

Statement of Rachel Reyes, Mother of Ruben Ray Martinez

My name is Rachel Reyes. I reside in San Antonio, Texas, and I am the mother of Ruben Ray Martinez, a 23-year-old U.S. citizen.

In March 2025, Ruben was killed by a federal agent. The pain and grief of losing a child is something no parent should ever have to endure.

Ruben was also a loving brother, uncle, nephew, and friend. He was kind, funny, and full of life, always making others smile. He had a good heart and was raised to respect everyone, especially people in authority. He had no criminal history.

His death came nearly a year before the names of other victims would go on to dominate national headlines, yet far fewer people know his name. For months, we were dismissed and denied access to reports, statements, and video evidence, while being told only that the case was "under investigation."

We were expected to accept a narrative that contradicted the account of the passenger witness, his lifelong best friend Joshua Orta. Knowing Ruben's harmless nature, nothing made sense.

The months that followed were consumed by grief and frustration. We felt unheard and left without answers, knowing Ruben's death was unjust.

Ruben's story should resonate with people because he was doing something so ordinary, spending time with a friend. He wasn't out causing trouble or harm to anyone.

On March 15, 2025, Ruben and his best friend Joshua took a spontaneous trip to South Padre Island, Ruben's first trip away from home without family. While returning from getting food, they encountered officers alongside federal agents re-directing traffic due to an unrelated accident.

Video released nearly a year later confirmed the account Josh consistently told me, attorneys, and law enforcement before his passing.

In the video I saw Ruben driving slowly, allowing pedestrians to pass, and asking the first officer he encounters for guidance. He was not pulled over for any violation. The officer told him to "keep going," motioning with his flashlight. Ruben followed that directive.

Seconds later, as Ruben drove ahead, a different officer yelled a conflicting command. That aggressive yelling and contradiction created chaos, and within seconds officers began converging around Ruben's car. That level of hostility would overwhelm anyone with fear and make the moment impossible for anyone to process.

Moments later my son was killed. In the video, I saw the car turn slowly, move several feet, and stop again.

In those few seconds, HSI Agent Jack Stevens fired three rounds through the open driver's window without any warning and no body camera.

The bullets pierced Ruben's heart and lungs. His last words were, "I'm sorry, sir." At this point Ruben had placed his car in park himself.

Watching the video, I do not see Ruben posing any immediate danger. He was moving slowly; his brake lights were on. He was not trying to "weaponize his vehicle." I don't see him intentionally accelerating to "strike" or "run over" anyone. He was not fleeing. Never confrontational. He was trying to comply.

No other agents present drew their weapons or took a firing stance, an indication to me that they did not see Ruben as a threat.

To add further devastation, after Ruben was shot, he was thrown face down on the pavement, knee to his back and handcuffed while incapacitated, his body limp and bleeding out, clearly not resisting.

I watched several agents standing around him, talking as if he was just a body to be handled, not a life to be protected. It's deeply distressing to know Ruben's final moments were consumed by confusion, fear, pain, and disregard for his life.

Though the circumstances surrounding his death and these other victims are distinctly different, the pattern is the same. Lives cut short by the same agency; agents without body cameras; no warnings; no attempt to de-escalate; excessive force followed by deflection, and a lack of accountability after the fact.

Other similarities are that these victims, despite being nonviolent community members with no criminal background, were disparaged and blamed to shift focus away from the officer's misconduct.

What happened to my son is personal, but it should be a concern for us all.

His death reflects a pattern of callousness and power imbalance that allows rights to be violated without consequence — the very conduct our Constitution was meant to prevent.

This is not a partisan issue. Trust in our government is foundational, and right now that trust is broken.

No family should have to beg for answers while mourning a loved one or at the worst moment in their lives endure additional harm caused by our own government's actions.

Meaningful reform is necessary. Real accountability requires independent oversight, not secretive internal reviews that protect institutions instead of people.