



Season 4
Episode 7 Transcript
Ex Con

Torah Kachur:

You're about to hear a true story that's full of heart, hope, and transformation. It involves drug use, mental health, and crime. There are moments that are difficult to listen to, but they were a lot more difficult for the people who lived them. You probably didn't press play looking for a story about pain and suffering, but like every story we share on Tell Me What Happened, this one features a stranger stepping in to save someone in trouble. Justin Downey is about to have one of the worst conversations of his life. He's a year into a three-year prison sentence. This time, Justin's in for illegal possession of guns.

Justin Downey:

Where the payphone was is right next to this mop closet and the cord is long enough where you can hide kind of in the mop closet if you were going to have a conversation.

Torah Kachur:

Justin's calling his aunt.

Justin Downey:

And she said, "I got something to talk to you about." I said, "What's up?" And she said, "They took custody of the children." My daughter and my stepson were taken into state custody. My aunt tells me this on the phone.

Torah Kachur:

She also tells him that his baby daughter is in custody too. She'll be adopted by another family.

Justin Downey:

And I remember that I broke down crying in a really, really inconsolable way, and I tucked myself into the closet so nobody would see me.

Torah Kachur:

Three weeks later, Justin's aunt dies of a heroin overdose. The losses send Justin over the edge. He ends up in solitary confinement for months.

Justin Downey:

I had to really sit with myself and look at the fact that not only did my criminal