



Scully & Scully

MORNING MIX

# Balloons fell from a yacht into a bay. It led to an arrest and \$25,000 in fines.

By Jonathan Edwards  
Today at 6:54 a.m. EDT



Video showed people popping dozens of balloons during a party on a yacht, causing plastic to fall into Miami's Biscayne Bay. The incident led to outcry from witnesses along with an arrest and thousands of dollars in fines. (WTVJ)

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Esteban Bruna shouted at the people popping dozens of balloons on a yacht as he watched the their plastic husks fall into the water.

They ignored him and kept popping, he told [the Miami Herald](#).

Bruna, a yacht broker, started [recording video](#) Tuesday afternoon at the Miami marina on Biscayne Bay, where he was moving a client's boat. In one clip, he captured two people rapidly stabbing decorative balloons. Later, he shot more footage as he cruised past the moored yacht and through the trail of white and tan plastic debris floating around it.

"Got to love Miami charter boats," Bruna said in [one of the videos](#). "Let's throw a party, pop every single balloon on the bow of the boat and just right into the water."

Later that day, Bruna uploaded [the videos](#) to Instagram, something that was not ignored. [Miami-Dade police](#) have charged 29-year-old David Torres-Bocanegra with reckless disregard for the environment and issued fines totaling more than \$25,000 to 10 individuals and companies in connection with what happened late Tuesday afternoon at an engagement party on the yacht.

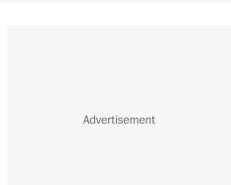


"As a community, we share the responsibility to protect our environment," Miami-Dade Police interim director George Perez said Thursday in a [statement](#). "Our coastal waterways are the natural beauty of our county, and our marine life depend on us to keep them safe."

Marine animals can starve when they mistake balloons for food and the plastic blocks their digestive tract, according to [the Ocean Conservation Society](#). Sea turtles and seabirds are especially vulnerable.

Torres-Bocanegra, who bonded out of jail Thursday, did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Washington Post early Friday. During his interview with police, he confessed to popping about 50 balloons, an officer said in a [sworn affidavit](#) obtained by the Miami Herald.

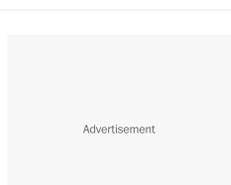
A representative for Cloud Nine, an event-planning company based in South Florida, said Wednesday in an [Instagram post](#) that it decorated the engagement party and brought in a vendor to hang balloons. Although no one from Cloud Nine popped the balloons, according to the representative, the company nevertheless apologized.



"We are sorry for the situation we were involved in, and we are aware now of the damage it generated to our environment," the representative said in the post.

As Bruna's video went viral and outrage built, Miami fitness coach [Tom Rivas also took to Instagram](#), telling people he had chartered the yacht to propose to his girlfriend. After his fiancée accepted his proposal, the newly engaged couple headed inside the yacht's cabin with their fellow revelers as crew members started to take down decorations. Rivas said he didn't know how they were getting rid of the balloons and couldn't see the yacht's bow as he and his guests celebrated inside.

"If I had known that's the way they were to remove this I would have certainly objected but we honestly had no idea until we saw the viral videos," he said in a statement posted to Instagram.



Still, Rivas added, that hasn't stopped people from directing their anger toward him and his fiancée. "A very special day for us has turned into tons of hate messages of people assuming it was us doing this horrible act."

Bruna published the videos on the Instagram profile of his employer, yacht management firm Miami Maritime Group, alongside a written post that said the yacht had been decked out with more than 200 balloons, and that "the damage these balloons can cause to our marine wildlife is catastrophic."

"I was pretty upset about it, this is our bay, this is our livelihood," Bruna told [WTVJ](#).

He told [the Miami Herald](#) he posted the video because he wanted to hold the balloon poppers accountable, raise awareness about what balloons and other plastic can do to marine life and keep that plastic out of the water.

"I just want people to be responsible boaters," he told the Herald. "There is only one ocean, we have to preserve it the best way we can."

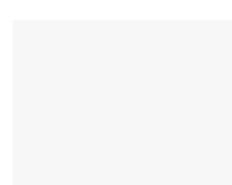
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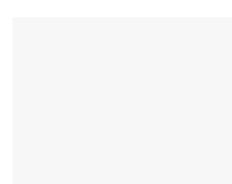
### The Effects of Patronizing & Marginalizing Minority

Marginalization at the individual level results in an individual's exclusion from meaningful participation in society.

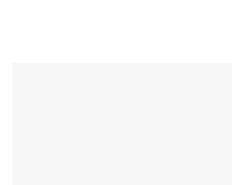
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