



# DenverDA

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

March 19, 2010

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### **MOTHER GIVEN 20 YEARS IN PRISON FOR “TORTURED DEATH” OF SON**

A woman who rode around running errands for hours with her boyfriend as her 2-year-old son was dying a slow, painful death from scalding burns on his body was sentenced to a lengthy prison term today. Prosecutors called it one of the most horrific cases ever seen.

**Isela Reyes-Talamantes** (dob: 02-23-85) pleaded guilty earlier to child abuse resulting in death (F3). Although she was not accused of causing the scalding burns that caused the death of her son, Elijah Archuleta, she failed to make any effort to seek medical care that could have saved his life and later lied to the police in an effort to protect both herself and her boyfriend from prosecution.

Denver Chief Deputy District Attorney Kerri Lombardi, in arguing for a lengthy sentence, told the Court that Elijah was alive and in his car seat next to his sister when Reyes-Talamantes was picked up from work by her boyfriend the afternoon of November 7, 2008. They spent hours driving around running errands, including stops to buy groceries and fast food. Eight hours later, when they arrived at St. Anthony Central Hospital complaining that Elijah had choked on a piece of food, the boy was already dead. He had suffered burns over 75% of his body that were so severe he had large patches of skin missing from his body, including his face and even the bottom of his feet.

“Mother’s everywhere should listen,” said Lombardi. If you make a choice to protect your boyfriend or husband over your child, you will be punished. You will be punished for sacrificing the well-being of your child for yourself. If your fear of losing your boyfriend is greater than your sense of a duty as a parent, you will go to prison.”

In sentencing Reyes-Talamantes, Denver District Court Judge Ken Laff noted, “There can be no more horrible crime than what happened to Elijah, no greater suffering than what he endured.”

Reyes-Talamantes’ boyfriend, John Vigil (dob: 09-17-84), is facing trial later this year in connection with Elijah’s death. He is charged with first-degree murder and child abuse resulting in death.