



EL DIARIO *de la* GENTE

Vol. 9 No. 1 – Fall 2026

Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute Lands

CU's money is moving through ICE's flight network

The University of Colorado Boulder is financially linked to the federal deportation system through its long-standing contract with Key Lime Air, a Colorado airline now confirmed to operate flights for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). That relationship means CU funds help sustain an aviation network used to move detained migrants between ICE facilities and toward removal from the United States.

Investigations by Colorado Newslines found that Key Lime Air is the first known Colorado-based carrier to fly deportation and detainee-transfer routes for ICE, operating aircraft that shuttle people in custody to hubs such as El Paso and Alexandria for processing. The reporting identifies the airline as part of a broader charter-flight system that underpins federal deportation operations.

CU Boulder has contracted with Key Lime Air since 2011 for athletic-team travel, and the agreement is set to continue through 2029. In statements to Boulder Reporting Lab, Boulder County's nonprofit



One of Key Lime Air's airplanes. Photo Courtesy of Greg Goebel.

newsroom, the university said it does not typically review contractors' business with federal agencies unless it affects safety or performance.

Because CU pays the airline directly for charter services, the university contributes to Key Lime Air's overall revenue stream. Money that helps maintain the fleet, operations, and staffing also supports ICE flights. Even if CU does not engage with immigration enforcement, its dollars help keep an airline in business that does.

University officials have not addressed the ethical implications of maintaining the contract, even as reporting has made the airline's role in ICE operations clear. CU has not indicated whether it plans to reevaluate its financial relationship with Key Lime Air or consider alternative vendors.

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CU continues investment in the Center for African and African American Studies while helping bomb Africa

The Center for African & African American Studies (CAAAS) received a \$2 million investment on Feb. 2 from CU Chancellor Justin Schwartz and CU President Todd Saliman. Despite this large reward, Black and African students on campus are critical of CU and the timing of this investment.

The investment will provide support for CAAAS's programs, student support, faculty initiatives and community partnerships. Prior to this announcement, funding for the CAAAS was planned to end this year on its fifth anniversary. CU is parading the investment as an act of charity, but in reality is the continuation of an educational center that shouldn't have to rely on contracts and bursts of generosity.

One black member of Students for a Democratic Society criticized CU, saying that, "Instead of uplifting [African students] and taking action to defend them from aggressors like the Trump administration, they use money to construct a narrative that distracts from their inaction."

The Center for Cultural Connections and Community (formerly Center for Inclusion and Social Change) held a Black History Month celebration in the University Memorial Center's Glenn Miller ballroom. The event



Schwartz and Saliman pose for a photo with Rabaka. *Photo courtesy of El Diario.*

included live musical performances, food and speeches from CU campus leaders.

CAAAS director and founder Reiland Rabaka was in attendance at the celebration when the investment was announced. "I don't just want a center, I want a world-class center," Rabaka said. He is a professor in the Ethnic Studies department at CU Boulder. He started teaching at CU Boulder in 2005 and established the CAAAS in May 2021.

Despite wishes for a world-class

center, some African students are criticizing the University's ties to the military-industrial complex, believing this investment to be a distraction from war crime profiteering. A North African student, who asked to be referred to as Djamila, questions the settler administration and the University, asking, "What's two million dollars mean when African students are barred from entering, when Nigeria is bombed by this regime, and the weapons designed on this campus are used against Africans?"

