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# By Killing Renee Good, ICE Sent a Message to Us All

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Throughout Donald Trump’s second term, when he’s sent armed, masked ICE agents into cities, locals have tried to resist by organizing neighborhood watches, both to warn people that agents are coming and to document the arrests they make. Minneapolis, where this week ICE launched what its acting director called the “largest immigration operation ever,” was no different.

Keith Ellison, Minnesota’s attorney general, told me that since ICE ramped up its operations in Minneapolis, it’s felt “like we are being inundated with a hostile paramilitary group that is mistreating, insulting, terrorizing our neighbors.” And the residents of Minneapolis have responded: “People have got their whistles, and they’ve got their little alert system to tell people ICE is in the neighborhood. They’ve been protesting. They’ve been out there trying to protect their neighbors.”

Many of these people probably believed that even in Trump’s America, citizens still have inviolable liberties that allow them to stand up to the jacked-up irregulars who’ve descended on their communities. The civil rights of immigrants have been profoundly curtailed; even green card holders are on notice that this government may detain and deport them simply for protesting. But Americans — particularly, let’s be honest, white Americans — might have thought themselves immune from ICE abuses.

The killing of Renee Nicole Good, a mother of three and widow of a military veteran, tests that assumption. ICE, said Ellison, is all but telling people, “‘You want to defend your neighbors, you’re going to do it at the risk of your own life.’ I think that’s the unmistakable message. Just looking at the tape, they could have said, ‘You get out of here,’ right? And then she gets out of there. They didn’t want her to get out of there. They wanted to either drag her out of that car or do what they did. And it was all about

teaching lessons.”

The lesson didn't end with Good's killing — the administration had to smear her afterward. As The New York Times reported, bystander footage filmed from several different angles shows that the agent who shot Good wasn't in the path of her S.U.V. when he fired on her. That did not stop Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem from accusing Good of trying to run agents over in “an act of domestic terrorism.” Vice President JD Vance called her a “deranged leftist.”

In the imagination of some on the right, Good quickly came to stand in for all the grating Resistance moms they'd like to see crushed. Fox News sneered that Good was a “self-proclaimed poet” — she's the winner of a prestigious poetry award — “with pronouns in her bio.” The conservative radio host Erick Erickson described her as an “AWFUL,” or “Affluent White Female Urban Liberal.”

It's entirely possible that had Good lived, the Trump administration might have tried to prosecute her. That's essentially what happened to Marimar Martinez, a U.S. citizen in Chicago, in October. Martinez was in her car trying to warn people about ICE when she collided with a Border Patrol vehicle. Federal officials claimed she “rammed” a car driven by the agent Charles Exum, while her lawyers say he sideswiped her. Exum then got out of his car and shot her five times.

Martinez survived, only for the Justice Department to charge *her* with assaulting a federal officer. Her lawyers soon discovered that Exum had been boasting about the shooting in text messages. In one, he wrote, “I fired 5 rounds, and she had 7 holes. Put that in your book boys.” In another, he said, “Sweet. My fifteen mins of fame. Lmao.” The Justice Department ended up dropping the case before even more messages could be revealed.

Exum's giddy sadism shouldn't have been surprising; it reflects the culture the administration is encouraging among its immigration enforcers. In one ICE recruiting ad, an agent mans a mounted gun atop some sort of militarized vehicle, with the words, “Destroy the flood.” It was a reference to the video game Halo, where players must kill hostile space aliens. Another shows sword-wielding knights with the words, “The enemies are at the gates.”

Homeland Security's social media feed is an unending stream of demented propaganda and bellicose Christian nationalism. An image posted on New Year's Eve shows a classic car on an idyllic beach with the slogan, “America after 100 million deportations.” Homeland Security has added the words, “The peace of a nation no longer besieged by the third world.” One hundred million, it's important to note, is almost twice America's entire immigrant population. They are telegraphing the creation of a far-reaching police state.

In such a system, the relationship between citizens and their government is transformed by the constant demand for submission. Since Good's death, Republicans have been lining up to threaten those who don't immediately comply with ICE's orders. "The bottom line is this: When a federal officer gives you instructions, you abide by them and then you get to keep your life," Representative Wesley Hunt of Texas said on Newsmax.

All of us, citizens and immigrants alike, are being ruled by people who think life is a privilege bestowed by authority, and death is a fair penalty for disobedience.

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