

Join WTLC & the Anaheim Family Justice Center for a very special viewing of the film Sin by Silence
Hosted by Chief John Welter Anaheim Police Department

When: Wednesday, June 17th at 6:00 p.m.
**Where: Anaheim Justice Center located at 150 West Vermont Ave.
Anaheim, CA**

The evening will include testimonial survivor Brenda Clubine & a question and answer session with Sin by Silence Director Olivia Klaus. There will also be a brief presentation on resources available for survivors of domestic violence by WTLC's Executive Director Rocio G. Watson
This event is free and open to all members of the community interested in seeing solutions to end the cycle of violence.

For more information about this event please contact Rocio G. Watson at (714) 992-1939 ext 106 or email at rwatson@wtlc.org



Sin by Silence



www.SinBySilence.com

Quiet Little Place Prods. 949.645.9687 Info@QuietLittlePlace.com

Synopsis

From behind prison walls, SIN BY SILENCE reveals the lives of extraordinary women who advocate for a future free from domestic violence.

Inside the California Institution for Women, the first inmate-initiated and led group in the U.S. prison system, shatters the misconceptions of domestic violence. In 1989, Convicted Women Against Abuse was created by inmate Brenda Clubine to help abused women speak out and realize they are not alone. Over the past two decades, the women of CWAA have changed laws for battered women and raised awareness for those on the outside.

SIN BY SILENCE is an emotionally packed documentary that tells the personal and shocking stories of these strong women who have learned from their past, are changing their future and, most importantly, teach us how domestic violence affects each and every person.

About the Film

The normalization of violence against women, relationship complexities and the pervasive cultural ideology that private matters should remain private have made domestic violence the number one cause of injury to women today – more than rape, muggings and automobile accidents COMBINED.

With unprecedented access inside the California Institution for Women, SIN BY SILENCE offers a unique gateway into the lives of women who are domestic violence's living worst-case scenarios - women who have killed their abusers.

Brenda Clubine endured broken bones. Skull fractures. Her face bruised and battered. By the time Brenda was put behind bars, for killing her husband in 1983, she felt worthless. She received a sentence of 15 years to life. She had to give up her son for adoption. She thought she was the only one in her situation. But, Brenda soon discovered that she shared common experiences of love turning violent with many of her fellow inmates.

After years of meeting on the yard and telling each other their whispered stories, an inmate-initiated and led group was born inside the prison in 1989, called Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA). Brenda's revelation inspired this support group, the first of its kind in the entire US prison system, to help women inside prison break the silence about abuse and learn more about what they needed to do to help others stop the cycle of violence. Over the past 20 years, since the group was established, many familiar faces remain...

LaVelma killed her husband, a pastor and pillar in the community. She never spoke a word to her family or church members that her husband beat her on a regular basis. She was embarrassed what others would think about what was happening behind closed doors. She had faith that her husband would change.

JoJo explains that she tried to leave, but there were no options available to her. No shelters. No hotlines. No help from the police. Yet, she knew she couldn't live in her car with two kids and temperatures dropping. So she stayed. And the abuse for her, and her kids, got worse.

Glenda ran over her husband with her car in a public parking lot. He died at the scene. A cut and dry murder case. Yet, why would a 45-year-old woman with no prior criminal history brutally kill her husband?

Instead of fighting a system that does not fully comprehend the complexities of abuse, CWAA led an initiative to help educate the system. Through careful orchestration of letter writing campaigns, media coverage, and senate hearings a movement was born and laws were changed. And, finally, for Brenda Clubine the flicker of hope begins to grow that her freedom from prison lies moments away.

Like many of the CWAA women, Brenda's years of inflicted abuse were never fully revealed in her trial since, prior to 1992, California law did not allow a legal defense to include evidence of battering. Yet, because of CWAA's advocacy gaining notoriety across the country, a new law was set in place in 2002 that allows incarcerated survivors to challenge their original conviction. And because of those efforts, battered women across the country are now permitted to seek a new trail if they were convicted before the laws recognized the importance of expert testimony on the effects of battering.

After 26 years, Brenda now stands a chance at freedom. A chance to walk on the beach. A chance to be with her son that she was told died 5 years after her incarceration. Her upcoming trial will hopefully enable her to take her passion for CWAA beyond prison walls and continue to make a difference and help other women caught in the cycle of violence.

