

**TAVP Visions After Violence Interview
Interview with Nadia Kerr**

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Summary:

Nadia Kerr describes what imprisonment was like alongside her sister while her mother raised her children for her.

MARCI MARIE SIMMONS: Hello, my name is Marci Marie Simmons. I'm a fellow with Texas After Violence Project. I'm here with Nadia Kerr. It is Friday, March 24th at 12:08 p.m. Thank you so much for being here, Nadia. I really appreciate your willingness to share your story with us and I'm excited to hear from you today.

NADIA KERR: You're welcome, pleasure to be here.

SIMMONS: So Nadia first – first let me just ask you how much, I asked or, I got ahold of you so that we could talk about incarceration in a Texas prison. So if you could just for the record, tell us how much time you did in prison in Texas.

KERR: I did 10 and a half years on a 20-year sentence.

SIMMONS: Okay.

KERR: And, I made my first parole.

SIMMONS: Okay, good. Thank you. Okay, Nadia I am – how old were you when you went to prison?

KERR: I think I was about 25 or 26.

SIMMONS: Okay. Do you feel like anything prior to 25 or 26 year old Nadia – do you feel like any of your life circumstances put you on a path that led you to prison?

KERR: At this point in my life I can answer that with an absolutely. I did not grieve properly when I lost my father in 2003 and I was already in a lifestyle that was headed that way. I started that early, at about 16 but I figured I was okay until my Daddy died. And he died and I just used that as a space to not cope properly. I just kind of fell into this

dark place, and I was there for years for years. So, yeah, I think that's definitely where everything kind of went to the left.

SIMMONS: Nadia, I'm so sorry that you lost your dad at such a young age, and you know, I got the pleasure of speaking with your sister as well and I just let her know also that I feel like that age, we're trying to handle our emotions, just being that age. So having some kind of traumatic event during that time, I can only imagine how hard that was for your family. Do, do you – were there any illegal substances or controlled substances involved with that after your father's death?

KERR: Oh, yes ma'am. Yes. I was drinking and drugging, you know. It was just the thing to do, the part of life. It was like drinking water. I used pretty much everything. Or, I didn't smoke any crack. Yeah that was another – coke, amphetamines. But that was also so I could go to sleep as well. Okay. Okay, so yes, I was doing all those things just to kind of stay up and maintain a personality while I was in my life. And then I would also, you know, use whatever I needed to use to go to sleep. It was, definitely, was a part of my life.

SIMMONS: Thank you for being so open about that. I don't think that's unusual for people to self-medicate and in traumatic situations. So you're very brave for sharing that. I appreciate it. So Nadia, you – you went, you caught a charge and, and yours was kind of a unique situation because you have a sibling that was involved with that, right?

KERR: Right. She's not my co-defendant, but pretty much.

SIMMONS: You guys are both facing criminal charges at the same time basically.

KERR: Yes, ma'am.

SIMMONS: You're going – are you in the county jail? When you're going to your court hearings, or are you out on – out with your family? Going to court?

KERR: No, we did have bonds, but we could not afford the bonds. And I actually had plans where if I bonded, then I was gonna run. I felt that in my soul. So that's probably another reason why God didn't allow that to happen. That probably would have been another channel. And yeah, we were in the county and we weren't together. Like, they wouldn't let us be together and we would go to court. Like, I didn't see her for like the first time we were there – like a year and I saw her, maybe, after being there about 10 months, I saw her going for the medical – in the med. But would change from every unit together. Until she went home before I did. When she went to the camp.

SIMMONS: Wow. I – what does that feel like, your sister – you guys grew up together and now you're in this situation where, I know you're concerned for yourself, but I imagine there's some concern there for your sister. How are you managing that, not getting to see her and, and work things out with her like you normally would?

