

Journalists identify Alex Petti's killers as immigration Gestapo continues nationwide terror campaign

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Over the weekend, the two federal immigration agents who shot and killed 37-year-old ICU nurse Alex F. Petti on January 24 were identified as Jesus "Jesse" Ochoa and Raymundo Gutierrez. Records reviewed by ProPublica indicate that Ochoa, 43, and Gutierrez, 35, are both from south Texas.

As of this writing, the government has neither confirmed nor denied ProPublica's reporting. It has now been more than 10 days since Petti was attacked and gunned down in Minneapolis, yet the Trump administration has refused to identify, much less charge, his killers. Only because of mass outrage and sustained protest following Petti's killing did the Department of Justice announce that there would even be an investigation, conducted by the Department of Homeland Security into itself.

Whatever investigation takes place, justice will not be served. It has been nearly a month since Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent Jonathan Ross murdered 37-year-old mother and poet Renée Nicole Good. The only people being investigated by the government in her death are her wife and their associates. Neither Ross, who deliberately placed himself in front of Good's vehicle before opening fire, nor the other agents who refused to render aid or allow others to do so, have been investigated, much less charged, for their criminal actions.

Democratic Party claims that the only problem with the federal occupation and mass deportation operation is that the immigration Gestapo is insufficiently "trained" collapse in the face of the evidence. Like ICE murderer Ross, both Ochoa and Gutierrez are not new recruits but longtime Customs and Border Protection agents. Ochoa joined CBP in 2018, while Gutierrez began working for the agency under the Obama administration in 2014.

Democrats raise the issue of "training" to divert attention from and obscure the class purpose of these agencies, which exist not to defend workers democratic rights from external threats, but to function as an auxiliary federal paramilitary

force loyal to the executive branch and the financial oligarchy. Terrified of a mass movement of the working class, which is increasingly demanding a general strike to abolish the immigration police and drive the fascists out of Washington, both capitalist parties have supported the expansion of these agencies for decades, alongside the construction of a nationwide network of for-profit concentration camps.

A week after the Trump administration announced that White House "border czar" Tom Homan would assume control of the federal occupation of Minnesota, nothing has fundamentally changed. Immigration police continue to violently abduct residents and deliberately provoke confrontations to manufacture pretexts for violence against the working class.

On Sunday, federal agents, illegally staging at a public park in Minneapolis where children play, deployed tear gas and detained at least one US citizen. Video taken by residents shows agents tackling a man to the ground before indiscriminately throwing multiple tear gas grenades. One masked agent is seen firing a "less-lethal" round at point-blank range at an observer.

On Saturday, video from a legal observer's body camera was released showing DHS agents kidnapping a US citizen at gunpoint for the "crime" of filming them. The footage, taken January 29 in St. Peter, Minnesota, begins with the woman expressing fear over the aggressive behavior of federal agents pursuing her. A red SUV filled with masked, armed agents illegally passes her on the left, cuts her off, and slams on the brakes. The woman is heard on the phone pleading for the person on the other end to call emergency services.

After blocking the road, the agents exited the vehicle and within seconds had their guns drawn, ordering the woman to exit her car. As in the murder of Good, the agents deliberately placed themselves in front of the vehicle as they

advanced, providing themselves with a ready-made justification to kill her.

MPR News reported that the woman, who asked to remain anonymous out of fear of retaliation, was dragged from her car, thrown to the ground, handcuffed, and taken by agents. She told the outlet she suffered scrapes and bruises during the assault.

As the woman was being taken, her husband arrived and demanded that agents release her. The agents ignored him and proceeded to search her vehicle over his objections. He informed the agents that the search was illegal because they lacked a warrant or probable cause. Reflecting open contempt for the Constitution, one agent replied, “I’m not getting into the legality of everything.”

The woman was eventually released only after her husband contacted the local sheriff, a personal acquaintance of the family. MPR News reported this appears to be the sole instance in which a local Minnesota police official intervened to prevent federal agents from abducting someone. Seeking to distance itself from the incident, the St. Peter City Council issued a statement claiming the police department “did not participate in, coordinate with or intervene in any federal enforcement activity.”

Far from defending residents, local police departments are actively coordinating with federal immigration agents while refusing to investigate or arrest those who carry out violent crimes.

The same day agents pulled guns on a US citizen in Minnesota, federal agents violently assaulted a US citizen in Salem, Oregon. The woman, identified only as Maria, is a member of Service Employees International Union Local 503. She was pulled over by federal agents at approximately 11 a.m. while on her way to pay rent and buy a cake for her grandson’s birthday.

In a statement released by the SEIU, Maria said agents demanded to see her “papers.” She feared for her life, noting that she suffers from severe asthma and was terrified she would be tear-gassed.

“The agents shattered her car window, forcibly removed her from the vehicle and threw her to the ground, causing numerous injuries,” the union stated. After dumping out her purse and discovering her US passport, the agents fled the scene. Maria later sought medical treatment for a torn rotator cuff, concussion, and bruised ribs.

Days after the masked federal thugs violently assaulted Maria, a GoFundMe in support of her notes she is “still terrified of going out of the house and has asked her daughter to carry a tracking device when she goes out. Her spirits are still suffering. She will be out of work for some time, so these donations make all the difference.”

Maria contacted the Salem Police Department but was told

to contact the FBI. Journalists with the *Salem Reporter* sought comment from the police department regarding the assault and its policy on crimes committed by federal agents. As of this writing, the department has not responded.

As with the assault on SEIU official David Huerta last year, the union has proposed no concrete action to defend workers. Instead, it organized a protest centered on appeals to capitalist politicians for “accountability.”

Following another weekend of mass protests demanding a general strike, Democrats in the House signaled support Monday for a spending deal negotiated between Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and the White House that will maintain funding for the immigration police for at least two more weeks.

In a statement to *Politico*, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Connecticut) said she would vote for the package on Tuesday: “I will support this package.” The Democrat argued that if DHS was not provided funding then Democrats, “won’t be able to bring the kinds of pressure” needed to influence the larger DHS funding bill.

Under conditions in which a clear majority of Democratic voters, a majority of independents, and even a significant minority of Republicans support abolishing ICE, congressional Democratic support for continued DHS funding exposes the fraud of portraying the Democrats as an opposition party.

The Democrats are not intimidated by Trump and his federal paramilitary forces. They are far more terrified of workers and students organizing independently, above all through a general strike that would cut across the unions, the courts, and the two-party system and pose a direct challenge to capitalist rule.

This is why the fight against repression, war and dictatorship requires the building of independent rank-and-file organizations, uniting workers across industries and national borders in a conscious political struggle against the capitalist system itself.



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