**Source A:** By Ross Anderson BBC News, 10 April 2012

# **A child's experience of her mother going to prison**

Every year thousands of children experience the trauma of separation from

a mother who is sent to prison.

When Cheyenne was 13, her mum was caught trying to smuggle drugs into prison

and earned herself a four-year sentence. As a result she has been moved around

a lot, living with different relatives across south Wales. She is one of the growing 5

number of children living apart from a mother locked up in prison. Cheyenne struggled

to cope. "I was angry and disappointed.” Cheyenne ended up living with her granddad

She didn't have a room of her own so slept in her aunt's bed or on the sofa. Her

belongings were mostly strewn over the house or kept in carrier bags.

She had relatively few possessions, but those she prized most were letters and 10

photos from her mother, kept in a box with an inscription on the side warning

snoopers to "Stay Out". For Cheyenne, as for many people with a loved one in

prison, they were treasured keepsakes.

"I normally get quite emotional when I get letters from my mum. I recognise the

envelopes. Mum decorates the envelopes and I know her handwriting. Every year 15

she always sends a Valentine's Day card - she always writes Mummy at the end.

Never Mum. Always Mummy. "I really miss her. Some days I have my depressing

days and I really break down."

Diana Ruthven, from the charity Action for Prisoners' Families, says it's particularly

difficult for children of Cheyenne's age. "Being a teenager is a very transitional 20

time, during which it's particularly difficult to be without your mother," she says. "In

some ways, it's more difficult for teenage children to be without a parent than it is

for younger children."

## **'Upsetting'**

Cheyenne was entitled to an hour-long prison visit once a fortnight. But the prison

was in Gloucestershire - over 50 miles from her new home in south Wales - so she 25

only managed to visit five times in two years. Ahead of her latest visit Cheyenne

experienced mixed emotions. "I am excited, nervous, scared. At least we're able to

hug and kiss at this prison. At other prisons we weren't even allowed to hold hands

but I did anyway and I made sure they saw it. Because at the end of the day, that’s

my mum." 30

With only an hour to catch up. There is always a lot to squeeze in. As well as

chatting about hair and nails, Cheyenne has to confess that she's had problems at

school. Being locked up doesn't stop mum Yasmin giving her a ticking off:

"Cheyenne you've got to learn to be humble. Do as I say not as I do."

Before she knows it, the time is gone and it is time for Cheyenne to leave. "The 35

time goes so quickly,” says Cheyenne. “Leaving is the worst part. It's upsetting

leaving them there, knowing you can walk out those gates but they're stuck

inside."

Cheyenne's mother welcomed visits from her daughter, but according to Ruthven,

mothers often don't want to be visited by their family. "Women sometimes don't 40

want their children to see them in jail, so they don't have their families visit as often

as men do," she said. For children missing one or both parents in prison, little

support is available, she argued. "The government will only try to keep track of a

child if they're at risk," she said.

## **'Better relationship'**

Her mother’s release is an event Cheyenne eagerly anticipates. "I am going to have 45

a wicked life when my mum gets out. I'll be a happier person. It is hard being without

your mum. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

**Charles Dickens - A Visit to Newgate Prison (1836)**

Turning to the right, we came to a door composed of thick bars, through which

were discernible, passing to and fro in a narrow yard, some twenty women: the

majority of whom, however, as soon as they were aware of the presence of

strangers, retreated to their wards.

One side of this yard is railed off and formed into a kind of iron cage, from which 5

the friends of the female prisoners communicate with them. In one corner of this

den, was a yellow, haggard, decrepit old woman, in a tattered gown and the

remains of an old straw bonnet, in deep conversation with a young girl - a prisoner,

of course - of about two-and-twenty. It is impossible to imagine a more poverty-

stricken object, or a creature so borne down in soul and body, by excess of misery 10

and destitution1, as the old woman. She was talking in that low, muffled tone of

voice which tells so forcibly of mental anguish2; and every now and then burst into

an irrepressible3 sharp, abrupt cry of grief, the most distressing sound that ears

can hear. The girl was perfectly unmoved. Hardened beyond all hope of

redemption4, she listened doggedly to her mother's entreaties, whatever they 15

were: and, beyond inquiring after "Jem", and eagerly catching at the few pence her

miserable parent had brought her, took no more apparent interest in the

conversation than the most unconcerned spectators.

A little farther on, a squalid5-looking woman in a slovenly, thick-bordered cap, with 20

her arms wrapped in a large red shawl, the fringed ends of which straggled nearly

to the bottom of a dirty white apron, was communicating some instructions to

visitor - her daughter evidently. The girl was thinly clad, and shaking with the cold.

Some ordinary word of recognition passed between her and her mother when she

appeared at the bars, but neither hope, condolence6, regret, nor affection was 25

expressed on either side. The mother whispered her instructions, and the girl

received them with her pinched-up, half-starved features twisted into an

expression of careful cunning. It was some scheme for the woman's defence that

she was disclosing, perhaps; and a sullen smile came over the girl's face for an

instant, as if she were pleased: not so much at the probability of her mother's 30

freedom, as at the chance of her "getting off' in spite of her prosecutors. The

dialogue was soon concluded; and with the same careless indifference with which

they had approached each other, the mother turned towards the inner end of the

yard, and the girl to the gate at which she had entered.

The girl belonged to a class that should make men's hearts bleed. Barely past her 35

childhood, it required but a glance to discover that she was one of those children,

born and bred in neglect and vice, who have never known what childhood is: who

have never been taught to love and desire a parent's smile, or to dread a parent's

frown. The thousand nameless endearments of childhood, its gaiety and its

innocence, are alike unknown to them. They have entered at once upon the stern 40

realities and miseries of life, and to their better nature it is almost hopeless to

appeal for some good feeling in ordinary hearts. Talk to them of parental kindness,

the happy days of childhood, and the merry games of infancy and they will not

understand. Tell them of hunger and the streets, beggary and stripes7, the gin-

shop, the station-house, and the pawnbroker's, and they will understand you. 45

1. destitution = poverty, hardship 2. anguish = suffering, torment

3. redemption = improvement 4. irrepressible = wild, out of control

5. squalid = filthy, dirty 6. condolence = sympathy

7. stripes = hitting

**Q1 [AO1].** Read again **source A**, just the first paragraph.

Choose **four** statements below which are TRUE.

* Shade the boxes of the ones that you think are true
* Choose a maximum of **four** statements.

1. Cheyenne’s mum was imprisoned for dealing drugs.
2. Cheyenne has had to live all over Britain with different relatives.
3. There are an increasing number of women being sent to prison.
4. Cheyenne found it hard to cope with being apart from her mum.
5. Cheyenne ended up living with her grandmother.
6. She often had to share a room.
7. Cheyenne was a very untidy girl.
8. She had nowhere to keep her clothes. **[4 marks]**

**Q2 [AO1].** You need to refer to **source A** and **source B** for this question:

Use details from **both** sources. Write a summary of the **effects of life in**

**prison** in the two texts. **[8 marks]**

**Q3 [AO2].** You now need to refer **only** to **source B**.

How does the writer use language to explain the **conditions of the women**?

**[12 marks]**

**Q4 [AO3].** For this question, you need to refer to the wholeof **source A**

together with the whole of **source B**.

**Compare** how each source conveys ideas about the **relationship between**

**the mothers and daughters.**

In your answer, you should:

* compare the different ideas
* compare the methods used to convey the ideas
* support your ideas with quotations from both texts.

**[16 marks]**