

## Rosie Ruiz: the biggest cheater in the Marathon



**Rosie M. Vivas**, better known as Rosie Ruiz, was born in Havana, Cuba, on June 21, 1953. She immigrated to the United States with her family as a child, settling in New York. Ruiz gained worldwide notoriety for her fraud in the 1980 Boston Marathon.

On April 21, 1980, Rosie Ruiz participated in the Boston Marathon. She was declared the women's winner with a time of 2 hours, 31 minutes, and 56 seconds, the third-fastest time ever recorded by a woman in the history of the race at that time. This victory immediately aroused suspicion due to her unknown status among marathoners and her seemingly fresh and non-exhausted appearance at the finish line.

Doubts were quickly reinforced by spectators' and other runners' testimonies, who claimed not to have seen her on the course. Organizers also noted inconsistencies in her previous performances. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that Ruiz had joined the race in the final miles, emerging from the crowd to cross the finish line. On April 25, 1980, after a thorough investigation, she was officially disqualified for fraud.

The Rosie Ruiz incident received extensive media coverage, and she became an emblematic example of sports cheating. Her name remained synonymous with dishonesty in sports. Despite her attempts at rehabilitation and declarations of innocence, the evidence of her fraud was overwhelming.

After the Boston Marathon incident, Ruiz had several run-ins with the law for fraud and theft. In 1982, she was arrested for embezzling \$60,000 from a real estate company where she worked. In 1983, she was convicted of cocaine possession.

Ruiz then led a relatively quiet life until her death on July 8, 2019, at the age of 66, due to cancer.

## **Sources**

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