



MORE BREITBART.

BREITBART

SUBSCRIBE NOW

EXCLUSIVE – ‘THEY BROUGHT THEIR COUNTRY WITH THEM’: CINDY ROMERO ON ‘TERROR’ OF LIVING IN VENEZUELAN GANG-RUN APARTMENT



Francesco Carta photograph/Getty Images

by [BRADLEY JAYE](#) | 11 Oct 2024

An alleged apartment takeover by Venezuelan gang members in Colorado has elevated the issue of migrant crime, and viral video capture by an Aurora apartment tenant has refuted attempts by politicians and establishment media to downplay or deny the threat.

Cindy Romero, whose videos of armed members of the Venezuelan Tren de Aragua gang patrolling her Aurora, Colorado apartment building made international news, spoke exclusively with Breitbart News before Donald Trump’s Friday rally in Aurora – a city Trump has called a “war zone” due to the influx of migrant criminals.

She described her chilling experience with gang members “patrolling the area with guns, changing the locks on the buildings, running out the residents so they could kick in the doors of the empty apartments.”

“They’re takeovers, that’s what it is,” she told Breitbart. “It’s a takeover.”

Romero pleaded for months to law enforcement and elected officials for help, but those pleas were met with a mix of denial, indifference, and sympathetic inaction. Meanwhile,

the gangs continued to exert their growing influence inside Romero’s and neighboring apartment buildings.

Both her car and her husband’s sport bullet holes courtesy of the gangs, she says.

But despite those pleas, videos showing gun-toting gang members pointing firearms at passing cars, and multiple crimes taking place including the August 18 murder, fact checkers – along with many local Democrat elected officials and the mainstream media – say that it is not true that Tren de Aragua has “taken over” the building.

“It’s all about definition with these people,” Romero told Breitbart, describing how the gangs have supplanted the management of the building, intimidating tenants into paying them rent in a scheme akin to extortion. “[The gang members] hold guns. They’re running out the people who are supposed to be there. They’ve run off the owner, the management, anybody who worked with them, through threats or intimidation and again, changing the locks of the building, running their own electricity back and forth through apartments.”

She said, “These people wanted us to go so they would

harass my neighbors. 'Are you moving? Are you going to move? When you move, I want your keys,'... That alone was intimidation for me."

Romero accused media and politicians, who she says "knew about it for months before my video dropped," of burying their heads in the sand.

"How many gang members living right outside your door is okay?" she asked. "How many guns right outside your door?"

For Romero, there were too many. She successfully relocated within 10 days of the murder.

"It's no terror like you would imagine," she explained. "They would ride their motorcycles into the building, into the apartment, underneath us, and then rev the engines up while we slept. So if you can imagine waking up not only to the sudden sound of someone revving up a motorcycle up underneath you, but then the smell of the exhaust underneath your bed while you're trying to sleep... It was horrifying."

"I left, I had to get out of Aurora completely in order to feel safe again," she added.

For many in the media and politics, the issue is not an issue at all. Romero has even met claims that since gang activity has always been present in the area, Tren de Aragua does not present a new threat.

"These gangs don't act like any other gangs," Romero warned. "They're not wearing a certain color. They don't care if you know who they are, not they're not coming up and introducing themselves. Matter of fact, they likely don't want to talk to you at all, but they do want to rob your store. They do want to climb in through your window and steal your car."

She described the new threat posed by the Venezuelan gangs, who operate in a parallel system to the existing societal structures.

"The scariest part, besides how ferocious they are, they are organized," she said. "They have their own locksmiths and electricians and plumbers."

The Venezuelans may have left behind the poverty and lawlessness of a brutal dictatorship, but they did not leave their experiences behind, Romero believes.

"They brought their country with them," she told Breitbart.

"We're used to, you know, civility," she added. "We all have a basic code that we live by. Americans, we draw in on each other and help each other in times of strife, but [with the Venezuelan gangs] this is every man for themselves."

Romero, who says she lives paycheck to paycheck and has set up a GoFundMe to help with expenses including those associated with her recent move, does not expect the gang members to attempt to become Americanized, because they are insulated from American laws and can benefit from the American welfare state.

"Assimilation is not in their plans," she said. "I'm Hispanic, so I know that when Hispanics came into the United States more as a culture, a lot of people made the choice, you either rebel against what's going on, or you blend in and keep your head down and you work hard, and you build that American dream from scratch because nobody was going to give you anything. That is totally different now, because now [migrants] are getting everything. On top of that, you mix that with the 'let's take care of the homeless' initiative, and they're all doing better than American people."

She said the government and charitable programs in the area would not help her because of her citizenship status but were aiding migrants living inside her apartment building, many occupying units illegally.

"There were no programs to help me, the person with the lease to be there," she said. "I was the last lease holder in my building. I watched them one by one while they kicked in every other door."

Romero described the soft-on-crime policies that she believes spur gangs to flock to cities like Aurora.

"The police told us that first they were mandated not to help – they couldn't help, it's a sanctuary city," she said. "They can't come out unless it's a bad problem."

The response from law enforcement and elected officials has undermined foundational beliefs Romero grew up holding.

"I was taught as a child, much like every other taxpayer, that if you call 911 in case of an emergency, you are going to get help," she said. "And at times, I would call the non-emergency number, and I was just like, 'what can I do if the police aren't going to come, what can I do to stop this?' And they're like, 'We're so sorry. We're so sorry that you're going through this. We can hear it through the phone.'"

Romero is happy to be in a new home a half-hour from her previous apartment building, although signs of gang activity in her new location worry her. She believes she's doing a valuable service, although she knows she risks retaliation by continuing to bring attention to the gangs.

"I feel like as long as my face is out there and I'm shining light on the danger – I'm safer than I was when I was living there," she said.

Bradley Jaye is a Capitol Hill Correspondent for Breitbart

News. Follow him on X/Twitter at [@BradleyAJaye](#).