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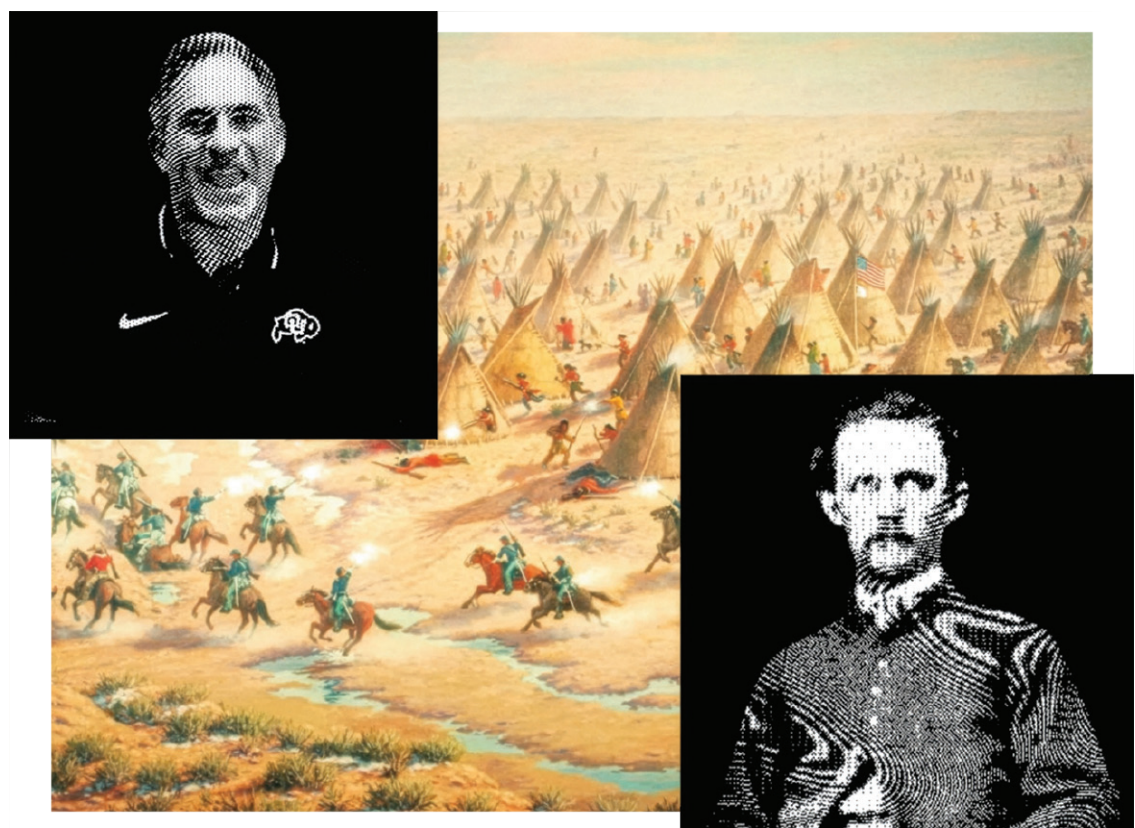
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CU Boulder Celebrates 150 Years of Native Genocide



Schwartz and Nichols against the backdrop of the Sand Creek Massacre.

CU Boulder Chancellor Justin Schwartz sent out a mass email and announcement on Jan 12 at 7:15 a.m. containing an invitation for students to attend his “State of the Campus Address” as well as a video welcoming students back, bringing to attention CU’s 150th year anniversary. Some students believe this celebration of 150 years is a celebration of Native genocide, given the early CU founders’ relations with the infamous Sand Creek Massacre and Mexican-American War, and the school itself and the colony of Boulder being on unceded land of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Ute Nations. This celebration, a part of the “Colorado 150” celebration, is an extension of the “America 250” celebration, a commemoration of the 1776

establishment of illegal occupation.

Native students feel this celebration is just another way of “advancing colonial ambitions,” as stated by an anonymous member of CU’s Oyate Native Student Group. This student, who wished to remain anonymous after a recent investigation exposed CU for harboring a neo-nazi student, stated the university’s relations with the tribal nations it is occupying are “rancid at best,” despite their stated goal to work “collaboratively with tribal nations.”

The anonymous student also spoke on CU’s founding, 150 years ago, when the eighth Lieutenant Governor of Colorado, David H. Nichols, rode into a peaceful camp of Southern Cheyenne and Arap-

ahos and helped to murder around 150 innocent people. Prior to this, he had previously served in the Mexican-American War, helping to annex over half of Mexico’s land. After Nichols’ genocidal mission to drive out the Indians, he returned to Boulder and settled, where he allegedly helped accrue \$15,000 to help establish CU Boulder in one night, on a ride from Denver to Boulder on horseback. While there are doubts about the story’s truth, according to a report by CU history professor Patty Limerick written in 1987, there is no doubt that Nichols had a major role in establishing CU through genocide. The current Cheyenne Arapaho Hall at CU Boulder was named after Nichols in 1961, but student protestors fought to have it changed in 1989.

