



NEWS

Judge dismisses Holloway lawsuit

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378 words

4 August 2006

[Newsday](#)

ALL EDITIONS

A29

English

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A Manhattan state judge yesterday dismissed a lawsuit brought by the parents of Natalee Holloway, the Alabama high schooler who disappeared in Aruba in May 2005, against a Dutch teen once under suspicion in the case.

In dismissing the case against Joran van der Sloot, 18, Judge Barbara Kapnick also threw out the claim against his father, Paulus. The elder van der Sloot had been accused in the original complaint for "failing to take reasonable steps to prevent his son from sexually assaulting Natalee Holloway."

Holloway's parents, Elizabeth Ann Twitty and Dave Edward Holloway, sued the younger van der Sloot, claiming he injured their daughter. The parents, who sought unspecified damages, argued that New York courts had an interest in seeing that Aruba was safer for the thousands of New York residents who visited the island each year.

Natalee Holloway disappeared during a high school class trip to Aruba. Her whereabouts are unknown. Local officials in Aruba, a protectorate of the Netherlands, had taken Joran van der Sloot into custody and questioned him, but have never filed charges in connection with Holloway's disappearance.

Holloway's parents believed that New York was an appropriate place to file their lawsuit because a lot of potential witnesses live in the United States. They also claimed that a 17-year-old girl stated she was a prior victim of a sexual assault by Joran van der Sloot but wasn't willing to testify in Aruba, court papers stated.

Kapnick noted that defense attorney Joseph Tacopina had submitted an affidavit from the girl in which she said van der Sloot had never done anything improper to her and that she was willing to testify in Aruba.

In dismissing the lawsuit, Kapnick ruled that New York was an inconvenient place to bring the case. She added that the fact there would be heavy media attention in a lawsuit in Aruba didn't justify having the case in Manhattan.

Neither Tacopina nor John Q. Kelly, the attorney for the Holloway family, could be reached for comment.

AP File Photos - 1) A lawsuit against Dutch teen Joran van der Sloot, 18, left, brought by 2) Natalie Holloway's parents was dismissed (A29 H)

Document NDAY000020060804e2840005o