KERR: Being that we are only eleven months apart, it was pretty traumatic. Once we got to, like once we got together, she became like my security blanket in the beginning of it all. It was kind of like, uh, I can't even describe it, it was just horrible. Um, I would call everyday and then she would call right after, or my momma would say she just got off the phone with her. We were still like telekinetically connected, soul-tied. Also, like, um in the beginning I wasn't concerned about me at all, honestly because I almost lost her like prior to that situation. So I was wanting to get her out of there and so I tried to take it all and my lawyer said I couldn't do that because they weren't co-defendant. Like, I couldn't do her time so that too was also, you know, God saying we have to walk our own walk. You can't swoop in and save her on this. So that was, uh, that was heartbreaking when the answer was no. I was willing to go do it all just so she could go home. Yeah.

SIMMONS: Wow. I'm wondering about your mom. So you've, you – she's got two daughters in the county jail, and she has some grandkids at home. Tell me about that.

KERR: Yes. She has two daughters in jail, and we went like nine, nine or ten days apart. And bless my momma's heart. She took them without question when they could have been lost in the system or you know. So they were raised well but it was, it was straining and draining. But I believe everything happens for a reason. I feel like she did a better job raising them than I would have been able to do. Had I been – had I not gone to prison because I wouldn't have gotten it. I don't feel like I would have made it out of the life if I hadn't had that experience, and I don't even think I would be alive if I hadn't gone to prison, because of the things, not just the drugs, but also the things I was doing. But she did it. She did it. I have two daughters, one and four. One and four. And then Chloe, that's funny. She was three, I think four or three at the time. Yeah. Yeah. It was a lot for her but she did it.

SIMMONS: So you're, you're there in county jail, worried about your sister, what it, what might happen to her, trying to be her caregiver in a way? Even though you're not getting to see her. What are your – what is your communication then, if you're not getting to communicate much with your sister. Tell me about your communication with your mom during that time.

KERR: I was callin' – tryin' not to call every day and cry, but every time I called, I would just cry. I would hear like my sister slipped in the shower or did this and that. She has a lot of, like hardware and stuff and that would worry me. I was just, I was just really worried for – my momma would encourage but that didn't really help. I would pray but then I stopped praying once they told me I couldn't do her time for her. I was really mad at God so I didn't wanna hear that part of what my momma was saying. But she tried – wanted to try it and it ended up actually signing for our time on her birthday. So instead of being out celebrating her birthday, she is sitting in a courtroom while we're signing our life away for the next amount of years.

SIMMONS: How was your – was your mom there in court with you?

KERR: Yes. March 21st, 2010-11 was the time. She had just celebrated her 50th birthday. I remembered that one and then her 51st birthday, she sits in the courtroom and I want to believe – I want to say it was her and my older sister. But I would say, I think it was, but I asked to hug her and they didn't let me hug her. I hugged and cried and told her happy birthday.

SIMMONS: Yeah, what did that hug feel like, Nadia? Like I'm trying to, I'm picturing the scene and I see you there. I want to know what was going through your mind, or your emotions holding on to your mom for that moment.

KERR: I was just smelling her, uh, because you know everybody's moms have that smell, you know. Well, everybody has that smell, but you know what your momma's house smells like. So I was just smelling her and crying and I didn't want to let go and eventually I had to let go. And I didn't fight it, I didn't wanna, like, make a scene or anything like that you know. And I was tryna be strong and saying what I felt like was goodbye, but it was actually, see you later. But, it was – it was goodbye, like in my head I was like, What if this is the last time I hold her cause she's older, getting older you know, and you know, yeah. That was devastating.

SIMMONS: Thank you for sharing that. I'm, I'm feeling that with you. And I know that our experiences are similar and, and I can just – I know that feeling and I appreciate you opening up about that. So, from county jail, then you go to where? To Plane State?

KERR: From county jail we actually went to Dawson's State Jail which had like a hold over at the time before the women that are waiting to go to TDC and we did another year pretty much there. That was the worst experience of my entire prison journey. The food was despicable, the water was despicable. It was filthy. It was, it was just a horrible experience. That alone – like I can honestly say that county was doable. That broke me. That, that broke me. Like they're going to die, like the officers way they, you know, it's Dallas. So you know, that's a different breed of people. Everybody's city is a different breed of people

and I'm from Fort Worth. So, There's a difference there on the professionalism. Like there was no professionalism. It was, they called it, they call it inmate-ran. When the, when the inmates basically run where they're at, you know?

