



Press for the People



ICE agents with no warrant violently arrest migrants

Federal agents surveilled and detained two men in Spokane Valley, broke into their truck, injured and arrested them as they were going to a court hearing, breaking up a family.

BY AARON HEDGE • **IMMIGRATION** • MARCH 11, 2025



ICE agents, some uniformed, some not, detained two migrants March 10 in Spokane Valley. They told the men they had an

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For a week and a half, Kayla Somarriba and her husband Jeison Ruiz Rodriguez noticed suspicious vehicles circling their Spokane Valley block. Some were marked as federal law enforcement vehicles, others were clandestine. The couple was getting nervous.

“With everything going on, we’re gonna be paranoid,” Somarriba said. “You see this serious car, and I’m like, ‘Oh my God, what’s going on?’ But it was way too much. It’s one thing to see it once or twice, but it was just something that we would see almost daily.”

But she did not expect that federal agents would soon pull them over, break through the windows of their white Chevy Silverado, drag Ruiz Rodriguez and his brother Cesar from the vehicle and sweep them to a federal immigration jail in Tacoma after injuring the brothers with a Taser and a rifle.

The Ruiz Rodriguezes are migrants from Nicaragua; Somarriba was born in Miami.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol agents have been [working in the Inland Northwest](#) — as they have across the country — with agencies as far-flung as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to detain and deport migrants. It’s part of President Donald Trump’s chaotic effort to rid the country of immigrants the administration says are here illegally.

ICE did not respond to a request for comment by press time. We will update this story if it does.

At least one agent who detained the Ruiz Rodriguezes was working for HHS, said Jennyfer Mesa, the founder of Latinos en Spokane (LeS), an advocacy organization that’s working to get legal representation for the detained men.



Mesa said the arrest was an “example” of how the government could use a new federal law requiring federal agents to arrest and deport any undocumented immigrant who’s been accused of a crime to subvert constitutional due process protections.

“What happens if you’re not convicted and released on bond?” Mesa said, referring to the [Laken Riley Act](#), which was the first legislation Trump signed into law in his second term on January 29. “What happens if you’re still in that process?”

In early February, two men wearing black hoodies and camouflage hats approached the LeS headquarters on Monroe Street in North Spokane trying to get information about migrants the organization was helping. In anticipation of this kind of intimidation, LeS had just the week before held a retreat during which they established an appointment-only policy and locked its doors. The men could not enter.

During the following week, the organization received at least three threatening phone calls, said Jorge Guerrero, an immigration and environmental justice organizer with LeS.

“They said, ‘Hey, who are your funders?’” Guerrero told RANGE. “‘How are you guys working? We’re gonna make sure you get audited. We’re gonna make sure that ICE agents show up.’ All ICE agents need is probable cause for something like a call.”

At the end of that same week — a few days before LeS [pushed](#) the Spokane City Council to affirm its commitment to the state sanctuary law — ICE agents showed up to the locked doors at LeS’s Spokane and Spokane Valley locations. LeS staff did not interact with the agents, Guerrero said.

Things have calmed down at LeS, but not in the broader community. Guerrero said there have been a number of reports of ICE agents stopping migrants in Spokane, but there’s no way for



They would even arrest migrants in Spokane and [house them](#) in an Idaho jail to skirt Washington's sanctuary law, which bars state and local law enforcement from helping the federal government enforce immigration laws.

But this case, which seemed to Mesa to be patently illegal, seemed like an escalation. It came a few days after the government [arrested](#) Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil in New York who was here on a green card, which confers permanent residential status, and began to process him for deportation.

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Shattered glass — and lives — after trying to work the system

Before he was arrested, Ruiz Rodriguez was facing two legal challenges.

One of them was a good challenge, an opportunity. He had been living and working in the US with his social security number and on a work permit for a decade, Somarriba told RANGE. He was on the cusp of getting his green card.

But he was also dealing with a harassment charge in Spokane County Court stemming from a family feud — a charge he told Somarriba was warrantless — and had a pending court hearing on March 10, which he shared with his brother Cesar Ruiz Rodriguez, who was charged with the same offense. RANGE verified the charges in court documents.

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They made it to March 10 without any confrontation with law enforcement and left their home near the Walmart on the east border of Spokane Valley for the Spokane County Courthouse. They wanted to comply with the law.

As they pulled from First Avenue onto Custer Road, heading south, they saw a “suspicious” unmarked SUV on the corner. It pulled up behind them and flashed police lights. Another unmarked vehicle pulled out in front of them and flashed its lights, too.

Suddenly, they were surrounded by six unmarked vehicles — five SUVs and one Dodge Charger — boxing them in so they could not drive away. Somarriba, sitting in the passenger seat, rolled her window down, and one of 12 agents, some in “Police,” “ICE” and other uniforms, others in plain clothes, approached.

“They haven’t done anything,” Somarriba said she told the agents. “We’re on our way to, we’re on our way to our court.”

Somarriba asked what they were pulled over for, she said.

“They said, ‘No, no, no, Jeison and Cesar need to get out of the car,” Somarriba said. “Jeison’s my husband and Cesar’s my brother-in-law. They knew exactly who was in the car.”

The men threatened to forcibly remove them from the car, Somarriba said, so they started recording [video](#) and demanded to see a warrant. The men said they had an “order,” but they did not produce it, Somarriba said.

As the video started, a man in a federal uniform placed a pen-like tool to the rear passenger window, locating pressure at a single spot, and it shattered. He reached in and opened the door. A plain-clothes agent said “Amigo!” several times, and someone in the vehicle calls out



Another agent broke in through the opposite side. They dragged the Ruiz Rodriguezes and Somarriba from the truck.

The cell phone fell to the floor and for a moment looked up into an empty winter tree canopy as someone moaned and screamed in pain, until an agent grabbed the phone in a gloved hand and cut the video.

Somarriba said the agents drew her out of view of the men but said they Tasered Jeison Ruiz Rodriguez and hit Cesar Ruiz Rodriguez in the head with a rifle. Jeison was hospitalized before the men were transferred to the Northwest Detention Center, ICE's detention facility in Tacoma.

Pregnant, out of work

Somarriba is unemployed. Her husband put food on the table by running a drywall hanging business. She does not know what's in store for her. She is in close contact with Jeison's immigration lawyer, who practices out of Miami, where her family lives.

She set up a [legal defense fund](#) through GoFundMe, which, as of press time, has raised about \$1,000 of a \$20,000 goal.

They had visited the Inland Northwest at the start of the COVID pandemic and moved here in late 2021 because Jeison said the cost of living was cheaper and work was more plentiful.

Jeison was all she had here.

"I spoke to my mom, my dad and my stepmom," she said. But they are far away. "I haven't told my grandparents because they're too old for me to tell them some stressful stuff right now, and I wouldn't want to worry them."



“These are young families with wives and partners that have babies, small babies,” Mesa said. “So that’s where we’re at.”



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Aaron Hedge, originally from Colorado, earned his MFA in Creative Writing from Eastern Washington University in June 2023. His writing explores environmental issues and the relationship between humans and animals. He grew up in a Christian home and wants to write more about end times theology.

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