



HEAR FROM HER

Destiny Harris

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

My childhood was cut short because I had to become my own parent. I made myself go to school. I was working 3 jobs at one point. My mom wasn't there to take care of me, so I had to take care of myself.

During one of my mom's incarcerations, I was molested. Had she been there, I wouldn't have been in that situation and she could've protected me. Locking her up, when she was no threat to public safety, put me and my siblings at risk.

Women need extra protection, even while incarcerated. There is so much abuse in prison. Incarcerated women are vulnerable to re-victimization and re-traumatization. Trauma probably led them here in the first place. They shouldn't then be subjected to the same things they were having to fight against on the street.



Note: Destiny was around 5 years old the first time her mother was incarcerated. The youngest of 4 children, Destiny and her siblings would crash on a family members' couch. Sometimes the person they were staying with would also get arrested and locked up, and they'd have to go stay on someone else's couch.



What was the hardest part about your mom being incarcerated?

Visitation was one of the hardest parts of my mom's incarceration. I always had to find someone to take me to see her. Even then, I could only see her on the screen. There was no face-to-face visitation.

I remember just looking at this fuzzy screen and crying. My mom was trying to console me, but she couldn't even wipe the tears from my eyes. The visits themselves were traumatizing.

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