

apartment, but at least it wasn't a shelter. During that time, I wrote a lot of bad checks because it was hard for me to get a job. I didn't have money for food, and you know, it was just a lot that we were dealing with. It was the only way really at the time that we could get anything.

Eventually I got a job at McDonald's. My brother was working, and my dad was coming up with some money to send us so we could maybe rent a trailer or something. But then three or four weeks after we got out here, I spoke with my mom, and eventually she let us stay with her.

I'd Made This Huge Mistake, and I Regretted It

By the end of 2007, I had two kids and was four months pregnant with another. I was living in Marietta, Georgia, and working two jobs, at Kmart and Pep Boys.

Well, one day I got an idea. I had a friend at Kmart who used to do fake refunds. She'd say a customer was coming in and she was refunding stuff that wasn't really being refunded. So I did it the first time and I didn't get caught, but of course I was scared. I said to my friend, "We didn't get caught. Let's not do it again." But we really needed the money. I was behind on a lot of bills, and I was trying to catch it up.

One night, my friend came through my line to check out little items like diapers and different things—some of the things I needed—and I didn't charge her for everything; diapers and stuff like that I would never ring up. We would do that a lot.

That night the Kmart loss prevention officer was outside smoking a cigarette, but I didn't see him at the time. When I got ready to close up, he called me and my friend to the back, and of course they'd caught it on tape. He asked us how long we'd been doing it, and I lied, "This is my first time." And then he basically told me, "Write what I tell you to write, and then I'll let you go home."

I think the total he had us taking was \$1,200 worth of stuff, and I said, "I didn't take that much," because we'd only taken \$300 worth. But he said, "But we have other stuff that's been taken," even though I told him I hadn't taken any of that.

Then he said, "Well, we're gonna press charges." I think he was trying to save his job at the time, 'cause they've got to catch people,