As part of its website displaying events for the 150th celebration, CU features a timeline honoring notable figures involved in CU, including “El Diario” co-founder and former United Mexican American Students (UMAS) member Juan Espinosa and Florence Hernández Ramos, a contributor for “El Diario” and founder of the KUVO jazz radio station in Denver, despite CU’s recent campus banishment of current-day “El Diario” writers involved in reporting on a Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) protest.

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January 21, 2026

CU bans Indian students for reheating food, students win \$200,000 in lawsuit

In September 2025, two Indian students at CU Boulder filed a civil rights lawsuit against the university over racist remarks, and four months later, they won their case. Although they won the case, their academic careers at CU have been forcefully ended due to the events that transpired.

The incident took place on Sept 5, 2023, when Aditya Prakash, the former anthropology doctoral student at CU and plaintiff in the case, was told by a CU staff member not to cook Indian food in the Hale Sciences kitchen microwave because it had a “pungent” smell, citing a rule against food with a “strong odor.” Prakash returned to his desk to eat following the comment and threw away the container. The racist faculty member then proceeded to call an administrator to dispose of the entire trash bag, which only contained the empty container. When Prakash questioned the administrator, she stated that she wanted the office to “[smell] nice” and that “sandwiches” were acceptable, but “curry” was not.

In initial protest to this racist confrontation, Prakash returned two days later with four other students, including Urmi Bhattacheryya, his partner and fellow plaintiff, who all heated Indian food. This time, faculty members “heckled” the students and shut the door to the kitchen, as reported by Prakash. It was following this incident that the students who heated their food were reported to the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR) Office for “inciting a riot.”

Bhattacheryya, who was a teaching



Aditya Prakash and Urmi Bhattacheryya. Photo courtesy of couple.

assistant, invited Prakash to speak during her two recitations for a class on cultural relativism and ethnocentrism, according to the complaint, and was promptly barred from her teaching role when she “went to [her] laptop to access the class roster” and “was locked out” without any communication beforehand.

The chairperson of their department then sent a department-wide email cementing a rule that stated everyone had “to refrain from preparing foods with strong or lingering smells in the main office.” The couple replied, stating it was discrimination, while Bhattacheryya said she would not teach until the bigoted policy was changed.

On Sept 12, Prakash was called into a meeting with three members of his Ph.D. advisory committee, including one who taught the class Bhattacheryya had been removed from, where

they told him the racist staff member “felt physically threatened by him during the interaction,” as reported by *CU Independent*. During this meeting, his committee “wouldn’t let him speak,” and his mention of the incident in Bhattacheryya’s classes was a “big problem.” The following day, everyone was barred from heating food in the kitchen.

Following these events, the couple filed complaints through CU’s Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) on Sept 16, but nothing ever came of it. Two CU deans reached out to the couple individually to resolve the matter two days later, and after discussions, decided on the terms that Hale Sciences repeal “the food policy, [dismiss] the complaint labeling Mr. Prakash a threat, and [issue] an apology.” Despite OIEC supporting the terms, the department

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did not agree, and Prakash took a more formal route, leading to their Ph.D. advisory committee resigning on Jan 10, 2024, and being replaced with professors outside of their department.

The students received negative teaching assistant evaluations from the professors who resigned, while lying about their attendance. Prakash's student status was downgraded because he did not meet the deadline for his master's thesis due to the sudden change in professors.

Almost a year after the racist event, which started the ordeal, Bhattacheryya sent an email to the deans who had tried helping, and over a Zoom meeting on Sept 18, 2024, acknowledged the racism at play, pledging to assist in finding funding and to help transfer doctoral programs. The couple applied to the Geology and Critical Media Practices program, but were denied. Bhattacheryya has echoed what many students on the CU campus feel, claiming that the progressive view CU prides itself on is akin to an "atmosphere of gaslighting and them wanting you to stay in this position of subjugation and not speaking out...."

The couple received performance evaluations again in June 2025,

which took away their teaching assistant abilities and revoked funding, meaning they would have to pay \$30,000 in fees as international students. Loss of teaching assistant status also meant they lost their jobs. Three months later, on Sept 5, 2025, the couple filed the lawsuit.