While most of the women in SIN BY SILENCE may remain in prison for the remainder of their lives, their focus is not on their own struggles. These women are committed to helping others understand the reality of domestic violence. Every other Monday for over seven years, the director of SIN BY SILENCE, Olivia Klaus, attended CWAA meetings and built incredibly close relationships with each of the women, carefully capturing stories they never before felt capable of giving voice to. Through their stories of terror and hope, the viewer can begin to understand the cycle of violence, the signs of an abuser, and how each and every one of us is responsible for changing the tragedy of domestic violence.

Director's Statement

My world was shattered by a 3-minute phone call. I had always heard about domestic violence, but it was a problem that happened with other people. Yet, there it was...on the other end of the phone. As my mind

started racing for ways to help or fix things, I actually realized, to my own horror, that I was completely helpless. There were no answers. No solutions. No reasons. I held that phone in silence as I heard the dark secrets of a seemingly perfect marriage unravel.

A painstaking journey continued, as I watched a friend move towards gaining the courage to leave her husband of 8 years. Numerous lawyers. New address. New phone number. Yet, I agonized in continued helplessness as she kept going back, and I knew there had to be more ways to understand what she was going through and how I could help.

I started discovering women's shelters and organizations. Yet, these solutions were extremely limited resources for victims and those trying to help. Then a conversation with a colleague, Dr. Elizabeth Leonard - author of *Convicted Survivors*, changed everything. She starting talking about her own inspiration for solutions to the crisis at hand. She suggested that my quest include a trip to the most unlikely place – prison!

The first time I visited the California Institution for Women was in 2001. I was nervous that evening, wondering whom I was about to meet. The group Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA) was comprised of women who had killed the men they once loved. Yet, when the meeting started I was slowly introduced to women who could be my neighbor, my friend, my sister...or even myself.

Since that first meeting, I have never been able to turn my back on the women of CWAA. They, along with my friend, opened my eyes to a part of the world that I never knew existed. Once that silence had been broken, I found that I could never pretend that life was the way it was before; and what began as a journey to help one woman, mobilized an effort to help many. Through CWAA meetings, I slowly realized that these women were the experts on domestic violence and were willing to share stories of how they found themselves on such dark and desperate paths. And, as relationships were built, the women soon approached me to help tell their stories.

Month after month, year after year I drove the 70 mile journey to be at every CWAA meeting. I started researching and listening to experiences that were living nightmares. I began trying to raise funds and was introduced to many doors closed. But, the women of CWAA believed that they could be a part of impacting the "outside" world and gave the first \$1000 ever raised - a donation made up of average wages of only 30 cents an hour.

We began the process of filming countless CWAA meetings under the horrible production conditions of prison and state schedules. Yet, by participating and listening in on these women's interaction we took part in several women's epic stories as they began to discover hope and dignity. Many interviewees openly expressed gratitude for the freedom to tell "the whole story" to someone with whom they felt comfortable. A surprisingly large proportion of the women stated that this was their first opportunity to openly express their lives, their abuse, experiences, and their perceptions.

The women of CWAA became stronger as a result of the filming process. Many members who used to remain in the background started find their voice and members started inviting other inmates they met on the yard. An entirely new sense of purpose was given to the women of CWAA and a sense of empowerment came from finally being able to have their voices be heard. An empowerment that could lead to other women learning how to not follow in their footsteps. Empowerment that could help society to finally do something about the countless women being brutalized behind closed doors.

It has now been 7 heart-wrenching years since my first visit to prison. Yet, my initial introduction to this tragedy still remains an unresolved saga. To this day, my friend has left and gone back to her husband countless times, and I don't expect that cycle to change anytime soon. But, because of her story and the women of CWAA, I realize how crucial the information is in SIN BY SILENCE. If one woman can hear the ring of truth from these woman's stories and understand her own choices - lives would change, women's roles would transform, and the next generation will be different.

Convicted Women Against Abuse

**“In gaining our independence from our abusers, we lost our freedom, yet gained ourselves.
If just one of us walks away from our past, then my efforts have been successful.”**

Brenda Clubine

Founder, Convicted Women Against Abuse

Beyond the societal excuses for domestic violence exists a visionary group of women who are determined to become more than a statistic. These women do not meet in corporate boardrooms, national crisis centers, or houses of worship. Their meetings regularly occur under the institutional glare of California's oldest female prison, the California Institution for Women (CIW).

