

35. Isidro Pérez

Who was Isidro Pérez? Isidro Pérez was a Cuban immigrant who arrived in the U.S. from Cuba in 1966 at the age of 16. He spent his life by the sea working as a mechanic and fisherman, first, during his childhood in Cuba, and at the end, off the coast of Key Largo with his dogs. While he was still healthy, Isidro made a living repairing boats. At 75 years old, with nearly six decades in the United States and after four heart attacks, he lived on a houseboat anchored near a park in Key Largo, south of Miami. He spent his days sitting on a bench in a coastal park. “He was like a bird that didn’t want to be caged up,” his stepdaughter, Alba Patricia Gomez, told reporters.

How did Isidro Pérez end up in ICE custody? On June 5, 2025, ICE agents detained Pérez, and the following day he was transferred to the Krome Detention Center in southwest Miami, a prison infamous for its hellish conditions. It is unclear where he spent the night of June 5th. Monroe County police have no record of the arrest. Although there is no record of his arrest, ICE stated that Pérez was charged with inadmissibility under the Immigration and Nationality Act for having been convicted in 1984 —*41 years previously*—of possession of marijuana.

How did Isidro Pérez die under ICE custody? According to Isidro’s ex-partner, 82-year-old María Adanéz, his health had declined over about 25 years. He’d had two spinal surgeries, one surgery on his foot, and suffered from osteoporosis. “He was shrinking because of his spine. Recently, he fell and broke his shoulder on a tree root and still had a medical appointment pending. . . . He used to call me three times a day.” When Isidro Pérez was in Krome, “a young man named Lázaro” gave Maria a few minutes to talk to him. “He told me he was freezing because he was in a place called ‘the fridge’ and had asked for a painkiller,” Adanéz recalls. Isidro called her again five days later: “He said he was sleeping on the floor, that he had asked to be taken to the infirmary, but there were so many people that he had to wait.” On another occasion, he told her he hadn’t received pills, and she insisted he ask for help. “After that, I didn’t hear anything from him,” she says.

According to an ICE statement, Isidro Pérez was hospitalized on June 17th and released on June 25th, 2025. The next day, he again complained of pain and was transferred to Kendall Hospital, where he died.

Sources:

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