

Statement of [REDACTED]

This attack changed my life forever. Before this happened, I was a friendly person who felt safe in my community because East Boston has many Latinos like me. None of my friends or anyone I know have ever been attacked for speaking Spanish, especially in East Boston. Because of this attack, I am reserved, shy, and scared of making new friends. I am afraid that they will be able to hear my accent and bully me. I live in fear of being targeted for my language or my accent. This has made it very difficult to speak Spanish because I never know what can happen anymore. I am terrified of potentially running into the women who assaulted my mother and I so in the winter, when the sun goes down so early, I go straight home from school. I also stay home on the weekends. I feel intense fear when walking past the location where this happened, which is an area I would visit often because this is my neighborhood. This has led to feelings of depression, isolation, and distrust in other people.

The effects of this attack have been emotional, psychological, physical, and academic. The night of the attack, I could not sleep because I was crying, in shock, and feeling unsafe in my own home. When I'd look at the wound on my mother's face, I'd begin crying again. I've had recurring nightmares of my mother being attacked and hurt. Can you imagine something happening to your mom? Sometimes, I'd have the same nightmare when I tried to fall back asleep.

After the attack, I often would not want to go to school in fear of being bullied for my accent. When I would go to school, I would be sad and depressed with little energy to perform well. I used to be a good student with really good grades. After the attack, it was difficult to pay attention in school and my grades show that. I've had a hard time making friends. My English is not the best so they can tell I am a Latina. I am not sure that they would like how I talk so I have kept to myself and only spend time with three friends I've had from before the attack.

I've had severe hair loss and neck pain because of how my hair was yanked. Shortly after the attack, I would cry when I brushed my hair because clumps would come out onto my hairbrush. I was scared I'd lose all my hair as a teenager. But the biggest scar that they left me with is the emotional one. A scar of fear and helplessness. I cannot speak about what happened without bursting into tears, along with a fear of having to see the women who caused me and my mom so much harm and trauma.

I did not think that something like this could happen to me, especially in a place where nearly everyone speaks Spanish. To think that these women were able to do this to me and my mom just because we were speaking Spanish. It is shocking that they did this just because they didn't like our language. I used to be a social, happy person. This attack took that from me.

If I could say something to these women, it would be to look at the consequences my mother and I must now live with. I am a teenager who will now have to go through life with this trauma and it will affect every aspect of my life from now on. All I want is to be a normal girl, and I can't be that anymore. What they did was wrong and caused a very deep pain.