**The History of Crime Stoppers**



When horrible things happen, we often ask that they not be in vain. And that was just the case when Michael Carmen was shot to death by two thugs in an armed robbery in July of 1976. As a result of that murder, detectives with Albuquerque Police Department teamed up with KOAT TV-7 to request anonymous information about the murder and offer a cash reward.

Michael Carmen was a young University of New Mexico student who was working at a small gas station in Albuquerque’s Northeast Height in July, 1976. He was only two weeks away from marrying his high school sweetheart. On the night he was killed, he was working an extra shift because one of his friends needed the night off.

On that fateful Friday night, two men robbed Michael’s gas station and then—for no apparent reason—fired a shotgun blast from less than 10 feet into his abdomen. Remarkably, Michael lived for more than four hours after the shooting. Several times he tried to tell detectives who it was that shot him, but he didn’t have the strength. He died on the operating table without being able to make a dying declaration.

Detective Greg MacAleese was one of the detectives working that case. The murder seemed so senseless at the time. It still remains senseless today. But Detective MacAleese told Michael’s mother that he would bring his killers to justice. And yet, after six weeks of trying to piece evidence together to solve the murder, they were no closer to a solution than they were the night he was killed.

Det. Greg MacAleese had the wild idea of asking the TV station to reenact the crime and broadcast it. Det. MacAleese approached Max Sklower, then general manager of KOAT-TV in Albuquerque, and asked him if they could reenact the crime for one of his newscasts.

The reasoning for reenacting the crime was simple. There was an eyewitness to Michael’s murder somewhere in the community. The only logical approach was to get the media to help find that witness. If they reenacted the crime, then the memory of a potential eyewitness may be triggered, someone who might have seen part of the crime committed but not understood what he or she was witnessing.

IT WORKED!!! On September 8, 1976, at 10 p.m., the first crime reenactment aired on the newscast. The next morning Albuquerque PD received a call from a young man who told them he had watched the news segment the night before and remembered some very important information. This tip led to this tragic case being solved by Albuquerque detectives. As a result to the newscast, police received nonrelated information and tips which played an important part of solving a handful of other local crimes. Local business people and citizens quickly volunteered their time, talent, and money to start the very first Crime Stoppers program – Albuquerque Metro Crime Stoppers.

Because of this huge success, Crime Stoppers programs are now worldwide. The local programs are responsible for assisting in solving serious crimes by offering cash rewards to tipsters. The state programs offer an opportunity for local programs to work together on a broader scale to enhance their capabilities, networks, and provide on-going support, training, and education.

There are now more than 1,700 Crime Stoppers programs in the U.S. and throughout the world, in 16 countries. And it all started in Albuquerque. In addition to the original program, Campus Crime Stoppers is now in hundreds of local schools, providing a safe environment for our K-12 students to learn and grow.

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