

# ICE immigration attorney accused of forging documents in effort to deport man, lawsuit says

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SEATTLE — A U.S. [Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) attorney forged a document in an attempt to deport an immigrant seeking to stay in the country with his wife and children, according to a new lawsuit.

The lawsuit, filed Thursday in a Seattle U.S. District Court, seeks \$500,000 in damages for Ignacio Lanuza-Torres because the alleged forgery cost him years of courtroom battles. Lanuza-Torres is now a legal U.S. resident.

According to the lawsuit, Lanuza-Torres entered the country illegally from Mexico in 1996, settling in Seattle thereafter. In 2008, he pleaded guilty to unlawfully displaying a weapon after handling a friend's pistol at a party, and he was put in removal proceedings by ICE.

The following year, Lanuza-Torres married his girlfriend, an American citizen, and sought to have his removal canceled because of the marriage and because he had also met the stipulation of being in the country continuously for 10 years.

But in court, ICE assistant chief counsel Jonathan M. Love said Lanuza-Torres had voluntarily given up his right to appear before an immigration judge after he was apprehended by Border Patrol agents in 2000.

The government argued that because Lanuza-Torres had left the U.S. to visit Mexico about five times and because he gave up his right to appear before a judge, his appeal to cancel his removal should be rejected.

In Border Patrol custody, Love said, Lanuza-Torres had signed a document declining to appear before an immigration judge to argue his case. The document provided evidence that Lanuza-Torres had not been in the country continuously for 10 years. Love entered the document as evidence a week after making his statement in court.

Immigration Judge Kenneth Josephson accepted the form as evidence and ordered Lanuza-Torres deported.

As Lanuza-Torres appealed, his attorney at the time, Hilary Han, noticed something off about the evidence.

The form Love submitted had a [Department of Homeland Security](#) header, even though it was dated Jan. 13, 2000 — nearly 20 months before the department was created in response to the

Sept. 11 attacks. The form also had the signature of ICE officer Anthony Dodd, who processed Lanuza in Seattle in 2008. The form was supposed to date to 2000 and originate from the U.S.-Mexico border.

"You're left in shock. You don't know why he did it. You don't know what he had against me or what happened," Lanuza-Torres said in Spanish, adding "besides getting angry, you get sad. It feels like I was stabbed in the back."

Here is "someone who blatantly forged a document in order to deprive someone of their only chance to stay here in the United States with their family, deprive them of their only chance to exercise their rights under the law," said Matt Adams, an attorney with the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and Lanuza-Torres' current attorney.

ICE spokesman Andrew Munoz said an internal review has been launched.

"Any unlawful conduct by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) employees is inconsistent with our agency values and the high standards to which we hold our employees. We take all allegations of misconduct seriously," Munoz said, declining to comment further because of the pending lawsuit.

Reached by phone Thursday, Love said he was not aware of the lawsuit. Asked if he remembered the Lanuza-Torres case, he said he did not.

Besides seeking damages, Adams has filed complaints with the Homeland Security inspector general, urging a review of all cases Love handled.

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