

Island of aruba



1 ISLAND OF ARUBA God must have loved Aruba so much. He not only blessed Aruba with a near-perfect, impeccable weather that is beyond compare with white, sandy beaches to boot and a lucid, placid azure waters that envelop it. It lies outside the Caribbean hurricane belt and thus stands out among other Caribbean islands that parlay tourism as major beckoning strategy to the outside world. Its tropical climate is regulated by constant trade winds from the Atlantic Ocean and thus is practically stabilized with an all-year round temperature of 27 degC. Its population is multi-lingual and most are conversant in English and many speak Dutch and Spanish fluently although majority speaks Papiamentu, which is a mishmash of Dutch, Spanish, English and Portuguese (Sullivan 7-20). Aruba is thus a natural magnet for tourists all over the world especially the world's rich and famous. Naturally, hotels, restaurants, beach resorts and other tourism infrastructures mushroomed in the capital Oranjestad and elsewhere in Aruba's 193 sq. km. island, which is an autonomous member of the Kingdom of Netherlands. It has the best of both worlds, enjoying full autonomy in its internal affairs from Netherlands yet enjoying the mantle of protection, specifically in defense and foreign affairs from the Dutch Government (Brushaber 2). Aruba's tourism has leapfrogged beyond everyone's imagination that it has dwarfed its oil refining and offshore banking concerns. Statistics show that 1.5 million tourists visit Aruba annually 75% of whom come from USA. Likewise hotel occupancy in 2004 averaged 80% where the rest of the Caribbean nations only managed 68%. Its GDP has risen astronomically to \$2.4 billion and its GDP per capita to \$23,831 which ranks it as 32nd in the whole world (CIA, The World Factbook). But before Arubans could pat themselves on their backs, grim reality has

<https://assignbuster.com/island-of-aruba/>

dawned on

2

them and the rest of humanity: that Aruba has been identified as a jump-off point for US and Europe-bound narcotics such as cocaine, heroin and marijuana and that many of its denizens are drowning in drug addiction (Hanson 13). Likewise, it has entrenched itself as a hub for money laundering and human trafficking activities.

It had been unearthed that drugs from Colombia are dumped to Aruba, Curacao and the island of Margarita to be transshipped to USA and Europe. Thus, the bombshell has been dropped i. e. 'the tourist-driven economy' of Aruba is a lie. Its economy is "literally floating on the proceeds of the drug trade" (Figueira 20, 50). It had also been ascertained that today Aruba stands in the forefront for human trafficking trade 'for the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation' (International Labour Office 259).

All these problems had never been more emphasized than in the Natalee Holloway case where the 18-year old Alabama high school graduate vanished without a trace on May 30, 2005 after last seen with Arubans Joran van der Sloot and brothers Deepak and Satish Kalpoe (Spence 112). All 3 were released from detention despite van der Sloot's confession that he was under the influence of marihuana on that fateful night. Van der Sloot also confessed in On The Record show that he sold Holloway into white slavery and earned from it. Geoffrey von Cromvoirt was also arrested for being a drug dealer. The case closed without being solved but not after it was revealed that drugs are aplenty and drug deals are but a natural occurrence in that island (Holloway 1-15). The case shattered Aruba's 'safe haven' image

<https://assignbuster.com/island-of-aruba/>

and calls to boycott it proliferated as it underscored the drug and human trafficking problem in Aruba (Porter & Prince 107).

Conclusion

To many tourists Aruba is God's gift to humanity, a paradise where the sun, seas, beaches charm and are feasts to tired eyes. But for people who linger closely, something evil lurks and

3

deeper investigation reveals that under its mantle are illicit drug-dealings, addiction to drugs by hapless citizens, money laundering and human trafficking activities and even a tight Mafia control, revealing the two faces of paradise. The people seems to be happy and in a state of nirvana but on analysis, they may be compelled to hide the bones and the rotting stench and keep up an illusion of harmony to keep the tourists coming. But the truth is, there's trouble in paradise.

4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brushaber, Susan and Arnold Greenberg. Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao Alive.

Hunter

Publishing, Inc, 2001.

CIA. The World Factbook- Aruba.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/geos/aa.html>

Figueira, Daurius. Cocaine and Heroin Trafficking in the Caribbean. iUniverse, 2004.

Hanson, Glen., Peter Venturelli and Annette Fleckenstein. Student Study Guide to Accompany

Drugs and Society. Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2008.

<https://assignbuster.com/island-of-aruba/>

Holloway, Dave., Stephanie Good and Larry Garrison. Aruba: The Tragic Untold Story of

Natalee Holloway and Corruption in Paradise. Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006.

International Labour Office. Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of

Conventions and Recommendations. International Labour Organization, 2008.

Porter, Darwin and Danforth Prince. Frommer's Caribbean. John Wiley and Sons, 2006.

Spence, Gerry. Bloodthirsty Bitches and Pious Pimps of Power. MacMillan, 2007.

Sullivan, Lynne. Adventure Guide to Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. Hunter Publishing, Inc, 2006.