Their lawsuit was settled later that year, in November 2025. CU Boulder agreed to pay the couple \$200,000 while also granting them master's degrees. Unfortunately, the settlement also included the stipulation that the couple could not attend or work at the school ever again. The two have since moved back to India, but believe, "If this is the path [they] have to walk, then so be it. [Their] people should see a better day," as Prakash stated in an interview with *The Independent*.

While racism on the CU campus, and perpetuated by CU staff, is nothing new, some see this as a new low. The complete barring of the couple from studying and teaching at the university echoes the firing of former professor and American Indian Movement member Ward Churchill, but the dispute over Indian food is a very is a different matter entirely.

Reflections of an Arab Student at CU

On Friday, Sept. 5, when I should have been driving through US-36 back to Aurora, Colorado to see my parents, I decided to watch a movie that GUT-C and SJP were hosting to fundraise for 19-year-old Feras and 20-year-old Razan. The movie was "The Time That Remains," which reviews say captures "the absurdity" of living day-to-day under apartheid. I can't confirm because the administrators of the University of Colorado (CU) Boulder, in their infinite wisdom called the police to shut the movie down. No administrator or university representative was there as the organizers of the event talked to the CU Police Department officer, who could only say that he was called down to ensure we don't use the room. As a group of my fellow students argued with one cop, another police officer directed a facilities manager to lock us out of the room. Looking back, I think CU Boulder echoed the absurdity of the movie.

In that moment, I felt isolated. In this room facing two cops, and the invisible yet ever present threat of reaction of the 148 year old institution of the University of Colorado, I remembered that the powers that be do not see me as worthy of having a space here. How many Palestinians lost their lives in those very hours, how many had succumbed to starvation, how many children became orphans, how many families were erased, how many saw their own siblings die in that very hour? What kind of person was I that all I could do was watch a movie, and even that I was failing at? What was worse than the isolation was the shame, the shame that came with being completely powerless and not knowing where that powerlessness came from. I hated myself in that moment. I hated myself more than I hated the administrators, more than I'm sure these administrators hate me. How could I call myself a free person, the daughter of a free person, the granddaughter of those who overthrew their own apartheid state, when all I can do is succumb to the threat of what, some asshole who was such a coward that they couldn't come face the students who paid them thousands in tuition. Are we truly another set of victims, or are we just a set of cowards allowing ourselves to continue to be behold-

• Arab CU Student

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

en to another set of cowards who profit off of their continued capitulation to fascism?

The fact that two cop cars showed up, and the administrators of this university were too scared to face the decision they made, not caring for the well-being of their own students facing this unforeseen escalation. One student was carrying a comically larger Ikea pride bag filled with popcorn bought earlier that day. In that moment, I didn't recognize the absurdist humor of the situation. All I could think of, standing there between my friends, watching the students argue with the officer who was frankly more confused than we were, was that my people are being murdered and my university denies my humanity so much so that I can't watch a fucking movie. For the last two fucking years I saw mothers lose their children, I saw young children digging through the rubble till their hands bled, hoping to find their parents, I saw my people starve, I saw fathers mourn themselves in the loss of their own child. I saw complete apathy for people I saw myself in. I watched as my professors banned us from saying Palestine, and saw them avoid meeting my eye as they did. I saw students

design the weapons that leveled homes to the ground. I watched as Professor Andy Meyer and his colleague attacked a fellow student, ripping a keffiyeh off her head. I watched Director Montez Butts do nothing to stop the harassment of Arab and Muslim students. I watched Dean Devin Cramer target and repress students calling for an end to a genocide. The only thing that I haven't seen at this point is the goddamn movie, and even that was to ensure I had a front-row seat to the screening of CU's attack on the Arab and Muslim identity, and its active participation in the genocide of Palestinians.

All I could do was break down. All I did was cry, and sob, and scream, and let my grief leave its mark on the University that caused so much of it. I wanted the coward who called the police to remember that these students aren't a job to be handled, but human beings with dignity deserving of respect. I wanted that coward, who was probably at that point driving through US-36, back to their safe and quiet neighborhood in Westminster to witness what people who freed themselves from apartheid looked like. I wanted that administrator to remember that

– much like any colonial occupation – their existence on the land and in this space was an unwelcome but temporary nuisance.