SIMMONS: Right.

KERR: You get to, you get to do what you want to do. You get to, you know, screw who you want to screw. Because, it was a lot of that going on. Basically it's – there's no structure. There was no structure. And I was already breaking, but I come in from a life of flying by the seat of my pants. Not my current just doing what I want to do. I needed that, for somebody to tell me what to do, otherwise I'm gonna do what I want to do. I needed the repercussions and consequences that come with not, you know, and they did not offer that. And I end up getting in trouble. Going to seg – that was my first experience with seg. Wouldn't be the last, but it's just, yeah that – that was the worst.

SIMMONS: Nadia, what was what was at seg? Why, if you don't mind sharing, why you went to restrictive housing or solitary confinement, and what was that like?

KERR: Um. Okay, I was actually trying to get back to my girlfriend who was in the dorm next to my sister because they wouldn't have me and my sister together. So I refuse housing after a fight I had gotten into. They didn't put me in seg or lock me up for the fight. They put me in seg because I said, I'm not livin there and that's that. So that came with a major case, which is a big deal versus a minor case. It's still a big deal but it's not as bad. And I think I spent 12 days in there, but their seg was actually pretty laid back. Yeah at the seg stay there wasn't too bad. But yeah, I can't – I have no complaints about the seg because the dorm setting itself was just annoying. It's just open and bunk beds everywhere and people were loud or doing what they wanted to do or, you know, just so that was more like a vacation for me. But I never did wind up next to my sister again. They actually put us in the same dorm together though eventually for a very short period of time but that didn't last long because we end up getting into a little tussle with somebody else, but they just moved me because they knew that

would – that's the worst thing you can do to me taking me from my sister. Everybody knew we were sisters. Our last name's the same in our PVC, PVC number is one digit off so it's kind of like they knew.

SIMMONS: Wow. Did you, and I hadn't thought about this before but did the officers treat you differently because you were related. I mean –

KERR: They loved her. They couldn't stand me. We are night and day. I'm more like in-your-face whatever. I'm a wild child. I'm a redhead. I'm going to do, you know, I'm going to be this this and that, where she was very quiet, and, you know, out of the way and I couldn't blend in though. So, I feel like I was a target anyway, because of my naturally red hair, and I had actually never felt that much different until prison, like I had never experienced racism or anything in reference, to my hair color anyway, until prison. But they, you know, she was – they didn't mess with her because she didn't do anything. I want to always – doing something out of play which is be somewhere I'm not supposed to be or trafficking trade, being with – is giving something to somebody else or taking something from somebody else. Or yeah, I was always doing something. I didn't have nobody.

SIMMONS: Do you think that, that the racism regarding – especially the color of your hair or because you were different because of the color of the hair? Were you experiencing that from the ladies you were incarcerated with or from the prison staff?

KERR: From the prison staff. Amongst my peers, I'll call them – I'll call them my fellow inmates. Amongst them, it was more like a conversation starter, Is that your natural hair color? Or something like that but I ran into this lady who just – I was working at the beauty shop at the time. She would swear I was using something in the beauty shop to dye my hair this color because it highlights on its own just like South Asian people. Like if I sit in the sun too long it's going to be a little blonder in some areas or you know it just does whatever you want to do. It's a lot darker in the winter time when there's less sun, but when it's summertime it's bright. And then, so she swore. And so here comes the harassment. Here comes them coming in my cubicle or bump, you know, destroying it looking for whatever. You're not

going to find anything. So you were determined to find something else that I probably wasn't supposed to have. Like a chip bag. God forbid, I had a chip bag. And I lost my job as well at the beauty shop. I was punished actually by being put on shower crew, which is where you go in and clean the shower and clean the drain. You can only imagine in a women's prison what you'll find in the shower, and I was there for two years for the punishment.