In 1989, Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA) was formed by several women who serve life sentences for killing their abusers and has since grown to a membership of nearly 60 inmates, most of whom stand convicted of first or second-degree murder. Yet, this group was a historical landmark for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation because no funding is provided for inmates with a life sentence to receive any form of therapy while imprisoned. Brenda Clubine, an inmate of 26 years, knew that something must be done. There were numerous fellow inmates who shared her same story, struggles and heartaches of a past filled with abuse. She knew if they could just meet to talk, empower, and uplift one another that they would make progress towards the redemption of healing. However, petition after petition kept getting rejected by the prison board, and only after 2 years of persistence Brenda's dream finally became reality and CWAA began.

The CWAA group is the first inmate initiated and led group in the California prison system. They meet twice a month and provide a setting for abused women to share their past experiences of victimization and to discuss their legal cases. Yet, CWAA is more than a self-help or support group for its members and their lingering effects of abuse. The women also use the gathering to share current news events regarding battered women, current homicide cases, pending legislation, and pertinent court rulings. They share their experiences with the criminal justice system and advise one another on possible legal strategies to affect their potential release.

In the early 1990s, CWAA played an active role in a statewide effort to gain clemency for battered women in prison. In 1992, Battered Women's Syndrome had just become legally defined to recognize the psychological condition that describes someone who has been the victim of consistent and/or severe domestic violence. This defense became widely used in the cases of battered women who kill because it helps explain to a jury the possibilities that might lead to their crime. Yet, there was cause for protest from the women of CWAA since the majority were convicted prior to the availability of the Battered Women's Syndrome defense being given its proper weight in court. The women of CWAA took a stand for what could be their improper convictions since battered women who kill would now be receiving, on average, a 6 to 8 year sentence of involuntary manslaughter.

Numerous media representatives, from newspaper and television visited the group, to record proceedings and to interview individuals about their experiences with abuse and with the criminal justice system. Lawyers and law students came to the aid of a number of incarcerated battered women. More than thirty petitions for clemency were sent to (then) California Governor Pete Wilson. Throughout his tenure as the state's chief executive, he failed to respond to most of the petitions and it appears that the current governor continues that practice. Due to Wilson's lack of response and the Board of Prison Terms' unwillingness to release these women, the clemency movement in California had lost much of its momentum by 1995.

The women's efforts have resulted in some of their fellow inmates being released. Their clemency movement created enough progress to see cases re-tried and convictions overturned. Yet, the remaining CWAA members refuse to accept their status as powerless women prisoners. They choose to create new means to have their voices heard. For, their voices are important—they are also the voices of the thousands of American women who do not survive that final violent assault.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon, yet society has only recently begun to recognize the tragedy of violence against women as a social problem of extraordinary proportions. For far too many women, home is a place of greater danger than places in public view – more dangerous than places of work, more dangerous than interstates and freeways, and more dangerous than city streets. Domestic violence causes far more pain than the visible marks of bruises and scars. This crime against women affects nearly one-third of American women. It is a devastation to be abused by a loved one who you think loves you in return and has a ripple effect of immeasurable victims.

Domestic abuse creates a cycle of violence. Children who are abused or witness abuse are at a higher risk of abusing their own family and significant others as an adult. In addition, they also are at risk for long-term physical and mental health problems, including alcohol and substance abuse. It is evident that these abuse victims follow the example they learned in childhood and continue the cycle of violence when they are adults. Domestic violence is witnessed by between 3.3 and 10 million children every year, and these

are only the cases that are reported. Forty percent of girls, age 14 to 17, report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend; and approximately one in five female high school students reports being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.

It has been less than 40 years since our country finally began to take notice of what is happening behind closed doors. Only over the last 20 years have researchers begun to explore the lives and experiences of battered women who killed their abusive male partners due to the startling evidence found in the area of domestic violence. It was just in 1994 that Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act which funds services for victims of rape and domestic violence, allows women to seek civil rights remedies for gender-related crimes, and provides training to increase police and court officials' sensitivity.

Tragically, domestic violence remains an unavoidable threat to the fabric of all families and the well being of society's future. Why has there not been any progress, government funding or awareness about the issue of domestic violence any sooner? This is an epidemic that has been going on for centuries and we just recently started to take action? The findings and statistics prove the wide scope of domestic violence, but numbers cannot demonstrate how frightening domestic violence is to a victim. It is vital that we act to stop the cycle of domestic violence because women and children are being beaten and very little is being done to stop this abusive behavior in our society.

Production Team

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER – OLIVIA KLAUS

Ms. Klaus' career began with extensive travel throughout Central America and South America, gathering stock footage and interviews for various non-profit organizations that serve social justice issues in poverty-stricken areas of these regions.

