

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

ANTONIO AGUIRRE VILLA

A# 

Petitioner,

vs.

TONY NORMAND, *in his official capacity as*
Warden of Folkston Detention center, and
TODD LYONS, *in his official capacity as Acting*
Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and
GEORGE STERLING, *Field Office Director ICE Atlanta*
Field Office
KRISTI NOEM, *Secretary of Homeland Security, and*
PAMELA BONDI, *Attorney General*

Respondents.

CASE NO.:
5:25-cv-89-LGW-BWC

PETITIONER'S MOTION FOR ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE,
AND FOR PRODUCTION OF EVIDENCE
AND THE PETITIONER'S BODY ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS

The Petitioner, Antonio Aguirre Villa, has been detained in civil immigration detention over two months, and has been denied release even though an immigration judge that he has been entitled to be released on bond under 8 U. S. C. § 1226(a)(2).

As such, Petitioner, by and through the undersigned, moves the Court to issue an ex parte¹ order to show cause on an emergency basis:

- (1) Directing the Clerk to serve a copy of the habeas petition, its supporting memorandum of law, and its appendix of exhibits (ECF D.E. 1, and 1-1 through 1-6) upon the U. S. Attorney's Office²;
- (2) Requiring the Respondents to file a return to demonstrate the "true cause of the [Petitioner's] detention," 28 U. S. C. § 2243, "within three days," *id.*, of service on an expedited basis, and allowing Petitioner to file a traverse within the same period of time;
- (3) Requiring the respondents to produce a copy of the Immigration Judge's decision in this case ordering release on bond, as well as a full record in removal proceedings, a transcript of the digital audio recording for those proceedings, and all other records bearing upon the "true cause of the [Petitioner's] detention," 28 U. S. C. § 2243, in support of their return; and
- (4) Order that the respondents produce the Petitioner's body for the Court to take custody over the Petitioner while it decides his case.³

¹ The habeas show cause procedure is designed to function ex parte. See Order to Show Cause, *Campbell v. Wolf*, No. 20-CV-20768-WILLIAMS, 2020 WL 2109933, at *1 (S.D. Fla. Feb. 26, 2020) ("Counsel for Respondent shall **immediately** notify the Court upon receipt of this Order of the name of the Assistant United States Attorney to whom the case is assigned.") (emphasis omitted); Limited Order to Show Cause (D.E. 29), *Robinson v. State of Fla.*, 1:18-cv-23821-FAM (S.D. Fla. Aug. 20, 2019) (ordering, *inter alia*, respondent to give notice of "the name and address of the attorney within the Office of the Attorney General to whom the case has been assigned") (respondent's appearance filed on Aug. 27, 2019 (D.E. 31)); *Bundy v. Wainwright*, 808 F.2d 1410, 1415 (11 Cir. 1987) ("If the writ is neither granted nor the petition dismissed for facial insufficiency, the court must issue a show cause order.").

² See Order (D.E. 9), *Sanchez v. Meade*, 0:21-cv-60290-RAR (S.D. Fla. Feb. 9, 2021) ("The Clerk is directed to serve the petitioner's Verified Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus [ECF No. 1] and Appendix [ECF No. 1-1], along with a copy of this Order, upon the Civil Division of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida.").

³ See Order (D.E. 11), *Fernandez-Espinoso v. Field Ofc. Dir.*, 0:21-cv-61229-WPD (S.D. Fla. July 7, 2021) ("The Government shall secure whatever writs or orders necessary to ensure the Petitioner's presence at the hearing.") (emphasis omitted); see also 28 U. S. C. § 2243 ("Unless the application for the writ and the return

Factual and Procedural Background Requiring Emergency Court Interference

Petitioner is a native and citizen of Mexico who has resided in the United States for more than 16 years. On June 24, 2025, Respondents (or those acting at their direction and under their authority) arrested Petitioner following a traffic violation. He was taken into custody and transported by Respondents to Folkston Detention Center in South Georgia.

On July 14, 2025, an Immigration Judge (“IJ”) ordered Mr. Aguirre Villa released on a \$10,000 bond, finding he poses neither danger to the community nor a flight risk.

