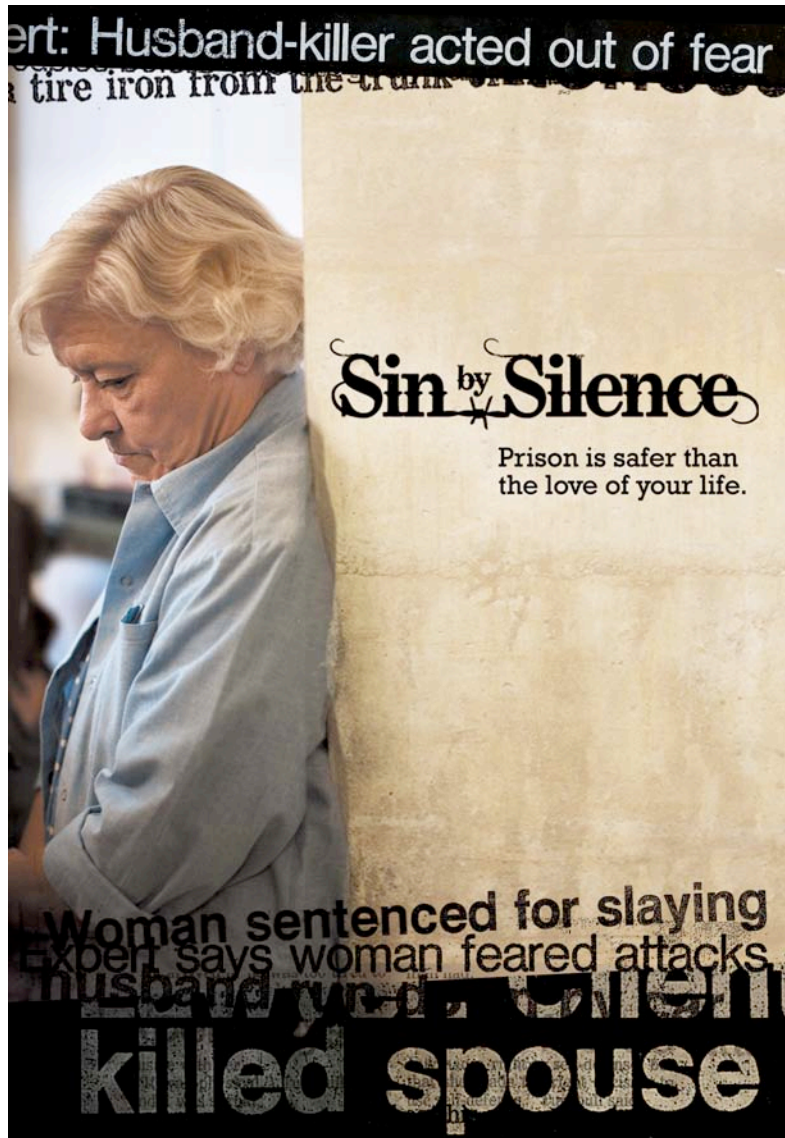


# Sin by Silence



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## **SYNOPSIS**

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

Inside California's oldest women's prison, the first inmate-initiated and led group in the U.S. prison system 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, Convicted Women Against Abuse, 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 courageous women who have learned from their past, are changing their future and, most importantly, teach 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 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 woman 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 group of its kind in the entire US prison system. The goal of the group is to help women inside prison break the silence about abuse and learn more about how they can 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.

Joanne 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 continued to go back 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. But because of CWAA's advocacy, new laws were set in place in 1992 and 2002 that allow incarcerated survivors to utilize the defense of Battered Women's Syndrome and even challenge their original conviction. Because of those efforts, battered women across the country are currently receiving lesser sentences and are now permitted to seek a new trial if they were convicted before the laws recognized the importance of expert testimony on the effects of battering.

After 26 years in prison, on October 22, 2008, Brenda became the 20<sup>th</sup> CWAA member to gain her freedom. A chance to walk on the beach. A chance to be with her son who she was told had died by his adoptive parents just after her incarceration. A chance to continue her advocacy and be a voice for the women of CWAA in the free world.

Every other Monday for over eight years, the director of SIN BY SILENCE, Olivia Klaus, attended CWAA meetings and built incredibly close relationships with each of the women, carefully capturing their stories for the documentary. 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.

## **The Director's Story**

My world was shattered by a three-minute phone call. I had always heard about domestic violence, but it was a problem that happened to other people. Yet there it was...on the other end of the phone. A close friend of mine was a victim. As my mind started racing for ways to help or fix things, I realized, to my horror, that I was completely helpless. I had no answers, no solutions. I held that phone in silence as I heard the dark secrets of a seemingly perfect marriage unravel.