Her work continued as she returned to the United States to participate in the establishment of the Plus 8 Digital location in New York City. While managing this office, she was part of the pioneering efforts in high-definition technology emerging in the late 1990's. Plus 8 Digital has most recently merged with Panavision, but still retains a sterling reputation as the pioneer in high-definition technology and resources for countless high definitions productions.

Ms. Klaus' production work includes numerous credits on various documentaries, films, cable series, international programs and DVD works including MTV, Showtime, E!, OLN, ABC Family and the Food Network.

She has been associated with Avant Productions as their Creative Director since 2003. Her extensive experience in editing and graphic design has made Avant productions a much sought after production company in the Southern California area. She also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Cinema and

Digital Media department at Vanguard University of Southern California. Her teaching specializations include high-definition and digital production.

SIN BY SILENCE is Ms. Klaus' first independent film endeavor. For the past seven years she has attended CWAA meetings and built incredibly close relationships with each of the women, carefully capturing stories they never before felt capable of giving voice to...until now.

FOUNDER OF CONVICTED WOMEN AGAINST ABUSE - BRENDA CLUBINE

In 1983, Brenda Clubine received a sentence of 15 years to life and thought she was the only one in her situation. But, she soon discovered that she shared common experiences of love turning violent with many of her fellow inmates. Brenda's revelation inspired the support group Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA), the first of its kind in the entire US prison system, to help women inside prison break the silence about abuse and learn more about what they needed to do to help others stop the cycle of violence.

In the early 1990s, Brenda and the CWAA women played an active role in a statewide effort to gain clemency for battered women in prison. In 1992, Battered Women's Syndrome had just become legally defined to recognize the psychological condition that describes someone who has been the victim of consistent and/or severe domestic violence. This defense became widely used in the cases of battered women who kill because it helps explain to a jury the possibilities that might lead to their crime. Yet, there was cause for protest from the women of CWAA since the majority were convicted prior to the availability of the Battered Women's Syndrome defense being given its proper weight in court. The women of CWAA took a stand for what could be their improper convictions since battered women who kill would now be receiving, on average, a 6 to 8 year sentence of involuntary manslaughter.

In October 2008, Brenda Clubine became the 20th CWAA member to be released from prison and can now continue her advocacy efforts on behalf of domestic violence survivors beyond prison walls.

CONSULTANT/RESEARCH – DR. ELIZABETH LEONARD

Dr. Elizabeth Dermody Leonard is Associate Professor of Sociology at Vanguard University where her course offerings include Family Violence, Criminology, and Sociology. She received her Ph.D. in 1997 from the University of California, Riverside. Her book, *Convicted Survivors: The Imprisonment of Battered Women Who Kill*, is being used by legislators, law professors, and advocates for convicted battered women. She has testified about her research before a state legislative hearing on women prisoners.

SPOKESPERSON/CONSULTANT – DENISE BROWN

Denise Brown led a life remarkable only in its normalcy 1994 when her sister, Nicole Brown Simpson, was murdered. Today, she is one of the leading advocates in the domestic violence movement.

Since early 1995, Denise Brown has traveled to various states speaking on the epidemic of domestic violence. She has addressed university student bodies, men in prison, batterers' treatment programs, women at risk, church groups and various educational and legislative forums. Ms. Brown has worked to

help pass a variety of legislative solutions for domestic violence. One of her most important projects was to lobby on behalf of the Violence Against Women Act. With a potential reduction of federal allocation to domestic violence services, Denise Brown testified to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee for increased funding for the Violence Against Women Act. After her testimony, that portion of the bill's funding was increased from eighteen million to thirty-two million dollars.

Denise Brown has made a life-long commitment to educate the public as well as improve the quality of living for women and children who have been victims of domestic violence, She is determined to banish the darkness and end the silence.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER – MARKER KARAHADIAN

After working in the motion picture industry as freelance crew for 10 years, Marker saw the potential of electronic cinematography and purchased the company's first video camera in 1981. He then started Plus 8 Digital, which became one of the most extensive inventories of digital motion picture equipment for rent worldwide. Plus 8 supplied the 4:4:4 recording technology for “Star Wars Episode III”, as well as, “Collateral”, “Domino”, and “Miami Vice.” Marker has also produced several television and PBS specials, including “Caesar’s Writers” and “M*A*S*H, Tootsie & God: A Tribute to Larry Gelbart.”

In 2006, Marker joined the Panavision organization as Executive Vice President.