Respondents have initiated removal proceedings against Petitioner 4(!) times already, which were all administratively closed by DHS or DHS failed to pursue removal. The first one on September 25, 2011, second one on July 4, 2025, third one on August 5, 2025 and fourth one filed on August 26, 2025. See Exhibit A Petitioner’s records from the EOIR electronic case portal. Even though Respondents TERMINATED the proceedings against the Petitioner that were initiated on July 4, 2025, during which he received a bond order from the Immigration Judge, Petitioner remains detained against the laws and regulations of the United States and against the U.S. Constitution. As a legal matter, **if DHS withdraws or terminates the Notice to Appear (NTA), or the charging document commencing proceedings, the legal proceedings that justified the detention are effectively nullified. Without an active NTA, there is no ongoing removal proceeding, and thus, no legal basis for continued detention.**

present only issues of law the person to whom the writ is directed shall be required to produce at the hearing the body of the person detained.”); *United States v. Wong*, 108 F. 376, 376 (5th Cir. 1901) (“On the same day, Hon. Aleck Boarman, judge, sitting as United States circuit judge for the Western district of Texas, at El Paso, issued a writ of habeas corpus to the marshal, commanding that he produce the body of the petitioner before him in open court on the following day, and show cause for such custody.”) (immigration case); *Wales v. Whitney*, 114 U. S. 564, 574 (1885) (“All these provisions contemplate a proceeding against some person who has the immediate custody of the party detained, with the power to produce the body of such party before the court or judge, that he may be liberated if no sufficient reason is shown to the contrary.”)

Since the EOIR online system shows that DHS has withdrawn the NTA that was the basis for the bond redetermination, it provides sufficient proof that they are holding him without legal basis for the detention.

Earlier today on September 3, 2025, Petitioner's attorney for the bond hearing met with him via zoom for a legal meeting. Based on her personal observations during the meeting, she has serious concern regarding his current mental state. He appeared confused and disoriented with difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is not. He was not coherent and described imaginary events. She shared her concerns with Respondents and reiterated her request for a copy of his medical records. See Exhibit 2, Affidavit from attorney Helen Vargas-Crebas, Esq.

Argument

I. Sitting in habeas, the Court may proceed via a summary show cause procedure notwithstanding the Rules of Civil Procedure.

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure expressly contemplate that they only “apply to proceedings for habeas corpus . . . to the extent that the practice in those proceedings” “is not specified in a federal statute.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 81(a)(4)(A); *U. S. ex rel. Goldsby v. Harpole*, 249 F.2d 417, 421 (5th Cir. 1957) (“The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure have no application, other than by analogy, to habeas corpus proceedings unless by express statutory requirement.”) (citations omitted) (precedential under *Bonner v. City of Prichard, Ala.*, 661 F.2d 1206, 1207 (11th Cir. 1981)). The practice in § 2241 habeas proceedings is governed by the provisions of chapter 153 of title 28 of the U. S. Code, and by federal case law.

“In a habeas corpus proceeding the court sits as a court of law to determine ‘in a

summary way' whether the petitioner is unlawfully restrained of his liberty." *Overholser v. Treibly*, 147 F.2d 705, 708 (D.C. Cir. 1945) (footnotes and citations omitted); accord *Walker v. Johnston*, 312 U.S. 275, 283–84 (1941) ("The court or judge 'shall proceed in a summary way to determine the facts of the case, by hearing the testimony and arguments, and thereupon to dispose of the party as law and justice require.'") (citation omitted). Given this summary nature, 28 U.S.C. § 1657(a) provides that "court[s] shall expedite the consideration of any action brought under chapter 153 . . . of this title."

The petitioner is seeking a general writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241, as opposed to one filed under § 2254, or § 2255. As per § 2243, when a court "entertain[s] an application for a writ of habeas corpus," it "shall forthwith award the writ or issue an order directing the respondent to show cause why the writ should not be granted."⁴ "The person to whom the writ or order is directed shall make a return certifying the true cause of the detention." § 2243.

"The writ, or order to show cause . . . shall be returned within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed." § 2243. "Granted that dispatch is the keynote in all phases of habeas corpus and that the statutory limitation of time is clearly directed to that end," it is still true that the "court possesse[s] th[e] inherent power" to "gran[t] respondent additional time." *Wallace v. Heinze*, 351 F.2d 39, 40 (9th Cir. 1965); see e.g., *Frick v. Quinlin*, 631 F.2d 37, 40 (5th Cir. 1980) (holding that the "district court was free to either consider or disregard the response" of the respondent where the "government did not respond until thirty-five days had passed" after "the magistrate ordered

⁴ "[U]nless it appears from the application that the applicant or person detained is not entitled thereto." § 2243.

the United States to show cause within thirty days why the writ should not be granted”) (footnote and citations omitted).