My painstaking journey continued, as I watched my friend move towards gaining the courage to leave her husband of eight years. Numerous lawyers. New address. New phone number. I agonized 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, they offered 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 started 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. But when the meeting started, I was slowly introduced to women who could be my neighbors, my friends, my sister...or even myself.

Since that first meeting, I have been unable 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. 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 found out that my background was filmmaking and approached me to help tell their stories. I knew with this request came a long journey, yet I knew their voices must be heard. So, what began as a dedication to help one woman, mobilized into an effort to help many.

Filming didn't just happen overnight. There were approvals from the California Department of Corrections, the Governor's office, the warden of the California Institution for Women. Yet, I had been attending CWAA in the prison for over a year already as a volunteer for the CWAA groups, so something that could take a media crew up to six months to gain approval happen for me in one month's time. I was already an 'employee' in the eyes of the officials and employees at CIW. They knew my heart and knew my passion for these women. Month after month, year after year, I drove the 70 miles to be at every CWAA meeting. I listened to experiences that were living nightmares. I began trying to raise funds. The women of CWAA believed that they could be a part of impacting the "outside" world and gave the first \$1000 - a donation made up from average wages of only 10 cents an hour.

We began the process of filming countless CWAA meetings under the horrible production conditions of prison and state schedules. By participating and listening in on these interactions, we documented 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 reveal their lives, their abuse, their 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 to 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 push society to finally do something about the countless women being brutalized behind closed doors.

It has now been eight heart-wrenching years since my first visit to prison. My initial introduction to this tragedy still remains an unresolved saga; my friend has 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 abused women can hear the ring of truth from these women's stories and understand their own choices, their lives will change, their roles will transform, and the next generation will be different.

## **Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA)**

*"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 Chino, Calif.

In 1989, Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA) was formed by Brenda Clubine, an inmate serving a life sentence for killing her abuser, and has since grown to a membership of nearly 60 inmates, most of whom stand convicted of first or second-degree murder. 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 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 to officially establish the group kept being rejected by the prison board, and only after two years of persistence did Brenda's dream finally become reality and CWAA officially began.

CWAA 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 establish precedence for the psychological circumstances of battered women's lives. Although battered women's syndrome came into public consciousness and academic debate in the 1980s, the legal system in the United States was slower to accept the syndrome as a mitigating factor in murder cases. The women of Convicted Women Against Abuse decided to try to make change in a system that did not recognize the intricacies of an abusive relationship. Through careful orchestration of letter writing campaigns, media coverage, and senate hearings, a movement was born and laws were changed. In 1992, Battered Women's Syndrome became legally defined to recognize, and mandatory for use in, the cases of battered women, to help explain to a jury the possibilities that might lead to their crime and circumstances.

Still, 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 6-8 year sentence of involuntary manslaughter compared with their sentences of murder.

Numerous media representatives from print and broadcast outlets visited the group, to record proceedings and interview individuals about their experiences with abuse and the criminal justice system. Lawyers and law students came to the aid of a number of these incarcerated battered women and more than thirty petitions for clemency were sent to (then) California Governor Pete Wilson. 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, with only a small handful of the CWAA gaining freedom while many remained incarcerated. However, the women of CWAA refused to accept their status as powerless prisoners.

In the early 2000s, the women were able to organize another legislative hearing at CIW and activists started petitioning on their behalf. On January 1, 2002, Penal Code 1473.5 became law, making California the first state in the nation to permit battered women convicted of killing their batterers to file a writ of habeas corpus that challenged their original conviction if sentencing occurred prior to 1992.

The CWAA efforts have resulted in many of their fellow inmates being released with cases being re-tried and convictions overturned. To-date, 22 women have found freedom because of their efforts. And the women who remain behind bars continue to create new means to have their voices heard. For their voices are important:

they represent the four women who die every day due to abusive relationships, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

## **CWAA Achievements**

**1989** - CWAA is approved by Sacramento and became a parole board requirement for those who had cases involving abuse.

**1990** - CWAA members compiled a booklet of brief stories about their abuse, domestic violence resources, the cycle of abuse, what to do to get help, how to see the signs of abuse, etc. This booklet was sent to every Senator, Legislator, and Governor in every state. The response from this collective endeavor was pivotal in helping politicians understand the plight of convicted survivors.

**1990** - CWAA paired up with a local shelter, allowing the women in the shelter to come to CWAA so they could hear first hand the cost domestic violence can take.