SIMMONS: Wow, wow. What would you, if you don't mind sharing, what do you feel like your, How do I word this? Like your biggest infraction that you may be committed your different – your biggest rule that you maybe broke while you were in prison and then, and then if you follow that up with by, what do you think your smallest one and then what are the punishments of those?

KERR: The biggest one I didn't, I didn't do it but it went through anyway. A new officer felt threatened in the case read threatening an officer by aggressively waving hands at the desk. Because I was talking with my hands and I was asking what are you writing me up for you know like anybody else would you know, kind of waving my hands but it wasn't like aggressively. It was me kind of trying to figure out – because I was confused, you know. Oh and I got pulled out. Pulled out of the shower taken to the Lieutenant's office. She said she felt threatened. I got sentenced to seg. I spent 22 days in there. And then I had – that was when they were taking your phone with major cases. Meaning I couldn't use the phone for 90 days, commissary cell restriction, which means you have to ask to go to the restroom. Something as simple as that. Yeah, that was the biggest and I didn't even do that, but there was also a lot of stuff that I was doing that I wasn't getting caught for. So, I really, in this bigger scheme of things, I can't really complain about a lot of it as well as with life. You know. There was a lot of things I was doing that I didn't get caught for and so I paid that off too in my time in prison. The smallest I think would be out of place. My bunk – my Bunkie, which is a person that lived across from me, the fan was over her bed and she had the habit of thinking it was her fan so she decided she was going to cut it on and off as you please. It was mandatory at the time for all the fans to be on. I did ask the officer if I could cut that fan on her because she was not there and you don't get to cut this fan off and it blew right on my bed. So I needed that fan. So I went in her cubicle and cut it on and so – but during that, somebody knocked on the

door – but the other officer knocked on the door and saw me. So the officer that actually gave me permission to go into the girls cubicle had to act like, you know, because you can't give me permission to go into somebody else's cubicle. So she had to write me up, and I respect that. But I think it's pretty, it was pretty extreme. Like, you could have acted like we were right there, so you don't have to ask you right now.

SIMMONS: Wow. So you, you went to restrictive housing, or solitary confinement for the supposedly – the allegedly threatening an officer. That was your second time at this point?

KERR: Mmm. No. No. At the unit I was at, I had gone before because some officer overheard somebody threatening to whup me or whatever. I didn't hear it. I had no idea. I came from work and they were like, Pack up your stuff, you going to seg. I'm like, For what? They're like, Such and such as threatening you. I overheard such and such and I don't want anything to happen to you and I'm like, Well, what's up? Where she at? You know, and – but that's not policy. So they had to lock me up for my own protection, is whatever. Whatever.

SIMMONS: Can you describe what a, what a seg cell looks like on the inside.

KERR: It's the toilet with the sink, connected to it, like in the county. It had a gate on it and a bed, and there was no lock box because majority of the time you don't have any property anyway. And that was pretty much it. And they handcuff you depending on what you're there for. They'll handcuff you to take you to the shower and gown you, and they escort you to the shower, they lock you in the shower. Some officers would just let you shower as long as you want. Some of them will come and say, Hey, get out – whether you're ready or not. Depending on what time of year, you may not get ice water or anything like that, depending on the officer. There were no plugs so I couldn't plug up my fan. Yeah, it wasn't really, wasn't that bad. Like every time I went after the initial, like, when I was in trouble after the initial calming down, it was more like a vacation.

SIMMONS: Why would you – Why do you consider it maybe a little bit of a vacation. What was it a vacation from?

KERR: From being in a dorm with fifty women. Livin' their own world in their own cubicle and everybody's world is different. So etiquette and manners and consideration for the people around you differs depending on what life – what life you come from. In the end, in there, there's many different walks of life whereas I got in my floor to do what I needed to do and not be bothered. Other people want to listen to the radio with their headphones off and turned up to the max, or talk across the dorm in the middle of the night, or sit down and bump their back on my wall to get in their lock boxes, stuff like that.

