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Irvin: Helping families when Arizona officers are killed



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"What are you playing," I asked, not really expecting too much of a response.

After all, I'd seen my own son play video games, so absorbed in killing the bad guys that he would barely acknowledge my presence.

But this little boy was excited, telling me all about his PlayStation Portable.

"SOCOM," he replied with little fingers furiously working the controls.

His name was Luis, named after his father. He and his sister, Arianna, were dressed in what looked like their Sunday best. After all, tonight their dad was being honored.

All around them, there were politicians and dignitaries, police officers, firefighters.

I admit, I didn't make the connection at first. I marveled at how well behaved the two siblings were, barely six and seven years old.

It wasn't until I checked the list again -- the names I would read later: Luis Aguilar, United States Border Patrol, End of Watch: January 19, 2008.

On that day outside of Yuma, Aguilar had been trying to deploy spike strips to stop a vehicle which had crossed over from Mexico when he was intentionally struck and killed. He was 31 years old.

In that year's time, Aguilar's wife, Ercia, his two children and brother Marcos, also a border patrol agent, have been left to carry on.

Last week, they were honored by the [100 Club](#), a group which directly helps the Arizona families of fallen public safety officers.

It is a sobering experience to attend the group's annual dinner.

There were six families this year, representing six who gave their lives in public service in 2008. When you get a chance to meet them, you momentarily witness their journey. No one can begin to understand what they've gone through, but when they are there, with you, sharing a meal, you can't help but imagine yourself in their place and how difficult it must be.

It was my honor to read the name of Luis Aguilar this year, along with five others, in what I hope was a respectful tribute.

I hope one day to attend the dinner without having to read any new names, but that seems unlikely given the inherent dangers of a career dedicated to keeping the rest of us safe.

I know I will take each opportunity to thank them for what they do, and to wish them good luck and Godspeed each time they put on the uniform. And I will never forget the ones they leave behind in the shadow of their sacrifice.

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