

Lawyer exposes illegal detention and “domestic Guantánamos” in case of former Detroit Cass Tech student, Alcides Caceres

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The arrest and continued detention of 23-year-old Detroit resident Alcides Caceres exposes how the Trump administration’s escalating deportation drive relies on lawless imprisonment and a growing network of makeshift detention sites across the United States.

Caceres is a Cass Tech graduate and former Wayne State University student who came to Detroit from Honduras at the age of four. He has spent weeks in ICE custody after being picked up around January 8, despite having no criminal record and despite a federal court ruling that his detention is unlawful.

Joseph Williams, Caceres’ attorney, told the WSW that Caceres was driving his work truck when he was pulled over by a Border Patrol agent despite no traffic violations. The agent spent roughly 20 minutes searching for warrants or grounds to justify the stop. When she found nothing, she called police departments to see whether Caceres was on any list or whether there was an arrest warrant. None existed.

Williams said the agent’s conduct then became openly racist. “According to Alcides, the agent said, essentially, ‘Because he’s brown, there’s got to be something.’” When the agent eventually discovered that Caceres had entered the US without inspection, she started mocking him and laughing.

Entering without inspection means crossing the border without going through an official checkpoint. In Caceres’ case, his family just walked across the Rio Grande around 2005, without paperwork, long before more recent programs used by asylum seekers.

Caceres is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)-eligible, meaning he qualifies for a legal status that should weigh strongly against detention and deportation. Yet ICE is still holding him, even though a

federal court has ruled his detention unlawful—similar to thousands of other cases.

Immigration courts frequently deny detainees bond hearings under statutes they interpret as “no bond,” resulting in people spending a year in jail, sometimes more, because they are treated as “a flight risk.” In other words, immigrants who have committed no crime are jailed for months on end without meaningful due process.

Caceres is currently held at Chippewa County Jail in Sault Ste. Marie—not even an ICE detention center. Williams noted that in some ways this is worse than being in a designated ICE facility because Caceres is housed with people convicted of violent crimes.

The detention’s social consequences extend beyond Caceres himself. Williams said Caceres is the legal guardian of his younger sister, a US citizen. “His little sister, who is a U.S. citizen, is particularly affected. She’s distraught. She doesn’t know what to do.” He described the trauma of a child whose “guardian was essentially snatched away from her.”

This is part of a broader pattern of fear and disruption in immigrant communities and schools. Teachers are witnessing the impact directly, with attendance dropping as families hide or leave.

Immigration courts are being politically weaponized under Trump. Williams noted that a directive was recently issued “directly from Pam Bondi to all these judges: deny all bond on ‘flight risk,’ no matter the evidence.” Williams pointed to a dramatic shift in outcomes: “In the past six months, I had over 50 hearings and only two denials. Since mid-January... I’ve had 15 denials in the span of two weeks.”

The objective is to force “voluntary” departures

through terror.

Williams noted that Caceres' case is part of a sweeping offensive: "The real problem is not these individual cases... but Alcides is one of a million." He cited clients with Temporary Protected Status—people legally allowed to remain—who were still arrested, detained for months, then released without any reason given for their detention.

Williams warned that the detention system is being built to function like a permanent domestic prison archipelago. "These detention centers are essentially Guantánamos at home," he said. Even when federal judges rule in detainees' favor, immigration judges and the enforcement apparatus "find ways to undermine" due process. "Once someone is arrested and pulled into this system, it's almost impossible to get out. Deportation is where it tends to lead. Due process is thrown out the window."

"Growing up, you wonder how the Nazis could do what they did," he said. "Now I see how it happens every day."

Caceres' seizure is part of a broader escalation of ICE and Border Patrol operations across metro Detroit. ICE has sharply intensified raids and roadside detentions in the region, carrying out an operation outside GM's Factory Zero in Hamtramck and arresting workers inside an Amazon facility in Hazel Park.

ICE is reportedly expanding its physical footprint in the Detroit area, purchasing warehouse space in Romulus and renting offices in Southfield. This is part of a national drive to build a sprawling network of makeshift detention sites in preparation for mass arrests.

The defense of Alcides Caceres, and of all those threatened by this deportation dragnet, requires the organization of the working class, through rank-and-file committees in workplaces and neighborhoods to block detentions and mobilize the collective strength of the working class against the repression now being prepared in Detroit and nationwide.



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