

Illegal Immigrant Found Guilty of Vehicular Homicide in Death of State Trooper

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Jun. 9, 2025 7:30 am



An illegal immigrant has been convicted of causing the March 2024 death of a Washington State Patrol trooper.

Raul Benitez-Santana was found guilty of vehicular homicide and vehicular assault in the crash that killed Trooper Christopher Gadd, according to [Fox News](#). Immigration and Customs Enforcement has a detainer out for Benitez-Santana, a Mexican citizen.

Benitez-Santana was driving 107 mph on the shoulder of Interstate 5 while under the influence when he struck Gadd's parked patrol vehicle, according to [KING-TV](#).

"Mr. Benitez-Santana had too much to drink; he mixed it with marijuana. His blood alcohol shows he was legally intoxicated," deputy prosecutor Tobin Darrow said during closing arguments.

"But for him driving at a 100 miles per hour on the shoulder illegally, Trooper Gadd would not have been killed," deputy prosecutor Isaac Wells said.

Defense attorney Emily Hancock blamed Gadd.

"He parked under an overpass. It was dark. His lights were off. And he was invisible," she said.

“Mistaking the shoulder for a lane is not reckless. That is a mistake,” Hancock said. “Raul is not guilty of vehicular homicide. He is not guilty of vehicular assault, and he was not impaired.”

After the verdict, the Washington State Patrol released a statement, saying in part the jury’s decisions are “just and welcomed.”

“With this decision, one more dangerous driver is removed from our streets, something Christopher Gadd dedicated his life to doing with every shift, by committing himself to conducting ‘one more stop’ on every day he served our state as a Washington State Trooper,” Washington State Patrol Chief John R. Batiste said.

“While the verdict does not take away the pain of losing Chris, it does offer a modicum of relief for those who served with and loved this fine young man,” he said.

Benitez-Santana’s sentencing has been scheduled for July 2.

During the trial, Darrow said that Benitez-Santana “was exactly the sort of driver that Trooper Gadd was looking for. That was specifically his purpose, that was his duty. Mr. Benitez-Santana ran into and killed Trooper Gadd before he could take action to enforce the law,” according to KOMO-TV.

But Hancock said mixing driving, marijuana and alcohol is just fine.

“It is legal to drive after you’ve had drinks. It is legal to drive after you’ve used marijuana. The law tells you this,” she said.

Darrow said Benitez-Santana did not need to be on the road, where he was clocked at over 110 mph just before the crash.

27-year-old State Patrol Trooper Christopher Gadd was recently killed in the state of Washington by an illegal named Raul Benitez Santana from Mexico.

Gadd was parked on the side of the road when Santana, who’d been drinking and smoking, plowed into him.

Secure the border.... pic.twitter.com/IRJjsaKe4c

— Real Life Footage (@RealLifeFootage) March 6, 2024

“Once he knew he was going to be consuming multiple alcoholic drinks and mixing in some marijuana on top of that — call a friend, get an Uber, sleep in the car for a while if you have to, but do not take to the road under those circumstances,” Darrow said.

“He also chose to drive at extreme speed, very recklessly, and as a direct result of that killed Trooper Gadd.”

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Benitez-Santana’s attorneys tried to have the trial thrown out, claiming collusion between the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office and ICE, which the defense said violated Washington state’s sanctuary laws.

The attempt to do so failed.

This article appeared originally on The Western Journal.