

KATIE'S LAW SUCCESS STORY

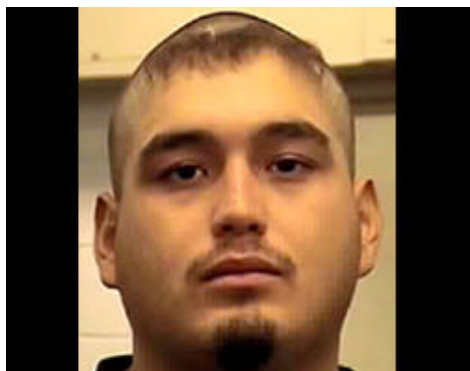


A SENSELESS LOSS

11 year-old Victoria Sandoval was raped and murdered on Halloween night 2005 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The killer broke into the home of Victoria's grandparents and attacked the girl in her bed where she slept. Her grandparents awoke the next morning to find Victoria's lifeless body.

A SUSPECT

Investigators quickly focused on Robert Gonzales, a man with an extremely low IQ who had identified himself as Victoria's boyfriend. During questioning Gonzales confessed to the crime, but then later recanted. Subsequent testing of the DNA evidence revealed there was *no match* to Gonzales. But despite this seemingly exculpatory evidence, police and prosecutors pressed their case against Gonzales – they felt he simply knew too many details about girl's death to be guessing. After more than two years spent in jail on the charges, Gonzales was found competent to stand trial in January 2008.



A NEW SUSPECT

In April 2008, Israel Diaz was arrested in New Mexico on felony burglary charges, and a DNA sample was collected due to *Katie's Law*. When his profile was entered into the DNA database, it was found to match the DNA evidence in Victoria Sandoval's case. After learning of this match, investigators discovered Diaz had been released with the burglary charge still pending. He was located in the custody of federal immigration control and was facing deportation.

AN EXONERATION

After identifying Diaz as the match to the unknown DNA profile in Victoria's murder, police and prosecutors pursued every avenue of connecting Gonzales and Diaz. But no connection could be found. Ultimately, the prosecutor's office concluded that Gonzales' confession was, in fact, a false confession. He was finally released from jail and was cleared of suspicion.

JUSTICE SERVED

Diaz is now facing a trial for the rape and murder of Victoria Sandoval.

KATIE'S LAW SUCCESS

Without *Katie's Law* to require DNA collection for felony arrests, Diaz would have escaped to Mexico where he would never become a suspect in the murder and rape of Victoria Sandoval. He would still be free, and he may have victimized more children. He would have gotten away with murder. Additionally, without a match to Diaz as the true killer, Gonzales – an innocent man – would have been prosecuted for a crime he did not commit, and very easily may have been wrongly convicted of that crime.

Delaying collection of DNA samples until the point of conviction impedes justice...for victims, for the general public that is left unprotected, and for the wrongly accused. But it is certainly in the best interest of the guilty.