

Immigrant husband, father spared from deportation

By Susan Carroll

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Rose Escobar and her son, Walter, pulled into the parking lot of the [Joe Corley Detention Center](#) in Conroe, looking for a black government vehicle that was supposed to hold her husband.

Jose Escobar, a 26-year-old handyman from El Salvador, had spent the last seven months in immigration detention. After intense media attention and an appeal by a U.S. congresswoman, Escobar and his wife were told he would be released on Jan. 10.

Rose, 25, a receptionist at [Texas Children's Hospital](#), stepped out of her car and was greeted by Escobar's detention officer.

"You are a pit bull," the officer told the woman, who noted a twinge of admiration in his voice. "Congratulations."

"Can I have my husband back?" she asked, crying as the officer opened the door and she saw Jose. He was wearing the same clothes he wore the June morning he was picked up by U.S. immigration agents outside his south Houston home.

"Papi!" yelled Walter, 2.

And with that, Escobar became part of a wave of illegal immigrants to receive temporary reprieves from U.S. immigration officials, who announced plans this summer to increasingly target for deportation the dangerous criminals while sparing people like Jose with clean records.

The government's effort to halt thousands of deportation cases involving non-criminals has infuriated some border control advocates but has earned praise from immigrant advocates.

An Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman confirmed that Escobar has been granted "deferred action."

That will allow him to live and work legally in the United States for a year while he applies for a green card through his marriage to Rose, a U.S. citizen.

Escobar, whose mother brought him to the U.S. when he was 15, was ordered to leave the country by an immigration judge in 2006 after he missed a court hearing.

U.S. Rep. [Sheila Jackson Lee](#), D-Houston, who appealed directly to ICE Director [John Morton](#) for Escobar's release, said his case serves as a good example of ICE's efforts to exercise prosecutorial discretion.

"I am very pleased that ICE ... recognized that Escobar is a family man and someone who came into this country as a child," Jackson Lee said.

"He is hardworking and paid taxes, has an American child, and is committed to being a good citizen."

One of the first things Escobar did when he was released from immigration detention was replace the tattered blinds in the family's front window. Walter had pulled and tugged at them until they were in tatters, hoping to see his dad's truck pulling up to the house.

"We used to take the little things for granted," his wife said. "Not anymore."

<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Immigrant-husband-father-spared-from-deportation-2757425.php>