What does it mean for a university to crack down on anyone attempting to remember the Palestinian identity? What does it mean for a university to not only ignore the attacks against Muslim students, but to itself strangle any semblance of the Arab identity on its already too white campus? It means that CU is justifying to itself the violence that it partakes in against Palestinians. It means the administrators of this university don't lose any sleep over the death of another Palestinian child, because why lose sleep over someone who you have utterly dehumanized? If you deny our existence, repress our voices, and criminalize our day to day student affairs, you can ignore the murder of our counterparts across the world. Razan and Feras are the same age as the majority of underclassmen at this university. In another world, they would be attending university events like any other person their age should have a right to. But in this world, they are Palestinian, and to be Palestinian is to have your humanity denied to you.

JUSTICE FOR MEGAN TRUSSELL

Megan was last seen leaving Hallett Hall at CU Boulder on February 9, 2025. She disappeared and her body was found a little under a week later on February 15, 2025 at the bottom of a steep embankment near the 40-mile marker of Boulder Canyon Drive. She had significant injuries—bruises, abrasions, broken teeth, but officials said no foul play was involved. Officials later said her cause of death was self inflicted.

Megan's family believes the investigation into her death was incomplete and mishandled. They've since learned that key evidence was never tested.

Despite the unanswered questions and conflicting evidence, authorities closed the case, Megan's family continues to fight every day to find out what really happened to her.

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Boulder Company Responsible for Bombing of Iranian Elementary School

On Feb. 28, the so-called U.S. and Israel launched an attack on Iran, bombing an elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province. The bomb has been linked back to the Boulder-based aerospace company, Ball Aerospace & Technologies.

In a photo released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting on March 9, fragments of the missile are displayed. Manufacturing information is imprinted on the parts, which indicates the parts were created in Boulder, Colorado, by Ball Aerospace. Ball Aerospace was acquired by BAE Systems in 2024, but the parts were created and bought in 2014.



The missile fragments with Boulder's manufacturing information.
Photo courtesy of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting

Ball Aerospace specifically provided a satellite data link antenna, which is used to navigate Tomahawk missiles, the type used to bomb the school.

The U.S. attack on the Shajareh Tayyebah Girls' Elementary School killed 175 people, according to Irani-



Ball Aerospace's logo overlaid on top of martyred childrens' graves.
Photo courtesy of West Asia News Agency. Edited by El Diario.

an state media. The majority of those killed in the bombing were children. The U.S. bombed the school using a strategy called triple-tapping, meaning it was bombed three times in succession to kill as many people as possible.

BAE Systems has also been known to provide weapons to "Israel," which are used to kill Palestinians in Gaza. These weapons include artillery systems that "Israel" has also used to launch white phosphorus at Palestinians.

BAE Systems, and formerly Ball Aerospace, holds deep financial

connections to CU Boulder. Their relationship began in 1956 when the company was created in collaboration with physicists at CU Boulder. Today, BAE Systems provides the university with research funding and acts as a pipeline for graduate students to become employed following their education.

Initially, settler president Donald Trump blamed the bombing on Iran during a March 9 press conference, but Iran does not have Tomahawk missiles. The only countries with Tomahawk missiles are the so-called U.S., so-called Australia and Britain.



Funeral of martyred children.
Photo via Tasnim News Agency

CU Boulder’s Unshakeable Ties to the Department of Defense

On Feb. 28, 2026 120 children would leave their homes, seeking education at the Shajareh Tayyebah girls’ elementary school in Minab, Iran. They would never return home because three Tomahawk missiles would be launched at their school, killing 175 people in total. Inside these missiles were parts produced by Boulder-based Ball Aerospace, who have longstanding financial ties to the University of Colorado (CU) Boulder.

News of the U.S.-caused wars and genocides throughout West Asia has become common, but what many don’t know is the direct link between these wars and genocides and universities like CU Boulder.

In the past 10 years, since 2015, CU Boulder has consistently received over \$20 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), according to CU Boulder’s yearly fiscal reports.

A lot of these funds go to new technology developed on the CU Boulder campus for use in war, according to Annabelle, an organizer with Boulder Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). This includes CU Boulder’s

Research and Engineering Center for Unmanned Vehicles, where students build AI-driven vehicles for use by the DoD.

