

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN BEGINS



ERIK VERDUZCO, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Willy Aceituno, left, makes a police report Saturday with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Officer N. Sherill, after U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents broke his vehicle window during an enforcement operation in Charlotte, N.C.

Federal government didn’t previously announce enforcement push

ERIK VERDUZCO
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Federal officials confirmed Saturday that a surge of immigration enforcement in North Carolina’s largest city began, as agents were seen making arrests in multiple locations.

“Americans should be able to live without fear of violent criminal illegal aliens hurting them, their families, or their neighbors,” Assistant Homeland Security Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement. “We are surging DHS law enforcement to Charlotte to ensure Americans are safe and public safety threats are removed.”

Area officials, including Mayor Vi Lyles, released a statement criticizing such actions as “causing unnecessary fear and uncertainty.”

“We want people in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to know we stand with all residents who simply want to go about their lives,” it said.

Crime is down in the city this year through August, compared with the same

months in 2024. Homicides, rapes, robberies and motor vehicle thefts fell by over 20%, according to AH Datalytics.

Still, President Donald Trump’s administration seized on the stabbing death of Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zarutskaha on a Charlotte light-rail train to argue that Democratic-led cities fail to protect residents. A man with a lengthy criminal record was charged with her murder.

The federal government didn’t previously announce the push but County Sheriff Garry McFadden said this past week that two federal officials told him Customs agents would arrive soon.

Charlotte is a racially diverse city of more than 900,000 residents, including more than 150,000 who are foreign-born, according to officials there.

Willy Aceituno, a Honduran-born U.S. citizen, was on his way to work Saturday when he saw “a lot of Latinos running,” chased by “a lot of Border Patrol agents.”

Aceituno, 46, said he was stopped twice by Border Patrol agents. During the second encounter, they forced him from his vehi-

cle after breaking the window and threw him to the ground.

“I told them, ‘I’m an American citizen,’” he said. “They wanted to know where I was born, or they didn’t believe I was an American citizen.”

After being forcibly taken into a Border Patrol vehicle, Aceituno said, he was finally released after showing documents proving his citizenship. He had to walk some distance back to his vehicle and later filed a police report over the broken glass.

Spokesperson Paola Garcia of Camino, a bilingual nonprofit serving families in Charlotte, said she and her colleagues observed an increase in stops by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents since Friday.

Greg Ascitutto, executive director of the community development group CharlotteEast, said via email that the “significant border patrol activity” was seen Saturday.

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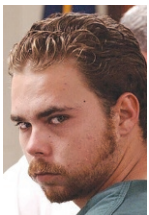
S.C. man executed by firing squad for 2004 killings

JEFFREY COLLINS
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — A South Carolina firing squad has executed a man Friday, the third person to die by that method in the state this year.

Three prison employees, all with live ammunition, volunteered to carry out the execution of Stephen Bryant, 44, who was pronounced dead at 6:05 p.m. Bryant killed three people in five days in a rural area of the state in 2004.

Bryant chose to die by firing squad



Bryant

instead of lethal injection or the electric chair. He made no final statement and briefly glanced toward the 10 witnesses before the hood was placed on his head.

The shots rang out about 55 seconds later. Bryant made no noise. The red bullseye target that marks the location of his heart flew forward off his chest. He

had a few shallow breaths and then a final spasm a little over a minute later. A doctor checked him with a stethoscope for a minute before he pronounced Bryant dead.

A media witness said after the execution that a pool of wetness emerged on Bryant’s chest where he was shot. Three family members of victims who served as witnesses held hands during the execution.

Bryant is the seventh person put to death by South Carolina in 14 months after the state had a 13-year

pause in executions when it couldn’t obtain lethal injection drugs.

Republican Gov. Henry McMaster denied clemency for Bryant, according to his office. No South Carolina governor has offered clemency since the death penalty resumed in the U.S. in 1976.

Final meal and memory

For his final meal, Bryant had spicy mixed seafood stir-fry, fried fish over rice, egg rolls, stuffed shrimp, two candy bars and German

chocolate cake.

Bo King, a lawyer who works on death penalty cases in South Carolina, said Bryant had a genetic disorder, was a victim of sexual and physical abuse by relatives, and his mother’s binge drinking “permanently damaged his body and brain.”

“Mr. Bryant’s impairments left him unable to endure the tormenting memories of his childhood,” King wrote in a statement.

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