SIMMONS: Right? Okay, so it was, it was a moment that you could be by yourself, really, it comes in comparison to be in this environment with all of these other people. So –

KERR: Definitely.

SIMMONS: So, your, I want to go – to kind of go back to your, your daughters. Tell me about – are you getting to see them once you get to prison? What does that look like?

KERR: I did get to see them once a week at county because we were right downtown. When we got to Dawson, it turned into like once a month, then it slowly drifted into once every couple months because life starts life'in, you know. They had their after school stuff, they had their Saturday stuff. My momma tried to have them in all these things cause you know, keep them busy. And then there were three of them so that's a ride in itself. Once we hit TDC, it was not so often because it was a two-hour drive. And at the beginning of our TDC time, even though we were sisters, we could not visit together so my momma would have to see me and then sit two more hours to see her. Or vice versa, whoever went first. And then she started doing it to where it would work for her where she would see me for an hour and

then see her for an hour. Finally we got the right warden that approved us to visit together because of my momma being old ya know already having to drive with kids. Drive back with the kids after staying for four hours, you know? But we still didn't see them that often again, because of the drive. But then, in 2013, Girls Embracing Mothers came into our lives. And this is at a time when I wasn't really getting in trouble. I was kind of trying to sit down and they started to – we could see them once a month, guaranteed, as long as we stayed out of trouble, they would bring them. We would visit for four hours and eat, take pictures, do a group class, activities, different things that allowed us to see them. We would have – be able to have more interactions with them without an officer like hovering, walking around, asking what's wrong, and I'm sitting with my mama crying stuff like that.

SIMMONS: Okay. So it was a more intimate of a setting it sounds like. I'm so glad that y'all got to be a part of that program and I've heard that it's grown a lot since then. And I hope that it just continues to grow because it's amazing. It's amazing.

KERR: Yes, it is.

SIMMONS: So you're – are you parenting from inside of prison? Or are you watching your mom parent? And I'm not judging either way because I did not really parent from within prison, and I'm just kind of curious how your dynamic was.

KERR: Well, I was trying to parent, but who am I, you know, then where am I? I'm not there. You know, like I would try to correct behaviors or talk to you about school, talk to you about life, talk to you about being a girl growing up to be a woman. You know, little things girls need to know. Their daddys weren't around either, so it wasn't like, you know, they had that. So I mean I tried parenting but it was more like, like I didn't want to be too hard on them because they were both so open. Well, my oldest child she was very open with me, and if I wanted to keep that dynamic, she would tell me things that she felt like she couldn't tell my momma, but I would also educate her on such things and all that. My baby girl was still kind of, she's just a baby, you know. She would get on and then she would get off. And that was it, she was – okay, I gotta go back outside.

SIMMONS: Right. Right. Yes. I remember those phone calls. So you, you went home, then to middle-school aged just about, right? I mean, we – one-year-old –

KERR: By the time I came home, I was throwing a Sweet 16 that January, that next year. And that was a big accomplishment. My village helped me, but pretty much, it was all me. And then, my baby girl was turning 13. I believe. Yeah, 13. So yeah, I came home to 15 and 12 [year olds] and by that time in your life, you kind of know who you're going to be, like your personality and your what I called, Swag, you know, your persona. So where I had this one side of me is ego mouth, bad attitude, talking back. Say what I want to say in my oldest, I also had my other side of me in my baby girl, the more reserved, who loves her momma. Still got a mouth but you know, I'm just gonna do what I got to do cause I can do what I want to do type of an attitude, and I'm going to be the best at it. Yeah.

SIMMONS: Those ages are I think it's challenging to parent any age child, but maybe in particular, those ages.

KERR: Yeah, that's been a hard adjustment. My oldest just moved out. So my heart is breaking for that, but in life, we all have to walk our own paths. That seems to be the going statement, we have to walk our own path, so, I just pray. It's all I can do is pray.

