

# Chicago Tribune

Dear members of the Shadid Award Jury:

Please accept this submission on behalf of the Chicago Tribune.

**1. Nominator**

Mitch Pugh, Chicago Tribune Executive Editor

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**2. Reporting team**

Gregory Royal Pratt - gpratt@chicagotribune.com

Laura Rodríguez Presa - larodriguez@chicagotribune.com

Caroline Kubzansky - Caroline Kubzansky - ckubzansky@chicagotribune.com

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Andrew Carter - acarter@chicagotribune.com

**3. Stories being submitted:**

[“64 Days in Chicago: The Story of Operation Midway Blitz.”](#)

The definitive account of the Trump administration’s mass deportation effort in Chicago. Produced by journalists who were tear gassed and threatened by their own government, it best illustrates our ethical commitment to tell the unvarnished truth without fear or favor.

[They were already living in one of Chicago’s worst apartment buildings. Then came the ICE raid.](#)

The Trump administration claimed it raided a South Shore building to apprehend violent Venezuelan gang members. In a powerful, thoroughly reported narrative, Tribune reporters disproved the government’s account and in doing so upheld a core principle: Our duty is to the public, not to the state.

**4. Description of conflicting values, options considered, rationale for the decisions:**

In 2025, the United States government unleashed a mass deportation mission in Chicago unlike anything any American city – or American newspaper – had witnessed in recent

history. Federal agents, dressed as soldiers, stormed the city and suburbs for nine weeks, detaining 4,500 immigrants and arresting more than 100 U.S. citizens who protested. They called their work “Operation Midway Blitz.”

As federal agents began the stunning 64-day dragnet, the Chicago Tribune newsroom mobilized to produce authoritative daily coverage, deeply reported enterprise stories and hard-hitting investigative pieces that contextualized an unprecedented incursion later repeated in Minneapolis. The work was fast, informative and driven by facts.

Tribune journalists, in words and images, held the government accountable, disproved Department of Homeland Security propaganda, featured the voices of people most affected by the operation and enabled a deeper understanding of an unprecedented moment in American history. Most of all, our work was clear eyed about the abuse of power that the Trump administration inflicted upon the country’s third-largest city.

Upholding our obligation to the truth was, clearly and directly, the most important ethical choice the Tribune made while reporting on Midway Blitz.

Journalists are trained to be objective, fair and balanced to ensure that everyone involved has a chance to share their story, rebut criticism and participate in the reporting. This is essential for truth and accuracy and we hold them as core values. However, objectivity does not require false equivalence. Journalism also must be grounded in a responsibility to keep the public truthfully informed — especially when dealing with unreliable or bad-faith actors.

In this case, the U.S. government repeatedly lied throughout the operation, as noted by federal judges, public records and eyewitness accounts. It also pushed untrue and misleading narratives about the administration’s focus on capturing “the worst of the worst” immigrants.

Our team’s collective ethics demanded that we share the truth with every story we told, without becoming cynical or close-minded.

The Tribune’s capstone piece – “64 Days in Chicago: The Story of Operation Midway Blitz” – is an unflinching and definitive account of the operation, told through an engaging narrative that explains the mission’s historical significance. Without hyperbole

or sensationalism, the team seamlessly wove more than 500 voices, 100 videos and 1,000 pages of public records to tell a story that attracted widespread interest and became essential reading for a country at a crossroads. It best illustrates our commitment to telling the unvarnished truth without fear or favor.

Their unassailable ethics and commitment to the truth did not go unnoticed – or unpunished – by the federal government. In the course of reporting, our journalists were teargassed on several occasions and had rubber bullets fired at them. Agents pointed semi-automatic weapons at them for doing their job.

The effort also came at a great personal risk for two of our reporters: Gregory Royal Pratt and Laura Rodríguez Presa. The journalists – who are both Latino – were directly targeted by the federal government for their reporting and regularly disparaged on social media by high-ranking members of the Trump administration, leading to doxxing and death threats from the president’s supporters. In one instance, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security created a social media post that led to followers questioning the Tribune’s “loyalty to America” and suggesting Immigration and Customs Enforcement check Rodríguez’s immigration status. A short time later, an assistant secretary at DHS accused Pratt of committing a crime for reporting on an ongoing raid in Little Village, one of Chicago’s largest Mexican-American communities.

That marked another central controversy for our newsroom: Is it doxxing to report the location of ongoing government operations taking place on public streets? The answer, most certainly, is no. We stood firm in our ethical and moral obligation to report the story, even as we took the implied threat of detaining our reporter into serious account.

The attacks against our journalists – which drew local and national media attention – were meant to intimidate our reporters, to stop them from reporting on a critical issue and to prevent them from holding the government to account.

It didn’t work.

For their deeply consequential reporting on Operation Midway Blitz and unwavering commitment to the truth, Gregory Royal Pratt, Laura Rodríguez Presa, Caroline Kubzansky, Jason Meisner and Andrew Carter would be worthy recipients of the Shadid Award for Journalism Ethics.

