



**For immediate release:**

*Lamplighter Project announces new annual award for moral courage in law enforcement, bestowed upon Sgt. Javier Esqueda on National Whistleblower Day.*

**July 30, 2021** – The law enforcement whistleblower organization, [Lamplighter Project](#), announced the creation of a new award to recognize ethical members of law enforcement who place their physical safety and professional livelihood in jeopardy to uphold their oath to the Constitution and ensure that justice is not subverted. The *Lamplighter Award for Moral Courage in Law Enforcement* is a distinction bestowed annually upon a sworn or civilian member of law enforcement for acts of moral courage against corruption, injustice, or misconduct in the criminal justice system.

The inaugural recipient of the Lamplighter Award is Sgt. Javier Esqueda of the Joliet Police Department. Sergeant Esqueda became aware of video footage related to the 2020 in-custody death of Eric Lurry, a Black man who was subjected to unconscionable treatment by the Joliet Police Department. Believing that members of his own agency would not be held accountable, Sergeant Esqueda released video footage of the incident to the media. In pursuing justice for Eric Lurry, Sergeant Esqueda has been criminally charged with four counts of official misconduct by the Kendall County Prosecutor’s Office and placed on administrative leave during an internal affairs investigation which resulted in a sustained complaint. He remains on administrative duty, assigned to the City of Joliet’s Business Services Department. Through all challenges he has confronted, Sergeant Esqueda’s utmost concern is for Mr. Lurry, stating, “I want justice for the death of Eric Lurry, a man I didn’t know but whose death has changed my life forever.”

The Lamplighter Project commends Sergeant Esqueda for his courage. The world would be a darker place without lamplighters like Sergeant Esqueda. Lamplighters not only shed light on corruption, injustice, and misconduct, but serve as shining examples to other enforcement officers around the country who bear witness to violations of their oath.



*The Lamplighter Project encourages whistleblowing activity in law enforcement by removing barriers to reporting, preventing retaliation, and elevating ethical officers. [National Whistleblower Day](#) “celebrates the people who raise their voice in the name of combatting fraud, corruption and other crimes; their courage in the face of great adversity; and the strength of their conviction and dedication to the truth.”*