



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney
Eastern District of Washington

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**HOMETOWN HERO DETECTIVE EDGAR SALAZAR RECOGNIZED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

Spokane, Washington — First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano announced that on July 9, 2026, the Department of Justice and United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington recognized Detective Edgar Salazar as its 2026 Hometown Hero.

Detective Salazar has been a law enforcement officer with the Moses Lake Police Department for 11 years, where he has served with distinction. For the last approximately 5 years, he has performed exceptional work on the MLPD Street Crimes Unit with an emphasis on community safety investigations, to include very significant drug trafficking and firearms offenses. He also served as a Task Force Officer with the Drug Enforcement Administration and MLPD's lead firearms instructor. Detective Salazar also takes pride in his role as a peer support counselor for his fellow police officers.

Prior to joining MLPD, Detective Salazar was a Police Officer for the Western Shoshone Department of Safety in Elko, Nevada. Prior to his domestic law enforcement experience, he was a Marine for 6 years, honorably serving the United States in 2 combat tours in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During the first day of Beyond Wonderful, a three-day EDM musical festival at the Gorge Amphitheater in George, Washington on June 17, 2023, five officers, working undercover at the concert, found themselves in the midst of a terrifying scenario. A gunman, 26-year-old James Kelly, was assaulting his girlfriend in the campground area of the event space. When two bystanders attempted in to intervene (Brandy Escamilla, age 29, and Josilyn Ruiz, age 26), Kelly indiscriminately opened fire in the campground, killing the two good Samaritans and wounding at least three others. Kelly then took his girlfriend hostage, dragging her into a nearby field where he continued to violently assault her.

Despite being in undercover assignments without ballistic vests, standard police equipment, or their usual firearms, and armed only with small backup pistols, the officers exhibited unmatched bravery amid the chaos and panic that ensued from the very large crowd. They navigated approximately 150 yards of open grassy terrain, advancing towards the gunman who was

actively firing in their direction. Their swift and decisive action allowed them to close in on the suspect to about 65 yards. Detective Salazar then took a crucial shot with his pistol, successfully incapacitating the gunman. Thanks to the fearless and skilled response of these officers and the exceptional shot by Detective Salazar, the threat was ended, Kelly was apprehended, and immediate aid was provided to the victims. There is no question that without Detective Salazar's heroic actions, more lives would have been lost.

First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano said, "Our office is honored to recognize Detective Salazar as the 2026 Hometown Hero for his bravery, sacrifice and exemplary service to our community on behalf of the Department of Justice."

"The Moses Lake Police Department is extremely proud of the professionalism and dedication to service displayed by Officer Salazar and all the officers that responded to this horrific event, something they will remember for the rest of their lives. As we celebrate Officer Salazar today, we also remember there are families that are missing their loved ones and will surely grieve for the rest of their lives as well. I would like to thank the United States Attorney's Office for recognizing Officer Salazar today."