



Jason Alfredo Silvas, 24, was among 252 Venezuelan men sent by the Trump administration to the Terrorism Confinement Center.

Beaten, Trampled and Tear-Gassed After Deportation to a Salvadoran Prison

This article is by Julie Turkewitz, Tibusay Romero, Sheyla Urdaneta and Isayen Herrera.

They said they were shackled, beaten, shot with rubber bullets and tear-gassed until they passed out.

They said they were punished in a dark room called the island, where they were trampled, kicked and forced to kneel for hours.

One man said officers thrust his head into a tank of water to simulate drowning. Another said he was forced to perform oral sex on guards wearing hoods.

They said they were told by officials that they would die in the Salvadoran prison, that the world had forgotten them.

When they could no longer take it, they said, they cut themselves, writing protest messages on sheets in blood.

“You are all terrorists,” Edwin Meléndez, 30, recalled being told by officers who added: “Terrorists must be treated like this.”

From the moment he took office, President Trump has seized on what he calls the threat posed by Venezuela and its autocratic president, Nicolás Maduro, accusing



In May, a cell search turned violent. José Carmona, 28, left, and Victor Ortega, 25, right, said they were hit by rubber bullets from the guards’ guns.

the government and Venezuelan gangs of orchestrating an “invasion” of the United States.

In March and April, the Trump administration made the extraordinary decision to send 252 Venezuelan men to a notorious prison in El Salvador known as the Terrorism Confinement Center, saying they had infiltrated the United States in a form of “irregular warfare.”

Mr. Trump accused the men of being members of a dangerous gang, Tren de Aragua, working in lock step with the Venezuelan government. It was an early salvo in the administration's standoff with Mr. Maduro, which has only intensified since then, with U.S. warships blowing up Venezuelan boats and Mr. Trump warning of potential military strikes on Venezuelan soil.

But the men received little to no due process before being expelled to the terrorism prison in El Salvador, and they were abruptly released in July, part of a larger diplomatic deal that included the release of 10 Americans and U.S. residents held in Venezuela.

Mr. Trump, speaking at the United Nations General Assembly in September, praised Salvadoran officials for “the successful and professional job they’ve done in receiving and jailing so many criminals that entered our country.”

In interviews, however, the men sent to the prison described frequent, intense physical and psychological abuse. Beyond the beatings, tear gas and trips to the isolation room, the men said they were mocked or ignored by medical personnel, forced to

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Saving Streets From Asphalt? Knees of Steel.

By WINNIE HU

Reeve Cherry got on his hands and knees next to a pile of granite stones on a Lower Manhattan street, and reached back into the past.

Mr. Cherry, who works for the New York City Transportation Department, repairs cobblestone streets that were built for horses and carriages but that are now pummeled by cars and trucks.

These streets date back to when New York, now the largest city in the United States, was a Dutch outpost. And in the more than three and a half centuries since, the painstaking way the stones must be laid by hand has not changed.

“Unfortunately, there’s no way to reinvent how to do cobblestones,” said Mr. Cherry, 42, who was wearing kneepads.

In a metropolis of steel-and-glass skyscrapers, Mr. Cherry is one of six bricklayers who are caretakers of a disappearing piece of New York history that has been largely torn up or paved over with asphalt.

Today, only 15 of the city’s 6,300



HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Specialty bricklayers preserve a quaint side of New York City: cobblestones. Kneepads are handy.

miles of streets are cobblestone. While that figure has remained the same for more than a decade, it was nearly ten times that — 140 miles — in Manhattan alone in 1949, according to a 2017 study commissioned by the Historic Districts Council, a preservation group.

“They’re such a wonderful link to our past and there’s clearly a charm to them that asphalt just simply does not have,” said Andrew Berman, the executive director of the group Village Preservation.

As a practical matter, asphalt streets are smoother to cross and

less expensive and labor-intensive to maintain. And it is not only cobblestone streets that have vanished over time but also the skilled artisans needed to care for them. So few people know how to lay cobblestones that the Transportation Department hires bricklayers

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Sierra Club Is Mired in Discord After Its Push for Social Justice

By DAVID A. FAHRENTHOLD and CLAIRE BROWN

The Sierra Club calls itself the “largest and most influential grass roots environmental organization in the country.” But it is in the middle of an implosion — left weakened, distracted and divided just as environmental protections are under assault by the Trump administration.

The group has lost 60 percent of the four million members and supporters it counted in 2019. It has held three rounds of employee layoffs since 2022, trying to climb out of a \$40 million projected budget deficit.

Its political giving has also dropped. Federal campaign-finance records show \$3.6 million in donations from the Sierra Club during the push to defeat Donald J. Trump in 2020, but none as Mr. Trump stormed back to the presidency in 2024.

And this year, as the Trump administration returned better organized and better prepared than in its first term, the Sierra Club was the opposite. While Mr. Trump boosted coal power, canceled wind farms and rolled back pollution limits, the club was consumed by



ARTHUR SCHATZ/LIFE, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Members of the Sierra Club at the Grand Canyon in 1966.

internal chaos, culminating when the board fired its executive director, Ben Jealous, a former president of the N.A.A.C.P.

“Sierra Club is in a downward spiral,” a group of managers wrote to the club’s leadership in June, in a letter reviewed by The New York Times.

That spiral helps Mr. Trump. But it was not his doing. The Sierra Club did this to itself.

During Mr. Trump’s first term, when the Sierra Club was flush with donations, its leaders sought

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The Russian activist Aleksandra Skochilenko had been imprisoned for replacing supermarket price tags with antiwar stickers.

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In a world of increasing protectionism, few countries are still excited about globalization. None may be more into it than Vietnam.

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The Dream of Outlasting Time

Longevity labs, “immortality islands” and grapeseed pills are part of China’s national project to conquer aging, despite sometimes shaky science.

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More Magic for Grande

The pop superstar reinvented herself in the first “Wicked,” but the sequel shows she still has surprises in store.

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Ezra Klein

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In many states, it was unclear how a Supreme Court order allowing the interruption of food stamp payments might affect recipients.

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Some experts say the nationwide fight over redrawing legislative districts is a crisis for democracy.

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What to Call This Criminal?

He has used many names as he cycled in and out of prison, but his true identity remains unknown.

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Zohran Mamdani’s campaign offered a master class in on-message millennial dressing.

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Generation Absurd

Young people just laugh when adults try to decipher the meaning of terms like “6-7.”

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Promised Revival Never Came

A newly elected Republican senator offered hope for a dying paper mill company and its unionized workers in Chillicothe, Ohio. But the private equity owners had other ideas.

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Too Much Milk in Switzerland

The country’s dairy farmers produced a bumper harvest of milk. But President Trump’s steep tariffs have forced them to consider ways to cut back, including slaughtering cows.

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