

# Nashville journalist seized by ICE as administration targets reporters documenting immigration raids

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The kidnapping of Nashville Noticias and Univision reporter Estefany Rodríguez Flórez by the US immigration Gestapo has sparked outrage across Tennessee and throughout the United States.

Rodríguez Flórez, a mother, wife and widely respected member of Nashville's immigrant community, was seized by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on the morning of March 4 at approximately 7:15 a.m. while heading to the gym with her husband, Alejandro Medina III.

According to eyewitness accounts, Rodríguez Flórez was in her clearly marked press vehicle when she and Medina were surrounded by multiple unmarked vehicles carrying masked and heavily armed ICE agents, who detained the journalist and took her into custody.

Rodríguez Flórez is a Colombian journalist who earned her degree in journalism in her native country, where she worked in media before coming to the United States. She joined the Nashville Noticias news team in 2022, covering social issues, immigration, family matters and policing in Tennessee's growing Latino community.

Her reporting has included articles critical of ICE and the government's ongoing mass deportation operations, policies that target immigrant workers and threaten the democratic rights of the entire working class. The same methods now used against immigrants are being developed as tools of repression against the working class as a whole, including striking workers and opponents of expanding US wars abroad.

According to The Guardian, which cited Rodríguez Flórez's attorney, the journalist was arrested without a warrant. Her lawyers state that she has been living lawfully in the United States for the past five years, possesses a valid work permit and has applied for political asylum while also seeking legal residency through her

husband, a US citizen.

For several hours after the arrest, Rodríguez Flórez's family and lawyers did not know where she had been taken. Her name briefly disappeared from the ICE detainee locator system, effectively leaving her unaccounted for. It was only late Friday evening that her name reappeared in the system, indicating that she had been transferred to Etowah County Jail in Alabama, hundreds of miles from her husband and her eight-year-old daughter.

ICE officials have claimed that Rodríguez Flórez was arrested because she was a "flight risk," alleging that she had missed two scheduled appointments with immigration authorities. Her attorney, Joel Coxander, disputes this claim. According to Coxander, the first appointment referenced by ICE was canceled due to a winter storm that struck the region, while a second appointment disappeared from the agency's system after her husband visited the ICE office to confirm it. A follow-up appointment had already been scheduled for March 17.

Press-freedom organizations have condemned the arrest. The Committee to Protect Journalists called for Rodríguez Flórez's immediate release, describing her detention as part of a "shameful and alarming pattern of the Trump administration's use of immigration authorities to clamp down on freedom of the press."

A GoFundMe in support of Rodríguez Flórez and her safe return has raised over \$10,000.

The detention of Rodríguez Flórez is not an isolated case. The Trump administration has used the immigration police to target multiple journalists, including Texas photojournalist Yaakub Vijandre and Atlanta-based reporter Mario Guevara, both of whom have faced detention after covering protests against the Gaza

genocide and the opposition to Trump's dictatorial ambitions respectively.

Vijandre remains detained more than five months after being taken by agents at gunpoint after refusing to become an FBI informant. Guevara was arrested while covering the "No Kings" protest in June 2025 and later deported to El Salvador after being transferred to ICE custody despite the dismissal of local charges.

US citizen journalists covering protests opposing the Trump administration have also been targeted with criminal charges. Prosecutors have brought charges against former CNN anchor Don Lemon and independent journalist Georgia Fort over their reporting on an anti-ICE protest at a Minnesota church attended by a senior immigration official.

The targeting of journalists is part of a broader assault on the democratic rights of the entire working class. As the Department of Homeland Security expands surveillance tools and databases to monitor immigrants, protesters and US citizens alike, reporters who expose the government's lies and violence are increasingly becoming targets themselves.

While the Trump administration lies daily about everything from its war against Iran to anti-immigrant propaganda and racist smears directed at Somalis, Haitians and other immigrant communities, the falsehoods issued by the Department of Homeland Security to justify violence by immigration agents continue to collapse under minimal scrutiny.

Body-camera footage obtained by CBS News, Newsweek and other outlets conclusively demonstrates that officials lied about the killing of 23-year-old US citizen Ruben Ray Martinez by an ICE agent in South Padre Island, Texas last March.

Federal authorities initially claimed Martinez was shot because he had "accelerated" and "intentionally ran over" an ICE agent with his vehicle. But the video evidence contradicts these claims.

Footage reviewed by CBS shows that no agent was struck and none were standing in front of Martinez's vehicle when he was shot multiple times through the open driver-side window.

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confirmed ICE agent Jonathan Ross deliberately placed himself in front of Good's vehicle and leaned forward as he shot her, first through the windshield and then twice through her open window.

The footage shows Martinez approaching an intersection after midnight where dozens of local and federal police had flooded the area. A voice can be heard instructing Martinez to "keep going" as he slowly drives forward. The video shows him stopping to allow pedestrians to cross.

Moments later officers suddenly begin yelling for Martinez to stop after he has already passed them. Several officers on foot ran after the vehicle. Martinez's vehicle stops and slowly turns to the left.

Three gunshots ring out as Martinez's brake lights flash red, indicating he was not accelerating toward agents when he was shot. The blue Ford Fusion then rolls slowly to a stop.

Martinez, who had been out celebrating his birthday with his friend Joshua Orta, 25, was shot multiple times at point-blank range. As the vehicle came to a stop, a federal agent dragged the wounded man from the vehicle, threw him face-down on the ground and handcuffed him.

According to witness accounts and the video timeline, police waited several minutes before providing medical aid, greatly reducing Martinez's chances of survival.

Orta, who was detained at the scene, later wrote that he and Martinez had become stuck in traffic and were attempting to turn around after officers directed them to do so. Orta died in a separate car accident last month in San Antonio just before he was slated to provide a formal eyewitness statement.

The body-camera footage ends with Orta being taken into custody.

"You are not under arrest," an officer tells him. "You are being detained right now until we figure out what's going on."

"Is my brother ok?" Orta asks.

"I don't know. I'm not going to lie to you man, I really don't know."

"Is he conscious?"

"I don't know," the officer replies.



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