

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
BRUNSWICK DIVISION**

Mario Alexander GUEVARA,

Petitioner,

v.

George STERLING, in his official capacity
as Director of the Atlanta Field Office,
Immigration and Customs Enforcement *et*
al.,

Respondents.

Case No. 2:25-cv-00104-
LGW-BWC

DECLARATION OF ALONDRA MADRIGAL

I, Alondra Madrigal, declare under penalty of perjury, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

1. I am over the age of 18, am competent to give this declaration, and testify from my own personal knowledge regarding the facts in this declaration.

2. I am a United States citizen and a reporter at MG News, an online news outlet started by Mario Guevara in 2024.

3. I was born in California in 2000 and moved to the Atlanta area when I was seven years old. I have lived in the Atlanta area since then. I graduated from Georgia State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism and communications in 2023.

4. I met Mario in February 2025 when he hired me to work as a bilingual reporter for MG News. My family speaks Spanish and Mario was known to us because of his reporting for *Mundo Hispanico*, a Spanish-language newspaper that serves the greater Atlanta area. This is my first news job and Mario has been an invaluable mentor, teacher, and friend in helping me get my start.

5. MG News is a small operation covering sports; entertainment; local, national, and international news; and immigration. Its reporting focuses on the Hispanic community in the Atlanta area, but it is also a trusted source of news for people outside the Atlanta area, and even outside the state of Georgia. There are currently five people, spread between the United States and El Salvador, working full or part-time at MG News (including Mario before he was arrested).

6. MG News publishes stories and other content on its website and its Facebook page, which has over 110,000 followers. Mario also shares MG News content via his personal Facebook page, which has over 780,000 followers.

7. Some of the important stories MG News has covered since Mario started it in 2024 include the mistaken-identity arrest of Ximena Arias-Cristobal from Dalton, Georgia, a college student who was wrongly accused of traffic violations and then detained by ICE for two weeks. Mario conducted a livestream interview with her immediately upon her release on bond from the Stewart Detention Center, which is a two and a half hour-drive away. He also conducted live interviews

to provide the Hispanic community with information surrounding the 2024 murder of nursing student Laken Riley in Athens, Georgia. This story was of particular interest to our community because the individual charged and ultimately convicted of Riley's killing was an undocumented immigrant from Venezuela, resulting in a surge of anti-immigrant backlash in the state.

8. MG News has two primary avenues of communicating with its audience: online articles and Facebook videos and livestreams. MG News's articles are important sources of information for the community, and MG News has historically published about six articles per day. This has decreased to 2 or 3 per day since Mario has been detained.

9. The Facebook livestreams constitute the heart of what MG News does, allowing it to fulfill its slogan "Lo Vio Primero Aqui," meaning "You Saw it Here First."

10. Mario has taught me that a good journalist should go into the field to document and present the story directly to their audiences, so that readers or viewers can make their own conclusions. Mario's Facebook livestreams do just that, instantly and in real time documenting events as they unfold to over 780,000 followers. This makes Mario/MG News a unique and a valuable source of news.

11. Followers have expressed their appreciation for this because so many members of the Hispanic community live in fear of being targeted by law enforcement—to the point that they will not call 911 when they have an emergency,

and some will not even leave their houses. Mario's recordings and livestreams give people at least some information about what is going on in the local area, which helps alleviate the unease of not knowing.

12. Mario starts his newsgathering around 6 a.m. and followers will wake up and check Mario's and MG News' Facebook accounts for information about what is happening that day. With Mario being detained, that source of information has evaporated, leaving the Hispanic community in the Atlanta area less informed and more frightened.

13. Another aspect of Mario's journalism is his ability to act as a bridge between the community and law enforcement. For example, he has done ridealongs with local police, asking them questions to better educate his viewers about law enforcement's perspectives. Mario cannot fulfill this role while detained.

14. Mario's detention has had a huge impact on MG News' output. As noted, reporting has decreased by more than half, from about 6 articles or postings per day, to only 2 or 3. Mario is MG News' primary news gatherer. He has a wide network of contacts from his years as a trusted local journalist so that people reach out to him when something is happening. No one else at MG News has those deep community ties.

15. I am also concerned by the unexplained disappearance of videos from MG News' and Mario's Facebook accounts since Mario has been detained. Videos

from May 13 and 20, 2025 that the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office says it reviewed in order to bring the now-dismissed traffic offense charges against Mario cannot be found on either account. And on the MG News account, there is a concerning gap: videos posted up to 9 or 10 weeks ago (June 2025) are there, and then the next most recent video posted was 33 or 34 weeks ago (December 2024). This equates to a 23-to-24-week period (about six months) where seemingly nothing was posted. MG News definitely did not go that long without posting any video.

16. I did not remove any videos from either MG News or Mario's Facebook accounts, and to my knowledge, no one working at MG News removed anything. Mario has not had access to the accounts since he has been detained.

17. I am trying my best to keep MG News going in Mario's absence. But it is very frightening to me that my boss and mentor is being held captive because of his news reporting. It constantly weighs on me and makes me afraid for myself as a journalist and even more afraid for noncitizens in the profession who report on government and the police.

18. I have communicated with Mario while he has been detained. He tells me that he fears that if he is released and continues reporting on law enforcement, he may be subject to further retaliation, including another arrest and detention.

19. I implore the Court to order Mario released. The longer he is detained, the more deeply chilling the situation becomes for people—both because his absence from our work and our community is so hard to bear and because it suggests that the

government is detaining him, not to protect anyone, but to punish him for sharing information and making the public aware of what police are doing in their neighborhoods.

Executed this 18th day of August, 2025.

Alondra Madrigal

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