



HEAR FROM HER

Angelica Rangel

**System Impacted Women Speak Series
Brought to you by the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition**

I didn't know I was pregnant when I got arrested, and I was shocked when I found out. My first thought was, 'what is going to happen to my baby?'

You're a prisoner, a number, not a human, not a pregnant woman. What I was going through wasn't important to them.

Being separated from my daughter like that sent me into a deep depression. I know I committed a crime and had to serve my time, but I did the wrong, not my child.

After delivery, I only got to hold her for fifteen minutes before they took her away.

For months I would wake up in my cell hearing a baby crying.

There were a lot of women in prison like me. Every story seems the same, just a different person.

Drug convictions and prostitution, women with extensive trauma histories, women who don't value themselves or their bodies because of things that have happened to them and messed with their self-esteem.

I had a hard pregnancy. I had gestational diabetes, and the doctors just want you in and out. I couldn't get my medical needs met like I could've if I had a regular doctor. When you go to medical appointments, you are shackled at your hands and your feet. What I was going through wasn't important to them. The guards think you're using your pregnancy as an excuse, there is no compassion. You don't get milk, and my teeth started decaying. Sleeping is so much harder on those thin mats. Pregnancy is hard on your body, and they don't take care of those needs. You only have what they give you.



What are you up to these days?

I am a member of Girls Embracing Mothers (GEM) now. They were one of my great supporters. GEM helped me get the money to get my driver's license after I was released. They changed my life by believing in me.

They didn't see me as a criminal. They saw me as a mother, and a human, and someone who needed a little bit of help. Part of my problem was having too much pride and not asking for help, but since then I've worked on that and it just took somebody believing in me and supporting me.

For more information about women in Texas' criminal justice system, visit TexasCJC.org/Womens-Justice