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### **Eastern Washington Jury Convicts Three Defendants Of Conspiring To Impede Federal Officers In The Execution Of Their Duties**

Spokane, WA – On May 28, 2026, a jury of twelve people from across the Eastern District of Washington convicted Defendants Jac Archer, Justice Forral, and Bajun Mavalwalla II of violating federal law by conspiring to impede law enforcement officers or injure property used in the execution of their duties. After 8 days of trial and over a day of deliberations, the jury found Defendants guilty, beyond a reasonable doubt, of the crime. Sentencing has not yet been set by United States District Judge Rebecca L. Pennell, who oversaw the trial.

In the summer of 2025, a federal Grand Jury made up of different members of this community returned an Indictment charging Archer, Forral, and Mavalwalla, along with six other Defendants with Conspiracy to Injure or Impede Officers of the United States. The charges arose from an event at an ICE facility in Spokane in June 2025. That day, defendants and others prevented law enforcement officers from engaging in their official duties of transporting individuals from a detention facility in Spokane to a detention facility and the immigration court near Tacoma. For more than nine hours that officers were denied the ability to transport the detainees. The charged defendants and uncharged co-conspirators destroyed property, blocked exits to prevent officers from safely leaving with the detainees. Several officers testified during the trial that they feared for their safety because of the actions taken by the defendants and other co-conspirators.

After the Grand Jury returned its Indictment, nearly a year of extensive litigation took place, with each defendant retaining or being appointed highly-experienced criminal defense counsel. The defense lawyers in this case ranged from the two leaders of the Federal Defender's office and two former federal prosecutors, to multiple attorneys from a well-respected private law firm in Spokane. Those six attorneys, engaged in extensive pre-trial motion practice. Judge Pennel presided over several hearings, denying motions to dismiss and presiding over the scope and admissibility of evidence. The other six Defendants pleaded guilty during this time, leaving three at trial.

Those Defendants along with their six defense counsel and two Assistant United States Attorneys, selected the jury. The jury selection process took over a day to allow the parties and the Court, to extensively examine the potential jurors to ensure a fair and impartial jury was impaneled.

Throughout the trial, there were ongoing motions and evidentiary rulings which included the exclusion of additional evidence. Much of the Defendants' conduct on June 11, 2025, was recorded on video. The United States called numerous witnesses. Two of the Defendants exercised their constitutional right to testify while the other exercised the constitutional right not to testify. Defense called additional witnesses and the case rested on Wednesday, May 27, 2026. For over a day, 12 jurors deliberated over the evidence admitted. On Thursday May 28, 2026, the jury unanimously found each Defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of the charged offense.

“The United States Attorney’s Office has been encouraged to see so many members of the community engaged with this case. We look forward to the same level of public interest in all of our criminal cases against defendants charged with domestic violence and rape of children in Indian Country, human trafficking, fentanyl trafficking, violent felons with illegal arsenals, and the exploitation of children as young as infants and toddlers,” said Pete Serrano, First Assistant United States Attorney. “As our office has said from the beginning, everyone in this free country has the right to make their voices heard, and we encourage the exercise of that right. But no one has the right to cross the line into lawbreaking. We presented facts and evidence to a grand jury, made up of citizens from this district who found probable cause that crimes were committed. Upon being charged, these defendants were afforded their rights and represented by counsel throughout the process. For 250 years in this country, we have turned to juries to resolve those disagreements. Here, twelve individuals from across our community heard 8 days of evidence and concluded beyond a reasonable doubt that these three defendants committed the crime as charged, that they agreed to impede law enforcement officers and injure their property as they did their jobs.”

Mr. Serrano continued: “Just because the jury did not find in a way that some people wanted, does not negate the fact that a crime occurred. Our office’s sole motivation for the charging and prosecution of these individuals was to hold them accountable to the law as each attorney in this office has sworn an oath to support and defend the United States Constitution. This case was brought by my office, was agreed upon by the grand jury, and concluded with a multi-day trial by jury because the alleged crimes were committed. Statements made by current or former public officials who never set foot in the courtroom during the trial bear no relevance to these facts or the outcome of this case. There is no better system in the world for resolving conflicts than the jury system enshrined in our Constitution, and we should all cherish this right whether we agree with outcomes produced by our system. Had the jury’s verdict gone another way, the United States Attorney’s Office would be issuing this same statement today: the jury has rendered its verdict, let us all respect it.”

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