“CU Boulder functions in a lot of ways as an extension of the United States government and the United States military,” said Annabelle. “We have projects that take our classmates, undergrads, and teach them to design tools of war.”

One of SJP’s main goals is to fight these connections. This included an engineering career fair protest, which led to SJP’s deregistration as a registered student organization

It was in 2023 when CU Boulder received the most funding from the DoD. The university received over \$38 million. Annabelle believes this jump in funding was for the support of new hypersonic weapon development. The DoD would not need to start its own projects if it could fund ongoing research at CU Boulder.

Despite recent jumps in funding, DoD connections to CU Boulder are not new.

“These ties to the DoD and to the military industrial complex go back

at least to the 1950s,” said CU Boulder political science professor Scott Ritner. “It doesn’t feel all that long at times: 70, 80 years of this connection. But I think that that is really a long time in terms of dependence on the money and the stability of these kinds of relationships.”

Ritner, whose research focuses on antifascism, believes a change has to happen at a larger scale than CU Boulder for DoD connections to be cut. “I think probably the biggest thing that would need to happen in order for that to change is for the United States to stop being the most militarily organized society on the planet,” said Ritner.

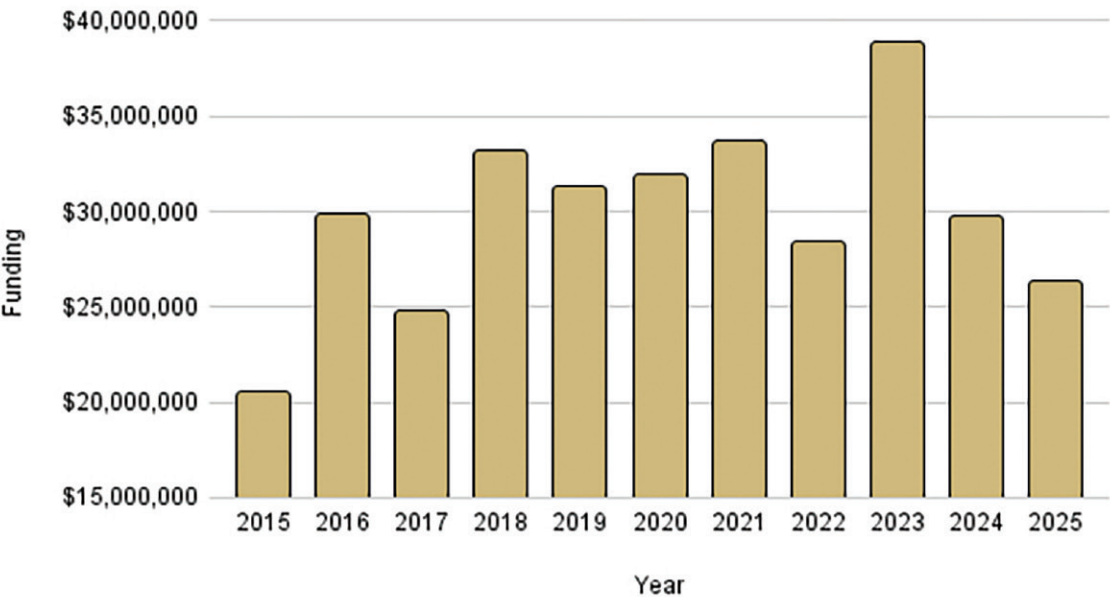
Despite the desire for large-scale change, SJP member Max believes local change is still possible. They joined SJP following 2023’s Al Aqsa Flood to learn more about Israel’s colonization of Palestine and how they could make a change locally.

The common perception that Boulder is progressive is not true, according to Max. They believe many politicians in Boulder hold anti-Palestinian views that go against so-called progressive values.

“Boulder is very affluent, very white, very detached from a lot of the political unrest we’re seeing domestically and internationally,” said Max, who was suspended from CU Boulder for the career fair protest. This is why they believe these military connections to CU Boulder go unnoticed.

The DoD and CU Boulder profit from their relationship, leading to war and genocide as a result. “I think it’s really about building a culture that rejects violence at its root. And uprooting it from CU Boulder,” said Annabelle.

