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LOCAL

L.A. Times photographer arrested after covering Nancy Reagan funeral motorcade

By MATT HAMILTON MAR 09, 2016 | 9:01 PM



A Los Angeles Times photographer was arrested Wednesday in Simi Valley while transmitting photographs of former First Lady Nancy Reagan's funeral motorcade.

Ricardo DeAratanha, 65, was arrested on suspicion of resisting and obstructing a law enforcement officer, a misdemeanor, according to a citation issued by Simi Valley police.

Deputy Chief David Livingstone said police responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle near Roosevelt Court and Wood Ranch Parkway, about three-quarters of a mile downhill from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, where a public viewing was being held for the former first lady. DeAratanha had parked by the side of the road to use his laptop computer to transmit his photos.

DeAratanha refused to identify himself and balked at providing identification, Livingstone said.

"This is not something we want to happen," Livingstone said. "Had he cooperated, we would have had a different outcome."



Times photographer Ricardo DeAratanha.

An attorney for the photographer, Mark Werksman, disputed the police account.

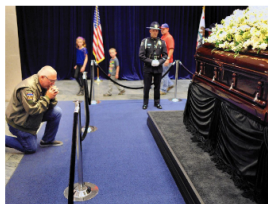
He said DeAratanha provided "multiple unassailable press credentials," including identification cards issued by The Times and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

The officers "kept asking him for more ID," Werksman said. "Then they ordered him out of the car when they weren't satisfied with his answer."

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At some point, Werksman said, the photographer suggested the officers were harassing him because of his ethnicity. DeAratanha is "Brazilian ... of tan complexion," he said.

Livingstone denied that race or ethnicity played a role in the incident and said officers were responding to a report of suspicious activity at a "high-security event."



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MAR 09, 2016 | 10:45 PM

A neighbor had reported that a tarp was partly covering the car and that a man inside was bent over with a cover on his head, Livingstone said.

After he was arrested, DeAratanha explained to officers that he was a photojournalist, and a commander allowed him to finish sending his photos, Livingstone said.

The photographer had been using the tarp to provide shade so he could read the screen of his computer as he transmitted his photos, his attorney said.

DeAratanha, who joined The Times in 1989, was taken to a hospital, where he was treated for a sprained elbow.

The Ventura County district attorney's office has 30 days to decide whether to file charges. DeAratanha is scheduled to be arraigned April 7.

matt.hamilton@latimes.com

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Matt Hamilton

CONTACT



Matt Hamilton is a reporter in the Metro section for the Los Angeles Times. He has covered legal affairs, crime and breaking news across California. He joined The Times in 2013 as an intern reporting on criminal trials in Los Angeles County. Hamilton was part of the team of reporters that received a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernardino. He grew up in Delaware and studied Catholic theology at Boston College. Before completing a degree in journalism at the University of Southern California, he edited magazines in Amman, Jordan.

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