. (Various media)

Aruba – Minister Oduber Denies Permission For 200 Venezuelan Workers

Aruban Labor Minister Otmar Oduber categorically denies that the Aruban government gave permission to 200 Venezuelans to work for the US-owned Valero-refinery. Valero does plan to hire employees and contractors for the refinery restart, but the Aruban government policy is to hire local employees, the Minister said. (La Prensa)

Aruba – Peruvian and Aruban Authorities Agree to Cooperate

Aruban and Peruvian authorities have agreed to "help each other" in the murder investigation of Stephany Flores -- in which Joran Van der Sloot is the prime suspect, an Aruban government spokesman said Tuesday.

Investigators hope the cooperation will lead to new information about the disappearance of Alabama teenager Natalee Holloway in 2005 in Aruba. Van der Sloot is also a suspect in that case.

Following a phone meeting with Peruvian Judge Carlos Morales on Tuesday morning, Aruban government spokesman Taco Stein said Peruvian authorities have agreed to allow Aruban investigators into Peru to interview van der Sloot once a formal request has been made.

Stein did not indicate when the request would take place or when Aruban investigators are expected to arrive in Peru, but described the meeting as a "positive start" to information sharing that many Arubans hope will shed more light on the Holloway case. (Various media)

Aruba – Natalee Holloway's Father Back in Aruba

Natalee Holloway's father was back in Aruba on Monday, hoping the suspect in his daughter's disappearance has provided local authorities with new clues since being arrested for the death of a 21-year-old woman in Peru.

Dave Holloway planned to discuss the latest developments with prosecutors and investigators at a meeting Tuesday, said Tim Miller, a friend and the founder of Texas EquuSearch, a group that has repeatedly searched for the missing Alabama woman since her disappearance in 2005. He had previously said they would discuss the case Monday but the meeting was postponed for unknown reasons.

Miller, who is staying with Holloway in Aruba but not attending the meetings, said volunteers were ready to immediately resume the search if there is any new information from Joran van der Sloot, who was jailed Friday on charges of killing business student Stephany Flores on May 30 in a Lima hotel.

Miller said the death of Flores, on the fifth anniversary of 18-year-old Natalee Holloway's disappearance in Aruba, opened up old wounds for the distraught father, who has been frustrated with the lack of progress by Aruban authorities.

"He's very saddened," Miller told The Associated Press. "He feels that if the Arubans had done their job, Joran would be in jail and Stephany would be alive."

Holloway and Miller have made many previous trips to Aruba in search of clues about the teen from Mountain Brook, Alabama, who was last seen leaving a bar with Van der Sloot on the final night of a high school graduation trip to Aruba. (Various media)

Aruba - Excerpts From Van Der Sloot Confession

Dutch media released excerpts from the signed June 6 confession of Joran van der Sloot, who was subsequently charged with first-degree murder and robbery in the killing of Stephany Flores, a Peruvian business student whom he met while playing poker in a Lima casino. In the confession, a transcript of which was obtained by The Associated Press, Van der Sloot is questioned by a prosecutor in the presence of a state-appointed defense attorney.

Van der Sloot spoke in Dutch, with a translator approved by the Dutch Embassy translating his comments into Spanish. The Spanish has been translated into English by the AP.

Asked if he has anything to add to the confession:

"I wish to talk about the Natelle Holoway (sic) case from five years ago and the possibility that if this trial goes quickly and fluidly it could be possible for me to be extradited to Aruba. I wish to discuss the case but not at the moment. It's a case that is years old and I would prefer to speak with the Aruban police and if there is the possibility of closing the case I would be ready to clarify the case ..." (Various media)

Aruba – Prosecutor Wants To Talk To Van Der Sloot About Holloway

Prosecutors in Aruba said Wednesday they want to take Joran van der Sloot up on his offer to discuss the unsolved disappearance of American teenager Natalee Holloway. Judicial authorities in Peru are willing to arrange a conversation between Aruban police and Van der Sloot, Attorney General Robert Pietersz said. Van Der Sloot is awaiting trial in Peru in the slaying of a 21-year-old woman in Lima.

Van der Sloot told his jailers he is ready to clarify the Holloway case, but only to Aruba authorities. He is the only remaining suspect in the 2005 disappearance.

