

Federal grand jury indicts Milwaukee County Judge Hannah Dugan in ICE case

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A federal grand jury indicted Milwaukee County Judge Hannah Dugan on May 13 on charges that she tried to assist an undocumented immigrant escape arrest from her courtroom last month, putting her at the center of the growing dispute between President Donald Trump and the judiciary.

The two-page indictment accuses Dugan, 66, of obstructing a U.S. agency and concealing an individual to prevent an arrest. The two charges carry a maximum penalty of six years in prison and a \$350,000 fine, but sentences in cases involving nonviolent offenses typically are much shorter.

Dugan is expected to enter a plea at a May 15 hearing. But members of her defense team issued this statement: "As she said after her unnecessary arrest, Judge Dugan asserts her innocence and looks forward to being vindicated in court."

The indictment came after a string of witnesses entered the federal courthouse throughout the day on May 13 to testify before the grand jury.

Among those making appearances were Alan Freed Jr., Dugan's court clerk, and Mercedes de la Rosa, who was the attorney for Eduardo Flores-Ruiz, the undocumented immigrant at the center of the case. De la Rosa has withdrawn from his case.

Also giving testimony was Milwaukee County Judge Kristela Cervera, a misdemeanor judge whose courtroom is next to Dugan's. She arrived and left with defense attorney Michael F. Hart.

Cervera, Hart and Freed declined to comment when reached at the courthouse.

The grand jury of 20 people returned the indictment against Dugan at 5:10 p.m. on May 13 before U.S. Magistrate Judge Nancy Joseph.

The vote by the grand jury was not disclosed, something that is not unusual. Joseph said the requisite number was recorded. To indict, 12 of the 20 jurors need to vote for it.

After the brief indictment return hearing, Joseph reminded the grand jury of their oath to keep the proceedings secret.

Acting U.S. Attorney Richard Frohling appeared for the government, which is unusual, highlighting the profile of the case.

U.S. District Judge Lynn Adelman was [selected to preside over Dugan's case](#).

The case stems from the arrest of Flores-Ruiz, 30, at the Milwaukee County Courthouse on April 18.

On that date, two federal agents [eventually chased Flores-Ruiz down](#) outside the courthouse and apprehended him at West State Street and North 10th Street downtown, according to the criminal complaint. His arrest is part of a [federal crackdown](#) on undocumented immigrants by Trump officials.

A week later, Dugan was [arrested at the courthouse](#), handcuffed and taken into federal custody to appear before a federal magistrate. Dugan's arrest was announced nationally by FBI Director Kash Patel on the social media platform X.

The indictment is so short that it omits a number of details provided in the earlier criminal charges against Dugan.

That criminal complaint said a six-member arrest team showed up on the 6th floor of the Milwaukee County Courthouse on April 18 with plans to arrest Flores-Ruiz.

It said de la Rosa, his attorney, took pictures of the individual members of the arrest team and alerted Dugan's clerk, Freed, that the federal agents were outside the courtroom, telling him where they were seated and what they were wearing. Freed, a former employment law and disability rights attorney, informed Dugan of the situation.

The indictment then accuses Dugan of leaving her courtroom and confronting the six-member arrest team in the hallway, falsely telling them that they needed a judicial warrant, not an administrative one, to take Flores-Ruiz into custody.

It also alleged that the veteran judge, who was first elected in 2016, directed the group to leave the public hallway and go to Milwaukee County Chief Judge Carl Ashley's office. The criminal complaint said it

was actually Cervera, her fellow misdemeanor judge, who took the group to Ashley's office to make a copy of the warrant and talk to Ashley by phone about their plans.

Cervera, however, left one agent behind in the public hallway, the criminal complaint says.

Dugan is accused in the indictment of then expediting Flores-Ruiz's case by handling it off the record while most of the arrest team members were in Ashley's office. Dugan then directed Flores-Ruiz and his attorney, de la Rosa, to exit the room via a "non-public jury door," according to the indictment. That door led to an adjacent hallway and to the public area on the 6th floor of the courthouse with elevators.

Dugan told de la Rosa that her client could appear by Zoom for his next court date.

But the federal agent who was left behind by Cervera saw de la Rosa and her client in the public hallway and got onto the elevator with them, leading to Flores-Ruiz's eventual arrest.

Flores-Ruiz is being held in federal custody at the Ozaukee County Jail. He is expected to have a new public defender named before his next court hearing on May 14.

Dugan's arrest at the courthouse has prompted [widespread criticism](#) from protesters and local government officials. Milwaukee County Chief Judge Carl Ashley has said he and his colleagues are "all concerned" about the manner in which [Dugan was handcuffed at the courthouse](#).

But Trump officials have said they routinely execute warrants and make arrests in public buildings, such as the courthouse, because they know where and when a person is expected to be and know that the person passed through a security checkpoint and should be unarmed.

A [CNN report on May 6](#) said it had confirmed a dozen cases of people being arrested by ICE on or near courthouse grounds in Virginia, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Wisconsin.

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