

## Man flees officer, caught with fentanyl

Written by Staff Reports  
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In an attempt to flee officers, a Gallup man sped down U.S. Highway 491, and almost crashed into an officer.

On May 18, around 10 am, Gallup Police Officer Brandon Salazar was patrolling the Gamerco area when he saw a black Ford F150 and a four wheeler parked behind Tropics Bar at 503 Chino Ave. According to his report, Salazar went to check out the situation because the bar was closed and there aren't normally any vehicles parked there.

As he got closer, he recognized the man in the driver's seat of the F150 as Martin Morales, 28, because he had previously interacted with him. According to the report, Salazar knew Morales had an outstanding warrant for his arrest for criminal sexual penetration. There was also an attempt to locate on the F150.

Salazar asked the man for his ID, but he would not give it to him. Salazar tried to open the truck's driver's side door, but it was locked. Morales then proceeded to speed off.

Salazar chased Morales through Gamerco, and while he did lose him at one point, he restarted the chase on U.S. Highway 491, heading southbound. He eventually stopped at the intersection of U.S. Highway 491 and Carbon Coal Road to deploy stop sticks.

As Morales approached the intersection, he was driving against traffic. He crossed over the raised median into the correct lane of traffic, and Salazar tried to throw a stop stick in front of his

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vehicle. However, Morales was able to avoid them by driving directly at Salazar.

According to his report, Salazar drew his gun, aiming it at Morales. Morales then quickly turned to avoid hitting Salazar and continued driving through the intersection.

Salazar gathered his stop sticks and rejoined the pursuit. Over the radio, another officer told him that Morales was now on foot on a dirt road behind Santa Rita Avenue. At that point, Morales was last seen jumping over a fence into somebody's backyard.

The officers found Morales hiding under a camper shell in the yard.

Gallup Magistrate Court Judge Brent Detsoi signed a search warrant for the F150 Morales was driving. Salazar found 6.8 grams of fentanyl, nine fentanyl pills and IDs belonging to multiple people inside the car. Jail staff also found a fentanyl pill on Morales when he was booked into the McKinley County Adult Detention Center.

Morales was charged with aggravated assault on a peace officer, aggravated fleeing law enforcement, possession of a controlled substance, reckless driving, driving with a suspended license, and concealing identity. His preliminary hearing was scheduled for May 31.

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