

41. Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez

Who was Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez? Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez was a 52-year-old father and grandfather from Guatemala who had lived and worked in the United States for about three years. Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez grew up in Jutiapa, a small Guatemalan town close to the Salvadoran border. He repaired cellphones, raised goats for milk and cheese, and trained young people to box. Despite juggling several jobs, he could barely make ends meet and felt he couldn't provide the life his children and grandchildren deserved. Like thousands of others from Latin America — regions rich in natural resources but scarce in opportunity, he made the journey north. Montoya Valdez had migrated to the U.S. three times before. Three years ago, he arrived again, in California, and quickly joined the day laborer community. He worked as a day laborer in Southern California, sending money home to support his wife of 35 years, his four daughters, and his grandchildren. His family remembered him as loving, respectful, brave, and hard-working, and said he hoped to earn enough money to return to Guatemala and start a small business.

How did Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez die under ICE responsibility? On August 14, 2025, during an immigration enforcement operation near a Home Depot in Monrovia, California, Roberto Montoya fled toward the 210 Freeway and was struck by an SUV.

What happened after Roberto's death? Montoya's wife and daughter, Ana María Vásquez and Ana Victoria Montoya, at their home in Guatemala state, "We want people to remember my dad in the same way we will remember him: as a loving, respectful, brave man. He died because of these injustices, this persecution."

Although public reports indicate he was not formally in ICE custody, his death became a symbol for many advocates of the fear and danger created by immigration raids targeting day laborers.

Sources:

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