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Father of R.E. Burke Details Her Experience in ICE Detention

International

Father of R.E. Burke Details Her Experience in ICE Detention



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Paul Burke, father of cartoonist **R.E. “Becky” Burke**, is speaking out about the treatment his daughter received in the ICE detention system after being detained over a question about her VISA. Becky, with no criminal record, was detained for 19 days. On a Facebook post, **he explained what happened and provided a FAQ on the events.**

Burke writes:

After 19 harrowing days in ICE detention due to a visa mix-up, our daughter Becky has finally returned home to the UK. Instead of allowing her to take an immediate flight

back, Homeland Security detained her in handcuffs at a Tacoma, WA facility under harsh conditions. The current immigration crackdown and systemic delays exacerbated her ordeal, worsened by a shortage of immigration judges. Becky's nightmare ended on March 18th, and she is now beginning to recover.

Below are the Q & A that provide more details to earlier reporting.

Did she break the rules of the ESTA?

The ESTA is for tourists only. For work or study a specific visa is required. Becky did a lot of research before she went and what she had planned was classed as tourism. This was accepted when she entered the US on 7th January. It was also accepted in 2023 when she spent two weeks in San Francisco, with a host family. On the 26th February, US border officers suddenly decided staying with host families and joining in with household chores was now classed as work. Our US Immigration Lawyer said they got their definition of work wrong.

Was she given a chance to return to the UK at her own cost?

No, this was not offered at the border despite this being the usual protocol for tourists. ICE had the chance to offer this at any stage during her detention, her parents even had a flight home booked for her at one point, in the hope they would let her take it, but they didn't.

Was she allowed to let family know when she was being deported?

No. One of the other detainees had to call us to say she had left. Even the British Consulate were not told that she had boarded the flight. We were only certain when she arrived at Heathrow.

Was she treated with 'dignity and respect' as written in ICE policy.

No. She was handcuffed when she was transferred from the border to the facility. When inside the facility ICE did not communicate where she was in the process, all her possessions were confiscated, lights were on 24/7 and there were four head counts each day during which they were forced stay on their bunk for at least an hour. When she was eventually transferred to Seattle airport to fly home she was taken in leg and waist chains and handcuffs, and was escorted to the plane.

He affirms that at a future date, Becky will create a graphic novel about her experience. You can follow Becky on [her Instagram account @R.E.Burke](#).

Becky’s story serves as a warning to anyone planning extended trips to the USA: always triple-check visa requirements and confirm them with the US Embassy. Print any documentation for added security.

Becky is also planning to produce a graphic novel highlighting her story and how it is not an isolated case. She wants to support her fellow detainees who are still locked up, a group of women who helped Becky get through this horrible experience, despite their own grim situation. When she feels able to she will start posting again on her instagram page @R.E.Burke

rebecca burke,



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Carol

our country is run by Neanderthals.

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Bob