



The Source

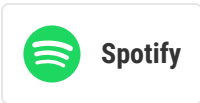
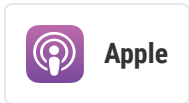
FRONTLINE uncovers ICE tactics in Trump's mass deportation

By **David Martin Davies**

Published April 15, 2026 at 5:02 PM CDT

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FRONTLINE PBS "Caught In The Crackdown"



A new FRONTLINE documentary from PBS, produced with ProPublica, is bringing new scrutiny on the Trump administration's immigration crackdown. The documentary asks questions about not only who was targeted, but also how federal agents carried it out.

"Caught in the Crackdown," which began streaming April 14, traces federal sweeps in cities, including Los Angeles, Chicago and Minneapolis, and argues that operations launched in the name of immigration enforcement often swept up protesters, legal observers, bystanders and, in some cases, U.S. citizens.

The film focuses in part on now-former Border Patrol head Gregory Bovino, who became a central figure in the government's show-of-force approach.

According to the documentary and ProPublica's underlying reporting, federal agents arrested more than 300 protesters and bystanders during the sweeps, often accusing them of assaulting officers or interfering with law enforcement.

But the investigation found that many of those cases did not hold up. In more than a third of the cases reviewed, charges were dropped, never filed, or unraveled under court scrutiny, sometimes after video evidence contradicted officers' accounts.

What emerges from the documentary is a portrait of an enforcement campaign that, critics say, blurred the line between public safety and political intimidation.

The film shows masked agents in tactical gear, aggressive crowd-control tactics and a style of enforcement that some former officials and civil liberties advocates argue escalated already volatile scenes.

Former Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Chris Magnus, interviewed in the film, says the approach often appeared to inflame tensions rather than calm them. At the same time, the reporting also notes that some demonstrations did turn chaotic and that some defendants ultimately pleaded guilty or were convicted, adding complexity to the documentary's broader account.

The documentary also revisits fatal encounters in Minneapolis that intensified national attention on the crackdown. Reporting cited by FRONTLINE and other outlets shows Bovino was later removed from his leadership role in Minnesota after the ICE shooting deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pratti, as pressure mounted over federal tactics and



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Federal officials have defended the broader enforcement effort. In statements cited by ProPublica, the Department of Homeland Security said the First Amendment protects peaceful assembly, "not rioting," and maintained that officers were using lawful and constitutional measures to carry out immigration enforcement and protect themselves.

Guest:

AC Thompson is a staff reporter with ProPublica. His stories often examine hate crimes, racial extremism and the criminal justice system. In addition to working as a print and web journalist, Thompson has reported extensively for television, serving as a producer and correspondent for the PBS documentary series FRONTLINE.

"The Source" is a live call-in program airing Mondays through Thursdays from 12-1 p.m.

Leave a message before the program at [\(210\) 615-8982](tel:2106158982). During the live show, call [833-877-8255](tel:8338778255), email thesource@tpr.org.

This interview will be recorded live Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

Tags

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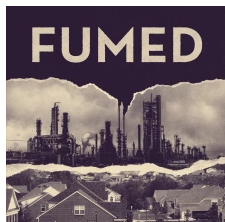
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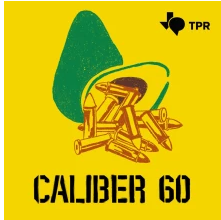
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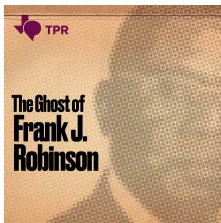




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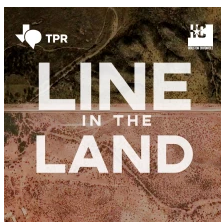
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