



From the Desk of
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To: **Law Enforcement Professionals**

Subject: **Ms. Dalene Nielson, Forensic Artist**

As the forensic artist for the Houston Police Department for the last 22 years, I recommend Ms. Dalene Nielson for forensic artistry in composite, post-mortem, and age-progression sketches. Ms. Nielson's forensic work in this proven field of police science has the potential to identify suspects, witnesses, and victims and thereby solve countless criminal cases for law enforcement.

Early in her career, Ms. Nielson produced a forensic sketch that resulted in the rescue of kidnap victim Elizabeth Smart. The suspect sketch was based on a witness's description. After *America's Most Wanted* released Ms. Nielson's sketch of the kidnapper, relatives of Brian David Mitchell reported his identity to authorities. His photos were released on March 1, 2003, and within days, viewers of the program spotted Mitchell on the streets of Sandy, Utah with two females, one was Elizabeth Smart. Forensic sketches by their nature are not perfect. But, Ms. Nielson captured the essential features that made her sketch a grand success. Interestingly, this was Ms. Nielson's first composite sketch and she had no forensic training before her work on this high profile case.

Following her successful sketch in the Elizabeth Smart case, I began mentoring Ms. Nielson and I am positive her work has the potential to aid any investigation that has a witness. Additionally, Ms. Nielson would be very talented at reproducing the appearances of unidentified murder victims and creating age-progression sketches of known fugitives. My sketches have been instrumental in identifying more than 1,060 suspects and *The Guinness World Records 2004* recognized me for the most criminals positively identified from the composites of one artist. Twice a year I teach a weeklong course in forensic artistry at Northwestern University in Illinois. It is therefore from a position of experience that I recognize the talent and skill in the forensic artistry of Ms. Dalene Nielson.

Full-time forensic artists who keep records report a 30% success rate. Comparatively, fingerprint technology has an approximate 10% success rate at identifying a suspect where usable fingerprints are available. Fingerprint technology is a common investigative tool. Increasing numbers of law enforcement agencies are utilizing forensic artistry to help solve criminal cases. Dalene Nielson is a talented artist whose forensic sketches have proved effective. She is a rising star in a growing field. I highly recommend that you utilize her talents to solve homicide, sex crime, juvenile, robbery, and other criminal cases.

Lois H. Gibson