SIMMONS: So she moved out of your home. You, you came home and your girls came to live with you.

KERR: Yes, ma'am. I went home to my sister and I moved out less than 60 days to my own place. My baby girl was actually living in my sister's with me pretty much because school was virtual. But then my oldest didn't want to come there to my older sister's house. She was also a new – getting ready to get married and all this type of stuff so they didn't make me feel any type of way. I'm just not a person who wants to live with

anybody, because the way I move, you may not move and vice versa. But when I got my spot, my, my oldest came right on, you know, and it was a tug of war ever since.

SIMMONS: I can imagine, I can imagine that road. You've, you've come a long way. How long have you been home?

KERR: I got out February 5th, 2021. So I just celebrated two years. I'm actually on parole until 2030. But I'm, I'm completing that with no issues once I got through with all the after care that they call it from the required programming stuff. I mean life ain't great but it's definitely better than not life.

SIMMONS: This is true. This is true. That's – it's just you, you have really accomplished a lot in that amount of time and I'm thoroughly impressed with you, Nadia, for sure.

KERR: Thank you. Thank you.

SIMMONS: So I want to kind of get back into your prison time a little bit. If there was just one memory, good or bad, like the first thing that kind of pops into your, into your mind – when I say that regarding your prison sentence – what would that be?

KERR: My lady, my lady. Well, I had a lot of ladies but the one, the one great that made me sit down, get it together. You're finna see, parole. What are you doing? Talk some sense into you. Without, you know, me wanting to hit her. Like, you don't tell me what to do. She, she's the best thing that happened to me in there. Yeah.

SIMMONS: Were you able to make a lot of connections, and maybe not on that level, but on a deep level with the women that you were incarcerated with?

KERR: Awkwardly, yeah. People were drawn to me. People that were broken, or you know, they were just drawn to me and I know it's, because my red hair,

you know, my light from the inside and it shines on the outside. I have a nice aura, but I also have an unapproachable side. But so like, once they got to know me, I couldn't get rid of them. So I was somebody's mom, I was somebody's auntie. I was somebody's nana. Like, I was this role for all these younger girls in there. And when I would tell them about, like my before life, and my before-prison life, like me getting in trouble and all this type of stuff, it was hard for them to believe, because I had made such a transition in there. I stopped getting in trouble. I stopped, you know, just being dumb, you know. That's basically what I was doing, being dumb, and I was trying to be an example of change. And so people gravitated toward me for that. I feel like – and I was good to people, I felt like I had to be good to people to try to tip the scales of karma that I felt like I was born once, once in my life. I felt like I would forever be indebted to karma, bad karma. So I was trying to be good to people whether – in whatever way I could

SIMMONS: That's really, that's really beautiful, and I can't help but make the connection of your kids not being right there where you can directly mother them, but you're able to help these other young ladies that don't have that mother right there with them, and I think that's what it is.

KERR: Or didn't – or didn't even have that mother when they were out. That's the crazy part like I would tell them all the time like, Y'all are preparing me to go home to these teenagers. Is this what my teenager's gonna be like? You know. And they kept me updated, like every new kid – I call them kid – every new kid they came in kind of kept me in tune with what was going on now out here ya know. All the weird stuff that I find weird and unnecessary but I'm kind of in the loop. I felt like hip – I was hip to it. I don't think I'm supposed to say hip.

SIMMONS: I love that. I, I do love that, and yeah, I'm just curious and this is based on just my own experience, did anyone call – did any ladies, did they call you Mom, did you have people that actually called you Mom?

KERR: Yes.

SIMMONS: Did your daughters know that?

KERR: Yes. And one of them is kind of still a part of our lives when she's not getting in trouble but yeah, and she's been integrated into my world with my momma and my girls and my sister. She feels like she's part of the family because she is, and they ask about her and she asks about them. My other daughter, I've been a part of her life since being out, and she got out she just had a baby, and I'm grandma, like genuine, like a lifetime connection. It's not, wasn't just, Oh, you can be my baby in here, you know, because these are people whose moms won't work the crap, right?

