

Back in the U.S.



AP Wirephoto

Herbert Bruno Kolker was reunited with his wife (left) and a friend greeted Joseph Karnatz

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Americans Freed After 4 Years in Cuban Jails

Miami

Three Americans jailed in Cuba for four years on a charge of smuggling a ton of marijuana arrived here last night after being released by

the Cuban government.

The three, who arrived home on a flight from Jamaica, were Edward J. Tavis, 49, Miami; Herbert Bruno Kolker, 46, Miami; and

Joseph Karnatz, 28, Fort Lauderdale.

They had been jailed in Cuba since February, 1971, when their 47-foot ketch *Pierrette II* was intercepted in Cuban waters by Cuban naval vessels.

Friends and relatives were on hand to greet the men, who were shabily clad in white shirts and baggy pants, unshaven, thin and worn.

Karnatz, when asked how he was treated, said, "The food was bad and there was water only three times a day for about a half an hour at a time."

Asked how it felt to be back in the United States, Karnatz said, "This is the greatest country on earth." He described the charges against the men as "completely false."

The men were questioned at length by FBI agents before being allowed to leave the customs area at Miami International Airport.

The three had left Miami on a cruise into the Bahamas. Federal authorities said the ketch had been the subject of an intensive search by the U.S. Coast Guard before it was seized by Cuba.

A customs spokesman said there were no U.S. charges pending against the three men. The U.S. State Department said release of the three left at least 18 Americans in Cuban jails on criminal charges other than hijacking and eight others held in cells on political charges.

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