

# Federal judge troubled by wrongful deportation

By Jay Weaver  
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Who put the suspicious paperwork in the immigration file of a Mexican that triggered his wrongful deportation?

The Department of Homeland Security wants to know why immigration agents deported Camerino Moreno Villa to Mexico on Oct. 6 -- only to have to bring him back to Miami under a cloud of embarrassment because of a judge's order.

U.S. District Judge Adalberto Jordan said Monday he did not believe Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials deliberately violated his order to keep Moreno in South Florida until Oct. 16 for a hearing on his fate. But the judge said he would still consider holding immigration authorities in contempt of court if Homeland Security concludes there was official misconduct in the high-profile case.

Jordan called the immigration agency's deportation "troubling," but said he was at least encouraged that ICE officials appear to be taking steps to prevent another Moreno-type deportation from happening again.

Moreno, 51, has been released while he tries to resolve his immigration problems.

Over nearly a quarter of a century, Moreno has been stopped at the border seven times, made it across five times and was formally deported four times.

From California, where he was a farmworker, he eventually made his way to South Florida.

Detained for allegedly being in the country illegally, Moreno was awaiting an October hearing in his case when immigration officials sent him packing and put him on a plane to the Mexican border -- violating the judge's order.

Authorities at the Krome detention center in West Miami-Dade wrongly deported the father of three U.S.-born sons -- even after an immigration officer learned of the judge's order in September and then removed the warrant from Moreno's file that should have stopped his deportation.

"I was convinced the removal could not take place," deportation officer Michael Finnerty testified on Monday.

The problem was, another immigration employee put a second warrant in Moreno's file -- apparently without his supervisors' knowledge -- that led to the Mexican's premature deportation in violation of the judge's order that had extended the deadline by 10 days.

In court papers, Marion Dillis, the officer in charge of Krome's deportation operations, described Moreno's removal as a mistake -- "an apparent breakdown in communications."