In response, a petitioner may “traverse[]” “[t]he allegation of a return to the writ of habeas corpus or of an answer to an order to show cause,” § 2248, and may “deny any of the facts set forth in the return or allege any other material facts” and file “suggestions made against” the return, § 2243. Once fully briefed, a “convenient” “practice has long been followed” where “the petition and traverse are treated, as [the Supreme Court] think[s] they should be, as together constituting the application for the writ, and the return to the rule as setting up the facts thought to warrant its denial.” *Walker*, 312 U.S., at 284. “[O]n the facts admitted, it may appear that, as matter of law, the prisoner is entitled to the writ and to a discharge.” *Id.*; accord *Tijerina v. Thornburgh*, 884 F.2d 861, 866 (5th Cir. 1989) (“Where the petitioner raises only questions of law, or questions regarding the legal implications of undisputed facts, a hearing becomes duplicative and unnecessary.”)

But, “if the petition, the return, and the traverse raise substantial issues of fact it is the petitioner’s right to have those issues heard and determined in the manner the statute prescribes.” *Walker*, 312 U.S., at 286; see also *Stewart v. Overholser*, 186 F.2d 339, 342 (D.C. Cir. 1950) (“[T]he denial by an answer or return of factual allegations set forth in a petition for the writ would not require a traverse to raise the issue.”); *Walton v. Hill*, 652 F. Supp. 2d 1148, 1171 (D. Or. 2009) (same); *Whitehead v. Richardson*, 580 F. Supp. 44, 46 n. 3 (N.D. Ind. 1984) (same).

In such cases, “documentary evidence” “shall be admissible in evidence.” 28 U.S.C. § 2247. “[E]vidence may be taken orally or by deposition, or, in the discretion of the judge, by affidavit.” § 2246. “If affidavits are admitted any party shall have the right to propound writ-

ten interrogatories to the affiants, or to file answering affidavits.” *Id.* Further, “the power of inquiry on federal habeas corpus is plenary.” *Harris v. Nelson*, 394 U.S. 286, 292 (1969) (punctuation and citation omitted).

But “the Federal Rules’ discovery rules do not apply completely and automatically” to habeas proceedings, as those rules are “ill-suited to the special problems and character of such proceedings” because “their literal application would be to invoke a procedure which is circuitous, burdensome, and time consuming.” *Id.*, at 296–98. For example, with regard to “Rule 26(b),” its “broad-ranging preliminary inquiry is neither necessary nor appropriate in the context of a habeas corpus proceeding.” *Id.*, at 297.

Rather, “a district court may, in an appropriate case, arrange for procedures which will allow development, for purposes of the hearing, of the facts relevant to disposition of a habeas corpus petition.” *Id.*, at 298. “[I]f the court concludes that the petitioner is entitled to an evidentiary hearing,” “it shall order one to be held promptly,” using the statutes’ “[f]lexible provision . . . for taking evidence,” and may do so by “fashion[ing] appropriate modes of procedure, by analogy to existing rules or otherwise in conformity with judicial usage.” *Id.*, at 299; *id.*, at 300 (“[I]n exercising this power, the court may utilize familiar procedures, as appropriate, whether these are found in the civil or criminal rules or elsewhere in the ‘usages and principles of law.’”) (footnote omitted). Thus, on a case-by-case basis “where specific allegations before the court show reason,” the “courts in the exercise of their discretion” may “require discovery when essential to render a habeas corpus proceeding effective.” *Id.*, at 300 & 300 n. 7.

I. The Court should order the respondent to show cause within three days and to produce documents showing the true cause of the Petitioner's continued detention, with leave for the petitioner to file a traverse within an equal time period.

1. To begin with, Petitioner moves the Court to treat his petition (ECF D.E. 1) and supporting memorandum of law (D.E. 1-1) as his opening brief for summary disposition of his application for a writ of habeas corpus. See *Walker*, 312 U. S., at 284. In his petition, the Petitioner explains how he has been held in civil immigration custody since June 24, 2025 without an opportunity to have his custody reviewed by an immigration judge under the auspices of an agency precedent, *Matter of A-W-*, 25 I. & N. Dec. 45 (BIA 2009), which purports to require mandatory detention without opportunity for custody review though no law of Congress requires that result. The Petitioner argues that: (1) he is, and could only be, subject to permissive detention under § 1226(a) which permits a person in civil immigration custody to request release from an immigration judge; and (2) alternatively, his subjection to a non-statutory, agency-created mandatory detention rule violates due process.