SIMMONS: Right. Wow. And you're stepping into that, into that role and you're doing more than just tipping the karma scale, Nadia. You're making our communities better. Our communities are better now that you're home because you're just offering so much. That's really amazing. It's really impressive. And I'm a little bit teared up, just thinking about the people, the many good women that I met during my incarceration. And I'm glad that you have that same experience for sure. So have you – I'm trying not to go back to your sister's, my thoughts with your sister's interview – but I am curious to know if your family has met any of your prison family.

KERR: Not in, not in person but this one weird thing, the Facetime – that is a tool that allows them to meet people. My sister, my younger sister knew most of them already because she was in there with me, but, and she was Auntie Kris and so, but yeah, some of them.

SIMMONS: That's incredible.

KERR: Yeah, it's pretty cool now that I think about it .

SIMMONS: It's really cool. So you made some really positive relationships with women that you were incarcerated with. What about the staff? You were there for a number of years? Tell me about some of those dynamics, good or bad.

KERR: I was at – once I sat down, when I say sat down, I mean, stop getting in trouble and realize anything that happens to you in here is your own fault because you want to act a fool. So, once I sat down, I'd gained so much respect from the officers that we will call haters. So I was cool with all the haters. Officers that sent me to seg, officers that wrote me up for you know, out of compliance. Stuff that I wasn't supposed to be doing. Anyway, it really wasn't like wrong. I end up being cool with them, and some of us are still in contact because like they went on to retire and stuff like that. So they're also a part of me seeing my sisters, like, you know, not for real. But I like Facebook. They check in and see how we're doing. I didn't realize that our sisterhood affected so many officers as well, because when she got moved to the camp, I was stuck there. And when I tell you every officer kept coming to do, like a wellness check because I was devastated, you know, and one of the officers that was there when she actually went, she actually cried for us because she was like our grandma.

SIMMONS: Wow.

KERR: Like our grandma is like, I just hate that this is happening to y'all, and you know, like she cries with me. And so it's nice that I have them as well. I feel there they are. A lot of them message me and be like, I'm so proud of you. I'm proud of what you doing. Keep going, just randomly sometimes. Yeah. Yeah.

SIMMONS: That's very –

KERR: There's quite a few, actually quite a few.

SIMMONS: It's so interesting the connections that we can make in such a harsh environment –

KERR: Right. Yeah

SIMMONS: That, that are lasting impressions, right? And let's see. It says – I'm looking at my questions.

KERR: Oh, kind got off track.

SIMMONS: No, no. I don't have a specific order but I just had some suggestions that maybe I should talk about. So how do you feel like the prison system – being imprisoned has affected your life now, good and bad?

KERR: Bad. I'll start with the bad first because I still feel awkward in social settings. I don't like people too close to me. I mean, before COVID, there wasn't personal space and then in prison, you couldn't really be too close to people. So I had kind of gotten used to that out here these young Generation Z, or whatever they are, they have no excuse me, or anything like that. And so I have to remember that these rules that my life revolved around really don't exist out here for people in their mind. So, I still haven't really gotten over being in a space where there's too many people for my liking. I feel like I have to, like, observe, like just watch, so it's kind of hard for me to even enjoy myself because I'm looking around. Like, What's going on over there? Like, What are you doing? What are you doing? You know, you look suspicious. You know, that's, that's pretty much it. I was already OCD about cleaning and stuff before clean – before prison, but in a good way like for my business, you know, my naughty role business.

Prison taught me budgeting because before prison I did not – money came so fast, it just went even faster. It's like it was never there. So having to make a commissary list that stopped at \$85, but stamps was kind of, that was, you know, meticulous down to the cent to get everything you needed. So that's really helping me with, you know, like paying my bills. Even though I'm stretching it as far as I can paying my bills and also trying to maintain my – try to get my business up and going. Definitely, definitely that. Also improvising. I improvise even out here and the kids think it's so funny because you're not going to put that T-shirt in the dryer. You're going to put it on a fan and let it dry. Not that one T-shirt. If you got a spot on you can get the

blow dryer and dry it, but you're not going to put it in the dryer and run it for 30 minutes. What else?