CO-PRODUCER/EDITOR – ANN-CARYN CLEVELAND

Ann-Caryn Cleveland is currently the head of the Cinema-Digital Media Department at Vanguard University. She received her MFA from USC’s School of Cinema-Television and is currently writing a book called “Crafting Images: A Hands On Approach to Communicating to an Audience.” Her wide range of creative work includes motion graphic design for film and television clients Sony Pictures, HBO, MTV, and the Fine Living Channel.

She has helped create press kits and behind the scenes packages for Spiderman, “Charlie’s Angels”, “Dawson’s Creek”, “Party of Five”, “The 6th Day”, “Jeopardy”, and many others. She has created DVD architecture design work for Sony Family Entertainment and has created web work for many corporations including Sony Pictures, Activision, and Quicksilver.

Mrs. Cleveland’s passion is documentary filmmaking. She has worked on documentaries, including “The Swell Life”, as well as other projects that aired on the CBC, the Sundance Channel and PBS.

Outreach Partnerships

Along with numerous women's shelters and programs, the following organizations have agreed to become part of the SIN BY SILENCE team by providing consultation, resources and commitment to help promote the film through various networks upon release. We are now collaborating with these organizations to connect the film at a national level.

The Nicole Brown Charitable Foundation

In 1994, Denise Brown established The Nicole Brown Charitable Foundation (NBCF) in memory of her sister Nicole Brown Simpson. NBCF pledges to educate the national and international communities of the dangers of domestic violence. They help organizations that shelter and protect families in crisis, support long term solutions and work with educational programs specializing in rehabilitation and job training. The founding pledge, in 1994, to help shelter and protect families caught in the crisis of family violence, remains strong.

The California Women's Law Center

The California Women's Law Center (CWLC) works to ensure, through systemic change, that life opportunities for women and girls are free from unjust social, economic, and political constraints. CWLC programs are designed to enable individuals to use the law that governs their rights and to assist them in addressing the legal issues that perpetuate women's growing poverty. By focusing on Gender Discrimination, Violence Against Women, Women's Health and Reproductive Justice, CWLC dedicates its resources to making the constitutional promise of equality a reality, and to protecting the rights of women and girls every day.

USC's Post-Conviction Justice Project

Founded in 1981, the Post-Conviction Justice Project (PCJP) began by representing clients at the Federal Correctional Institution at Terminal Island, a medium-security prison for men. In 1993, faculty directors applied for and received federal funding to begin a new program representing inmates at the California Institution for Women (CIW). Since 1981, more than 600 USC students have investigated, researched, and drafted habeas petitions on behalf of battered women who were convicted of murder for killing their abusers. Before 1992, most attorneys did not present evidence of a battering relationship and its effects on a defendant as a legal defense to a murder charge. PCJP students work on petitions arguing that had such evidence been used in the client's trial, she likely would not have been convicted of murder, and, for this reason, the conviction should be overturned. If the client is recharged, she at least would have the option of using expert testimony to help mitigate her culpability, so that she may be convicted of a less serious offense.

Action Committee for Women in Prison

Gloria Killian was released from prison in 2002 after serving more than 16 years on a sentence of 32 years to life for a crime that she did not commit. Throughout her trial and incarceration she always maintained her innocence. In March 2002, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals determined that her conviction was based solely on perjured testimony and overturned her conviction. Upon release, Gloria

founded the Action Committee for Women in Prison. This organization is part of her tireless advocating for the humane treatment and release of the women that she left behind.

Free Battered Women

Free Battered Women seeks systemic change in how the criminal justice system treats survivors of domestic violence, and understands the importance of a multi-pronged approach that seeks to educate and dispel misperceptions about the intersection between criminal justice and domestic violence. Through public education, community organizing, advocacy for support groups (both peer-led and professionally facilitated), policy work, and legal action, Free Battered Women seeks to create sustainable change with and for incarcerated survivors of domestic violence.

Family Justice Center

This nationwide organization seeks to provide a long-term positive impact on the community by compassionately providing effective, coordinated services and support to those whose lives have been touched by child abuse, domestic violence, elder/dependent adult abuse, or sexual assault.

White Ribbon Campaign

The White Ribbon symbolizes a man's pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. The White Ribbon Campaign is the world's largest effort by men to end men's violence against women. Started by a handful of men in Canada, in 1991 on the second anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, there are now White Ribbon Campaigns in over 50 countries around the world. What began as an annual awareness week is now a year-round effort focusing on education and awareness, and challenging men around their role in ending violence against women.