CU Boulder Funding Received from U.S. Department of Defense



Source: CU Boulder Office of Contracts and Grants (Visualized by El Diario de la Gente)

Boulder PD Announces Expanded Drone Force

The city of Boulder announced its expanded use of police drones and the opening of a new Public Safety Information Center on June 8 in an article released on the city of Boulder’s website. The center will share the same building as the Boulder Police Department (BPD) at 1805 33rd St. The city of Boulder claims the new center will help protect Boulder residents.

Boulder’s new center will centralize all first responder info and become home to Boulder’s Drones as First Responder (DFR) program. The center will use a program called Axon Fusus, which consolidates live info from police body cameras, Axon security cameras, police drones, real-time transcripts of 911 calls and when Axon-branded tasers are fired. Owners of private security cameras can also opt in to give BPD access to their cameras, and the feed will be added to the Axon Fusus database. Officers can see the live info on their phones and Mobile Data Terminals in their cars.

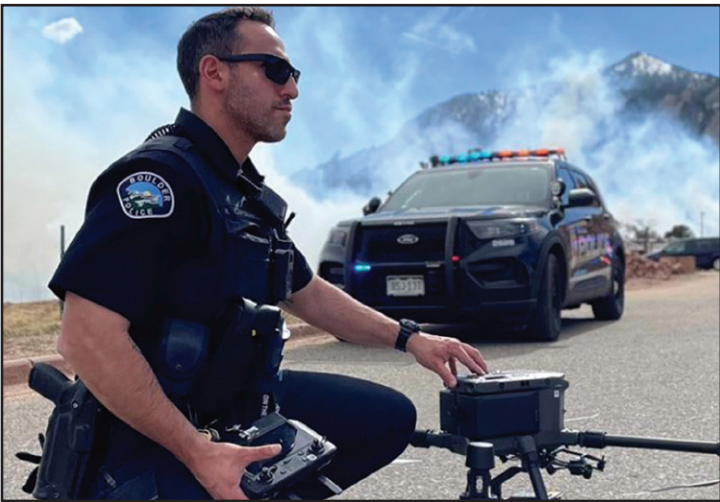
BPD has used the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) program since 2017, but the DFR program is an expansion of the existing program. The UAS is manned by 10 pilots who train with Traffic, Investigations, Bomb Squad and SWAT. The team uses 17 different types of drones.

The new DFR program will add seven Skydio drones to its inventory and will be piloted from the center. These drones will be stationed in specific spots throughout the city. They also only have 30 minutes of flight time, as stated on the center’s FAQ website.

The new Skydio drones have been used by zionists to surveil Palestinians in Gaza during the ongoing genocide. They have the ability to navigate in areas where GPS doesn’t work and can track people using thermal imaging and facial recognition.

The announcement of more drones follows reports by University of Colorado Boulder student activists in Students for Justice in Palestine of seeing drones following them during meetings for around 30 minutes. CU Boulder stated it did not have any of its drones flying at that time.

BPD Commander Darren Fladung said in a report by KGNU that drones will be used during holiday events and



A Boulder police officer prepares a drone for flight.

Photo courtesy of the City of Boulder.

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Boulder SJP Join the student Intifada





Boulder drone docking station. Photo courtesy of Flymotion

protests. In KGNU’s radio report, he states that BPD used drones to surveil protestors at a “No Kings Day” protest who were planning on taking over a street.

The center will also support Boulder Fire-Rescue, Open Space and Mountain Parks, Utilities, Transportation and Mobility and Parks and Recreation with the DFR program. It will help these departments with risk assessment and emergencies.

“Drones give us a clear, real-time view of what’s happening at a scene...” said Police Chief Steve Redfearn in the articles announcing the new center. He claims they keep “our officers safer.”

Redfearn also helped in the lynching of the black 23-year-old Elijah McClain while he was captain of the Aurora Police Department.

“Mad Bills to Pay”- A Digest, and Conversation with Director Joel Alfonso Vargas

By Max Gonzales

Winner of the 2025 “NEXT Special Jury” Award from Sundance, American Independent Award from the 2025 Denver Film Festival, among other awards, “Mad Bills to Pay”, the directorial debut of Joel Alfonso Vargas, is a wonderfully crafted film full of a large amount of importance.