Yeah, I think yeah also in like remembering that because before I did not care where you came from, who you were, or any of that – Like, I didn't care. I don't care if your feelings got hurt by something I said or anything like that, but like being so attached to my people in there. Like I grew a lot of not even – my empathy matured is what I would say. So now I'm able to kind of think before I say certain things that may be taken out of context and may hurt your feelings. I process it before I word it, to get it out without trying my best to not, you know, for you to take it wrong. Yeah.

SIMMONS: It sounds like you took some really positive things out of a really bad situation and turned them into tools, tools that you could use for your life now.

KERR: Right.

SIMMONS: So you, you're a mother, and you're a sister, and you're a daughter, and your entire family has been impacted by the Texas prison system. So if you had an idea of, prior to your incarceration, what I'm wanting to know is did incarceration change your view of what you feel a daughter is. If that's making sense. Like what does a daughter look like to you?

KERR: I can't really say that it's changed it. I feel like I was a good daughter. Other than, you know, but it has changed – what does a good daughter look like, yeah. What does a good daughter look like to you. I went to school. I was a straight-A student. I had all these goals. I was a little sneaky but I wasn't dumb as a kid. I became a dumb adult when I chose, chose with my choice after you know, a certain point in my life. I, I didn't talk back. I cleaned up. I wanted to make my momma and my daddy proud, like I wanted them to be proud of me, and I feel like this generation with all the technology right there at their fingertips. Like they are so engulfed in that, that it becomes real to them and that has a lot to do with the reason the way the, the reason the world is the way it is. So when I came home, like, that's why my 17

year old lives – because if you think you're going to talk to me, like I'm just some random person at your school and I'm not going to pop you in the mouth or correct your behavior as far as you failing and don't want to do this and not going to do that. Then you are grown. So, if you're not going to work on what you need to work on, then you are free to go. You're 17 now. You're free to go. You don't have to continue to threaten me that you're moving. You want to move? I'm not going to hold your hostage. Yeah. Yeah. I think that. Yeah, that's a good daughter. Even when you want to say something, you don't. You don't let them hear you because back when we were growing up there were different consequences. But, a lot of those consequences aren't allowed out to a certain extent. So, yes. Now, I'm not saying my baby is a bad daughter. She's still my baby.

SIMMONS: Oh yes –

KERR: She think she grown and the keyword to grown is own.

SIMMONS: Yes. And I think that I don't, I don't feel – there's necessarily bad and good, you know, but, but a perspective of that. So, I was just kind of curious because you being a mother and a daughter and a sister, for sure. So Nadia, we've covered a lot, and I thank you so much for sharing your story with us so openly, and I'm just so impressed by everything you've been through and overcome. I have one last question for you. You lost your dad, you lost your dad at a pretty young age. And you express, previously, that you didn't really know how to handle that situation, the grieving, and how to handle your emotions that you were feeling over that loss. I'm asking you, if you could go back six months, prior to that, to young Nadia, if you could tell young, Nadia, what? What if you could talk to her? If you could go back and tell her something, what would you tell her?

KERR: Listen to your daddy, what he says. He's not going to always be there. That would be number one. And don't fall in that – well, don't fall into that hole 2020 does lead. It's okay to be sad. It's okay. It's actually normal and healthy. Use it as a motivation and don't, don't run. Stop running. Slow down. Yeah. Mainly slow down.

SIMMONS: And that's a message that we all could. Yeah, we all can use that message. That sometimes we need to slow down. Yes, powerful message, ma'am. I appreciate you very, very much.

KERR: Thank you. I appreciate you, Marci.

SIMMONS: I'm gonna stop the recording for one second.