An Aruba policeman and a prosecutor could travel to Peru as early as August, said Peter Blanken, the island's chief prosecutor.

Van der Sloot has said he fears for his life in the Peruvian prison. But regardless of what information the suspect might provide in the Holloway case, it is unlikely he would be brought to Aruba before completing any sentence if convicted in the South American country, Blanken said.

"I think it's out of question because the case in Peru is a very severe case and the Peruvian authorities have said they do not want to do that," Blanken said.

Dave Holloway, the missing teen's father, met with Aruba police Tuesday, Blanken said. He said authorities did not have any new information in the case to discuss. (Various media)

Curacao\Aruba - U.S. FOL Welcomes New Commander

Lt Col Michael J. Price, Commander of the U S Forward Operating Locations in Curacao and Aruba, relinquished his leadership to Lt Col Brian Bell yesterday. Governor Frits Goedgedrag, Antilles PM Emily de Jongh-Elhage, Aruban PM Mike Eman, and other government officials were present at the ceremony. During 2009, surveillance flights from the U.S. FOL assisted in the seizure of narcotics with a street value of over 20 million USD. Lt Col Price said cooperation with Antilles, Aruban, and Dutch law enforcement agencies was outstanding. Also, U.S. FOL military and civilian personnel often volunteer their services in support of community projects and are pleased to have established partnership with various local agencies which benefits the people of Curaçao. (Various media)

Aruba - Peruvian Judge to Ask Van Der Sloot About Death

A Peruvian judge expects to interrogate Joran van der Sloot next week about the death of 21-year-old Peruvian woman Stephany Flores in his hotel room on May 30th. Thursday's statement said Morales will pass along any information to pertinent authorities if Van der Sloot discusses the 2005 disappearance of Natalee Holloway, a case in which he also is the prime suspect. Van der Sloot has said he is ready to talk about the case, but only to Aruban authorities. (Various media)

Curacao – Tourism From The United States Up

The Curacao Tourism Board announced the 2009 campaign to attract wealthy tourists from the Northeastern part of the U.S. - 'Curacao, the Hidden Treasure of the Caribbean' – has paid off. Tourism arrivals from the U.S. increased by 53% in April 2010 compared to the same month last year. A second daily American Airlines flight from Miami and a daily Insel Air flight to Miami contributed to the increase. Another factor contributing to the boost in arrivals is the increase in hotel rooms. Renaissance Curaçao opened its doors in February 2009. The Baoase Luxury Resort opened in June 2009, followed by the recent opening of the new Hyatt Regency Curaçao in April, the island's largest property with 350 rooms. Curaçao now has approximately 4,500 hotel rooms. (Various media)

Antilles – Dutch Court Sentences 5 Somalis for Piracy

A Netherlands court sentenced five Somali men Thursday to five years each in prison for trying to hijack a Dutch Antilles-flagged ship last year, the first ruling of its kind in Europe as the continent moves to crackdown on East African offshore piracy. The men were the first to go to trial in a European court on charges of piracy in the waters off East Africa, which has been a beehive in recent years for hijacking-for-ransom incidents against oil tankers and other cargo vessels. (Various media)

CURAÇAO

Crime June 11 – June 17

On June 12 a man in Kanga was shot and injured during a domestic dispute. On June 14 another man in Suffisant was shot and injured during an altercation (Amigoe, Extra).

ARUBA

Crime June 11 – June 17

On June 15 a home owner in Oranjestad was beaten and robbed by two men (Awe Mainta).

ST. MAARTEN

Crime June 11 – June 17

On June 12 a bar in Philipsburg was robbed by several men. The following evening, a Chinese restaurant in Sucker Garden was robbed. On June 14 a businessman in Pointe Blanche was robbed of his vehicle by three men (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time).

Suspects arrested after high-speed chase

Robbers stole a businessman's Suzuki van and money at gunpoint in Pointe Blanche on June 14. Later, the two suspects led police through town in a high-speed chase that ended in Hope Estate where they were arrested. Police also seized a sawed-off shotgun and ammunition found in the vehicle. A third suspect was arrested afterwards. Police also reported that four other persons had been arrested on June 13 and 14 in connection with burglary and theft cases (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time, Extra).

"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruban press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."