

# ICE agents attempting to arrest Tennessee man repelled by neighbors

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On Monday, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents attempting to detain a Nashville, Tennessee man without a warrant were thwarted when the man's neighbors formed a human chain to block the extra-legal action.

Residents of Nashville's Hermitage neighborhood told local media that in the weeks leading up to the incident many of them had noticed a white Ford F-150 circling the block repeatedly, which they found to be suspicious. Around 6 a.m. Monday morning the drivers of the truck revealed themselves as undercover ICE agent when they turned on vehicle's flashing lights and blocked a man driving a van and his twelve-year-old son in their driveway. The still-unidentified man, said to be a fourteen-year resident of the neighborhood, refused to leave the van.

For the next four hours, a standoff ensued. Neighbors emerged from their homes and came to the aid of the pair, providing food, water, and gas to keep the van's air conditioning running in the summer heat, and giving them cold rags. The numbers swelled as the man's neighbors were joined by local immigration activists who live-streamed the event on Facebook, as well as local politicians.

Local police also arrived at the scene at the request of the agents but did not intervene.

Meanwhile, the two ICE agents tried to cajole the man into surrendering, using the typical police tactics of lies, threats, and bribery. Because they had no actual arrest warrant signed by a judge but rather an administrative order issued internally by ICE, they could not legally detain the man without his consent.

As Daniel Yoon, an attorney present at the standoff explained to the *Nashville Scene*, "They were here with an administrative order that they wrote themselves...There's no judicial review, no magistrate

review, no probable cause. It doesn't give them the authority to break down a door like you would with a normal warrant. They didn't try to do that. But they still lied to the individuals inside and to people on the scene about, 'No, this does give us that authority.'"

The ICE agents variously threatened to arrest the man's 12-year-old son, offered cash to the pair, and tried to convince them that surrender was inevitable. When all of this failed, and the numbers of protestors continued to grow, the ICE agents finally retreated along with the local police.

The neighbors then formed a human chain to allow the man and his son to go back inside the house. The man's wife came outside and thanked the gathered crowd for their assistance. The family soon exited through another human chain and left in another car with some of their belongings stuffed in trash bags and have not been seen since.

One neighbor present at the scene, Felishadae Young, gave a statement to local news station WZTV expressing the anger and solidarity neighbors felt when the ICE agents attempted to abduct the pair. "I was real scared about what was going on," Young explained. "It put a lot of fear in me, because it could be me, it could be my family. It could be anybody. It could be your neighbors, just like it was my neighbor today."

"I know they're going to come back, and when they come back, we're coming back," Young declared defiantly.

Another neighbor, Angela Glass, explained to the *Nashville Scene* that, "These people, they've been living there for 14 years. They don't bother anybody. Our kids play with their kids. It's just one big community. And we don't want to see anything happen to them. They're good people. They've been here 14 years, leave them alone. To me, they're considered

Americans."

Meanwhile in Texas, a young US citizen, Francisco Erwin Galicia, who was illegally detained by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on June 27, is soon to be released from the custody of ICE after nearly a month in detention.

The 18-year-old Galicia was arrested last month by CBP agents at an immigration checkpoint in Texas, some 80 miles north of the US-Mexico border, as he was traveling with his 17-year-old brother Marlon and friends to a soccer event. Despite the fact that he produced a Texas state ID card, which can only be obtained with a Social Security card, agents took him into custody along with his brother, who was born in Mexico and is undocumented.

Marlon Galicia was held for two days before being coerced into signing a voluntary deportation order. The younger Galicia told the *Dallas Morning News*, "I signed because I wanted to talk with my mom. Now, we just have to wait and see and hope that they release my brother." Marlon now resides in Mexico with his grandmother.

In a blatantly racist and illegal move, ICE has imprisoned Francisco Galicia for nearly a month. The teenager is currently held by ICE at the South Texas Detention Facility in Pearsall, Texas in spite of the fact that his mother has produced a legal birth certificate showing that he was born at Parkland Memorial Hospital on December 24th, 2000. Both the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Washington Post* have reviewed the documentation and confirmed its authenticity.

Galicia's mother also gave CBP officials the boy's Social Security card, Texas state ID card, and a congratulatory certificate presented to her by hospital staff at Parkland Memorial upon his birth, to no avail.

Galicia was denied the right to contact his mother or anyone else while he was held in CBP custody. It was only after being transferred to ICE custody last week that he was able to call his mother.

CBP has cited a paperwork error, a tourist visa taken out in Galicia's name stated that he was a citizen of Mexico as the reason for his ongoing detention. His mother's attorney explained to the *Washington Post* that she had done this because she wrongly thought that was the only way he would be able to visit relatives in Mexico.

Though the mother's error has been explained to

immigration officials, and documents presented proving his citizenship, they had refused to release Galicia, only relenting in the face growing popular outrage as the story spread on social media.

Galicia's case is not unique, a 2018 investigation by the *Los Angeles Times* found that 1,480 US citizens have been released from ICE custody since 2012, including one man who was held for over three years.



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