This film centers itself around a Dominican teen living in the Bronx, Rico, and it follows his journey after learning that his girlfriend, Destiny, gets pregnant. It creates an emotionally captivating film that makes you root for, and against our main character because of the decisions he makes. This film feels as though it eats, sleeps, and breathes the Bronx. It portrays the Bronx in an atypical manner because it sheds light on how the daily life of a teen dad would go about their life. Although, as an audience member, you might not agree with every action that Rico takes, you can grasp an understanding because he is truly just trying to figure it out and in the end it doesn't leave you with any hard answers, it leaves you to think about what might happen.

One extremely well incorporated aspect of this film was its cinematography because there is only one

instance within the film in which the camera moves, and for the rest of the film it is sat still, leaving you there as just a watcher. The interesting part about this one camera movement is that it wasn't even planned, the actor hit the camera in a scene of mass tension, but it feels so authentic to the film because it appears at the climax that you are thrown off by the movement, but the dramatic interest keeps you engaged. It perfectly matches the energy of the scene and you get a physical sense of how the story is moving.

The thing that makes this camera-work so compelling is the reasoning behind it. Vargas attended a screening of this film at the University of Colorado Boulder, and he discussed how this film was so personal to him. Vargas explained that this story was so close to him because it was based around brothers, friends and people he had grown up with and seen. He described being a watcher always there and just simply, observing, which is so excellently represented within the camera in this film.

In this talk, Vargas also explained his influences, from films that depicted the Italian American experience in



The film's theatrical poster. Photo courtesy of Mad Bills to Pay official website.

New York, the African American experience in New York, and how those films truly created a sense of a “true” New York because a lot of films get that wrong in a lot of ways. One thing that he also included in this talk is about how if you want to see films like “Mad Bills”, you have to be the one to go out there and start that change. Oftentimes, the Latine perspective of New York is watered down, inaccurate, or disregarded, and with this film, there is that pushback. There is this sense of importance because while from an outsider looking in, it is possible to think that a film like this is a story about a Dominican-American living in the Bronx, but to Vargas, this is a story of what he saw living in the Bronx and that is so important because perspectives a lot of the time do get pushed away or ignored and creating films like this helps not only aid this change, it also extends these stories further out there. When asked how Vargas felt about his film getting critical and audience success and with a story so personal to him, he responded that it was incredible.

This film is stylistically beautiful and expressive with the story it wants



Destiny and Rico in the film. Still captured by cinematographer Rufai Ajala.

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• “Mad Bills to Pay”

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to convey, and it was created with an extremely small budget of about \$50,000, most coming from personal funding, and with that you can really see the care and love put into every frame of the film. Everything was filmed on location, from the Subway stations to Orchard Beach, all of these locations add to the natural feel of this movie and how it portrays a Slice of Life story in the Bronx. Having seen some of Vargas’ older works, there is a sense of personal style that he has grown into and it fits the theming of this movie so wonderfully. As a young filmmaker, Vargas is doing beyond impressive things with his storytelling, and if you have the chance to watch any of his work, you should jump at the opportunity to.

“Mad Bills to Pay: (or Destiny, dile

que no soy malo)” was officially released in Theaters in New York City and Los Angeles on April 17, 2026.

• African Studies

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Djamila also noted CU’s history, saying the University “...cannot distract from its colonial legacy by a mere \$2 million, we are owed so much more.” This colonial legacy was on full display in the 1980s, when student protestors and members of Black Student Alliance (BSA) erected a ‘shantytown’ encampment at the Dalton Trumbo Fountain Court. This led to CU divesting from South African apartheid in 1988, but only after pressure from students, including a demonstration in which police arrested an “...excess of 500 people in one case,” according to the CU Police Department.

El Diario needs help

This is the first issue of “El Diario de la Gente” in over 40 years, but it may also be the last unless you, the students, help to insure its future.

In the past, “El Diario” operated with a small, but dedicated staff. We have been able to start a new website with consistent articles, but “El Diario” needs a new medium away from algorithms.

The “El Diario” team wishes to provide the students with pertinent information. If students are aware of these issues, we stand better prepared to combat those who would oppress or exploit us and the Global South.

A semesterly “El Diario” newspaper is now in the planning stages and could become reality if students are willing to help. We need people who are interested in writing, photographers, and artists.

If you would like to work on a paper which is desperately needed on campus, send us a message at

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