

The Delray Democrat

Papiere Bitte ('Papers please')^{1,2}

Ted Block

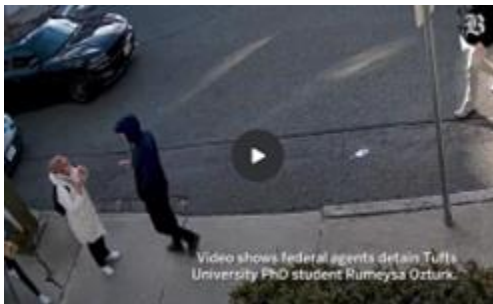
Anyone who has ever watched a film about the Holocaust or the Gestapo in Germany after the rise of Hitler in 1933 is probably familiar with the term, "Papiere bitte" or "Papers, please." In fact, the first spoken lines in one of the greatest films of all time, "Casablanca" were a variation of the term.

[Watch](#)...carefully:



Last week in Somerville Massachusetts, in the United States of America, in 2025, this happened.

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As reported by CNN:

As the sun began to set Tuesday over Somerville, Massachusetts, Turkish national Rumeysa Ozturk was on her way to meet friends at an Iftar dinner where they would break their Ramadan fast.

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), April 2025, page 3.

² Republished from [Around the Block](#), courtesy of Ted Block.

But she would never make it to the gathering, according to her attorney. Instead, the 30-year-old was arrested and physically restrained by immigration officers near her apartment, close to Tufts University's Somerville campus where she was a PhD student, lawyer Mahsa Khanbabai told CNN.

Before I delve into the issues surrounding this abduction, allow me to explain why I suggested that you carefully watch the videos.

In *Casablanca*, the Vichy French and Moroccan police were all clearly identified as police; they were all wearing uniforms. In Somerville in the United States of America, the "police" were not in uniform. Rather, they wore black attire, and had hoodies and masks.

The apprehended man who was the focus of the Casablanca clip c1940 was clearly asked by the Gendarme, "May I see your papers, please."

In the case of the Rumeysa Ozturk abduction in the United States of America in 2025, she was not asked for any documentation. But she was summarily handcuffed and hauled away by a squadron of unidentified, black clad, hooded and masked men and women.

As CNN reported:

Now, she is being held at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Louisiana, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

While no charges have been filed against Ozturk, her attorney told CNN, Ozturk's visa status has been terminated, according to a statement released Thursday by Tufts President Sunil Kumar.

A federal judge in Boston issued an order late Friday to stop Ozturk from being deported.

Judge Denise Casper wrote in the order that Ozturk "shall not be removed from the United States until further order from this court." Casper's order directs immigration authorities to stop deportation proceedings against Ozturk until she can determine whether the Boston court has jurisdiction to decide if Ozturk was lawfully detained.

Ozturk is one of several foreign nationals affiliated with prestigious American universities to be arrested for purported activities related to terrorist organizations amid the Trump administration's immigration crackdown. They include Mahmoud Khalil, a prominent Palestinian activist taken into custody this month outside his Columbia University apartment.

In her order, Casper cited Columbia graduate and Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil's case - specifically referencing a New York judge's decision to not allow Khalil to be deported until a court settles whether it has jurisdiction over his case.

Khalil and Ozturk's cases share some striking similarities - both were arrested near their homes without notice, both were transferred across state lines and jurisdictions and both have been transferred to Louisiana.

And, I might add, in neither case have the abductees been provided due process.

CNN:

*Ozturk “engaged in activities in support of Hamas,” a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said Wednesday in a statement **without specifying what those alleged activities were** (emphasis mine).*

*Secretary of State Marco Rubio “**determined**” Ozturk’s alleged activities would have “potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences and would compromise a compelling U.S. foreign policy interest,” Tricia McLaughlin, a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security, told CNN Thursday. **She declined to provide further details about Ozturk’s alleged activities or how they could pose adverse consequences to US foreign policy** (emphases mine).*

This, my friends, is what fascism USA 2025 edition looks like. The knock on the door. The abduction on the street. The lack of due process. The nebulous “determination” of “adverse foreign policy consequences.” This is what happens when the warnings of Sinclair Lewis in his 1935 dystopian* book and play, “It Can’t Happen Here” actually happen.

And this is only the beginning.

It’s up to us to stop it. And stopping it can’t wait until the next election when, frankly, the damage will be irreparable.

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