

Paedophile freed - but where's the baby?

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A paedophile and his Thai bride, who were jailed after refusing to tell a court where their newborn baby was being kept, were freed today.

Judge Malcolm Cotterill, sitting at the High Court in Taunton, Somerset, agreed to let Andrew and Sakunna Milton walk free after they made an emotional and tearful apology and offered details of the baby's whereabouts.

The couple were allowed to walk free even though police have yet to verify the couple's story.

Mr and Mrs Milton, from Wellington, Somerset, told the court their son was born in Thailand at the end of June and was living there with 23-year-old Sakunna's brother and sister.

Mr Milton, 38, said he was "deeply sorry" for defying the court and refusing to disclose any information about the baby's sex or location when he appeared in court last Thursday.

He explained: "I feared they would get access to my child."

A tearful Mrs Milton, who was clutching a tissue, said she had left the baby with her family in Thailand because she was afraid Taunton County Council would take the baby from her.

Couple feared baby being taken

Through a translator she said: "The reason I came back here is because I want to live with my husband. The reason I left the baby in Thailand is because I am afraid that they will take the baby away."

She said she had regretted not co-operating with social services or the courts last week.

Judge Cotterill jailed the couple for contempt of court on Thursday, July 29.

Today he told them they had paid "a heavy price" for defying the court and told Mr Milton he should be ashamed of himself for exposing his wife to prison.

He went on: "You have paid a heavy price for defying the court. The court has no wish to send either of you to prison but the court's only concern is with the welfare of your child.

"You have only yourselves to blame for the situation you have been in for the last few days.

"I have no doubt you, Mrs Milton, acted as you did under the influence of your husband.

"It is no credit to you, Mr Milton, that you exposed Mrs Milton to the risk of imprisonment and actual imprisonment. You should be ashamed of yourself."

The couple were released the same day, before police had a chance to check their story. Outside court, detective Paul Jervis said he had spoken to Interpol and would contact the Foreign Office.

He said: "The police still need to confirm what has been said. The parents have made disclosures and we need to confirm this information."

He added that representatives would travel to Thailand to get DNA from the baby and confirm its

whereabouts.