

Give us your views on women offenders on TV, and the EastEnders child abuse story

Send your views to Women in Prison, FREEPOST RRY5-ZCAB-TXCJ, 347-349 City Road, London EC1V 1LR. You don't need a stamp.



True to life?

Actress Suranne Jones met lifers at Askham Grange to prepare for her role as Ruth Slater in the recent ITV drama *Unforgiven*.

The show followed Ruth as she is released after serving 15 years for killing two policemen, having spent half her life in prison. It turns out that she was innocent all along.

Suranne Jones says meeting the Askham women changed the way she acted.

"Had I not met these prisoners I would have probably played Ruth mouthier," says Suranne, who used to play Karen McDonald in *Coronation Street*.

A drama about a woman leaving prison is a rare thing on TV, so let us know what you made of it.

Ruth Slater had a flat and a job lined up on release, so that aspect of the drama certainly was not true to life. But the way she was judged as an ex-prisoner as she struggled to rebuild her life rang true.

What do you think? Have your say, write and tell us your views.

Photo: Red Production Company/ITV

TV: Have your say

Ex-prisoner snubbed by X Factor voters

We so wanted ex-prisoner Rachel Hylton to win X Factor, but it was not to be.

Rachel got down to the last six but was then booted out by public vote.

Rachel is now singing on the X Factor tour, which lasts until the end of March. After that, she hopes to sign a record deal.

Rachel is open about her past and has talked about her drug addiction and prison sentences. She is now clean and a full-time mum to her two youngest children.

Although at times an unconfident performer, Rachel has a fabulous voice.

On X Factor, when she sang songs that suited her

like *Feeling Good* by Nina Simone, she was awesome. Her version of Mary J Blige's *No More Drama* was heartfelt and brilliant.

But Rachel believes the stigma of prison turned people against her.

"I think I've been judged on my past and not on my performance," she says.

"Newspapers were turning people against me," she adds.

As an ex-offender, Rachel says she was made to feel like an outsider by the other X Factor finalists.

"They were all close to each other – but nobody had any time for me. None of them were really my friends," she explains.

Do you think Rachel's past cost her votes on the X Factor? Was Rachel going on TV and being honest about her past a good idea or a bad one?

Have your say, write and tell us what you think.



Photo: Talkback/Thames/ITV



Child abuse on EastEnders

What do you think of the long-running child abuse storyline in *EastEnders* involving Whitney and her stepdad Tony? How do you feel *EastEnders* has handled the subject? Do you believe *EastEnders* is right or wrong to cover child abuse?

Photo: BBC