

and I don't think he'd been doing too good in that department. I got arrested and taken to jail that night, but I bonded out.

About two months later, I got a letter in the mail saying there was an arraignment. I honestly thought it was for Kmart, but when I got to court, I found out it was for Pep Boys—I'd been doing the same thing there. The judge was sending everybody to jail that day, and I was totally scared. So I got up there, and the Pep Boys loss prevention officer said he'd called his manager because he really felt bad for me. He said I was a good worker, and that he knew the situation I was in. He said, "Well, I asked my manager if there's a way that you can make payments, but he's not budging. He says it's too much." It came to something like \$700. The judge put me on a bond on my own recognizance. She basically let me go home that day without my needing to post bail, and told me that I needed to turn myself in the following night. It was like her trusting me that I was going to come back. She said, "I think you made a very bad mistake. I want you to go home, pick your kids up from day care, and make sure they're stable. Tomorrow at nine o'clock, you need to turn yourself in."

In my mind, I was thinking, *Okay, well, I've never been in trouble before, so the only thing they can do is put me on probation.* And that's all I kept saying to myself. But when I finally got to court, I got a court-appointed lawyer, and he said, "Well, the judge is saying eighteen months." And I was like, "Huh? I've never been in trouble before! I can pay the money back!" At the time I had \$1,500 on me, which I'd saved from my taxes. My lawyer talked to the prosecutor, who said, "No. She's got to serve time."

Then my lawyer told me, "Go home for the weekend and get yourself together with your kids." He said, "The only thing I can say is that I'll try and talk the prosecutor down. Any other judge, and I think you would've been okay. But I don't think she's gonna budge."

So I went home and finally I called my grandmother, my dad, and everybody, and let them know what was going on. Of course they were all shocked, because I had never said anything about it before. That weekend was real, real hard. I was scared, because I didn't want to leave my kids. I guess it just hurt me because I'd never been in trouble, and I was doing all I could to stay out of trouble. But I'd made this huge mistake and I regretted it. I think that was the most