Based upon the above, the petitioner asks the Court grant him a writ of habeas corpus ordering: (1) that he be immediately released from the respondent's custody; or (2) that he be immediately released pursuant to the bond redetermination order the Immigration Judge issued in this case.

As the petitioner's claims are already set forth in detail, and in light of the statutory requirement for expedited treatment of habeas petitions, 28 U. S. C. § 1657(a), the petitioner moves the Court to direct the Clerk to serve the habeas petition and its exhibits upon the

U. S. Attorney's Office,⁵ and to order the respondent to show cause via the submission of a return within three days, see 28 U. S. C. § 2243, of the Court's order. And, the petitioner in turn moves the Court to grant him leave to file a traverse to the respondents' return within a time equal to the time given to the respondents to file their return.

2. With respect to the respondent's need to show cause why the petitioner should not be released, and to show "the true cause of the [petitioner's] detention," 28 U. S. C. § 2243, the petitioner moves the Court to order the production of evidence. Specifically, this includes the full record in removal proceedings, the Immigration Judge's order to release Petitioner on bond, a transcript of the digital audio recording for those proceedings, and all other records bearing upon the "true cause of the [petitioner's] detention," 28 U. S. C. § 2243.

Removal proceedings are conducted through filings on an electronic docket since February 11, 2022. See <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/ECAS> (accessed Dec. 17, 2024). The petitioner's proceedings were conducted as such. Thus, it would be an insignificant burden for the Respondents to access and reproduce records that are already electronically stored on databases controlled by the Department of Justice, served on DHS electronically and the Court should order its production.

Further, removal proceedings are conducted on an audio record referred to as the digital audio recording (DAR) which is regularly transcribed for administrative appeals. See Immig. Ct. Pract. Manual §§ 4.10(a) & (b), <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/reference-materials/ic/chapter-4/10> (accessed Dec. 17, 2024). Review of the audio record, just like the record of the filing in the removal proceedings, would be directly relevant and

⁵ See, *supra*, n. 2. And although the petitioner's counsel has already mailed out service of process pursuant to Fed. R. Civil P. 4(i), service by the Clerk would still serve to advance the matter in the expedited manner required by 28 U. S. C. § 1657(a).

probative to the Court's inquiry, and the Court should order its production. As the respondent has access to internal transcribing services that regularly transcribe immigration court hearings, it would not be a substantial burden for the respondent to produce the same for the Court. Alternatively, a production of the audio recordings themselves would be an insignificant burden.

Last, the petitioner requests further production of all other records bearing upon the "true cause of [his] detention." 28 U. S. C. § 2243.

2. Following briefing, the petitioner requests a hearing on the matter. In aid of that hearing and of the Court's ability to order swift and effective relief, the Petitioner requests that the Court order that Respondents produce the Petitioner's body for the Court to take custody over the petitioner while it decides his case. See, *supra*, n. 3.
3. Last, the Petitioner preserves his right to propound interrogatories under 28 U. S. C. § 2246, or to request any other discovery by motion that would help "to render [this] habeas corpus proceeding effective," *Harris*, 394 U. S., at 300, 300 n. 7.

This 3rd day of September, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

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Certificate of Conferral

This habeas petition was filed August 29, 2025, and service of process is pending in that the counsel Ms. Weinstock's firm has dropped off certified mail packages for the U. S. Attorney's Office and the other Respondents as required under Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(i) in the USPS. Ms. Weinstock also emailed AUSA Woelke Leithart about this case, who informed her they cannot accept service on behalf of Respondents but is aware this writ has been filed. Thus, the undersigned has not had an opportunity to know who the government will assign to this case.

However, initial show cause proceedings in habeas petitions are designed to operate in an ex parte fashion,⁶ and per the ECF notices in this case, the government should be receiving notice by email of this case at the designated email address for the U.S. attorney's office for the Southern District of Georgia.

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⁶ See, *supra*, n. 1.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 3rd day of September, 2025, this PETITIONER'S MOTION FOR ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE, AND FOR PRODUCTION OF EVIDENCE AND THE PETITIONER'S BODY ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS was served, via electronic delivery to Respondents' counsel via CM/ECF system which will forward copies to Counsel of Record.

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