**September 1991** - Legislative member Jackie Spears of the California Women's Legislative Caucus organized a public hearing on domestic violence that was attended by approximately 22 dignitaries from the Senate, Legislature and Congress as well as a large group of media.

**1991** - Brenda Clubine spoke at The Women's Clinic in L.A. on a request from the L.A. City Women's Council with then Mayor Tom Bradley and the LAPD. The result was a change for DV training of LAPD officers to be increased from 8 hours to 40 hours.

**1991** - CWAA wrote a letter to then California Governor Pete Wilson imploring him to review the cases of battered women and consider clemency.

**1991** - The California Coalition for Battered Women formed to help convicted survivors and they began working on getting pro-bono attorneys to represent women eligible for a clemency petition to be filed.

**1991/1992** - Media interviews with CWAA began and attracted the attention of outlets such as 20/20, The Today Show, Montel Williams, Sally Jesse Raphael, Time magazine, the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times.

**1992** - Legislative hearing was held at CIW and 12 CWAA women shared their testimony. As a result of the legislative hearing, 1107 of the evidence code was enacted into law allowing Battered Women's Syndrome to be admissible into court. However, this law was not retroactive and did not include the re-trial of survivors convicted before 1992.

**1992** - The parole board was instructed to find Brenda Clubine suitable.

**1993** - The first CWAA women were granted clemency: Brenda Aris and Frances Caccavale.

**1994 to 2000** - 17 more CWAA women are paroled through the Battered Women's Defense.

**2002** - A Senate Hearing is held at CIW and eight CWAA women shared they testimony about their conviction before Battered Women's Syndrome was mandated. As a result, Penal Code Section 1473.5 passes to allow the filing of a writ of habeas corpus to challenge original convictions if sentencing occurred prior to 1992.

**2003 to 2008** - The release of many more CWAA survivors.

**2008** - Brenda Clubine, the Founder of CWAA, becomes the 20th survivor to be released.

**2009** - The 20th anniversary of Convicted Women Against Abuse.

## **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. This crime against women affects nearly one-third of American women. Domestic violence causes far more pain than the visible marks of bruises and scars. It is a devastation to be abused by a loved one who you think loves you in return and has a ripple effect on numerous 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. According to the National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline, domestic violence is witnessed by between 3.3 and 10 million children every year, and these are only the cases reported. Forty percent of girls aged 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend; and approximately one in five female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.

It has been only about 40 years since our country began to take notice of what is happening behind closed doors. In 1978, the United States formed the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence along with the first battered women's program opening in North Carolina. By the early 1980s, statistics proved that isolated cases of abuse were part of a shocking national problem. As a result, victims became more visible, as well as the inadequacy of society's response. The battered women's movement emerged, becoming one of the most powerful social justice and service movements in United States history.

Shelters and hotlines began to spring up around the country and what began as a social, service-based response to crisis began to take on political urgency. The staggering numbers of women and children turning to shelters continually outpaced the growth of the movement. The shelter work uncovered endless horror stories: law enforcement officials who mislabeled domestic disturbances, judges who ruled in favor of perpetrators, and health care providers who mishandled violence-related injuries. At every turn, women seeking help could expect indifference, hostility, and endangerment. It became clear that helping women in crisis required more than front-line emergency service: it required changing the established social institutions and the laws affecting them.

During the 1980s, a vibrant network of nearly two thousand domestic violence programs in the United States organized into state coalitions to take on the challenge of pressuring social institutions to adequately respond to victims. The 1990s proved to be a turning point decade with the Violence Against Women Act being passed in 1994. This major federal bill provided more than \$1 billion to assist shelters, train law enforcement personnel and judges, and support other crime-prevention efforts addressing violence against women. The decade also saw the trial of O. J. Simpson for allegedly

murdering his former wife, Nicole, and her friend. Though he was eventually acquitted of criminal charges, Simpson's case launched unprecedented media coverage of the issues of domestic violence.

Over the last 20 years, researchers have finally started to explore the lives and experiences of battered women who killed their abusive male partners due to the evidence found in the area of domestic violence over the

decades. Yet tragically, domestic violence remains an unavoidable threat to the fabric of all families and the well being of society's future.

As Abraham Lincoln once stated, "To SIN BY SILENCE when we should protest makes cowards of men." SIN BY SILENCE can help create and inspire advocates to be part of a movement of change that alters the country's political and judicial scenarios and stigmas. It is about changing lives and being part of a larger movement that addresses all types of violence against all women.

The goal of the SIN BY SILENCE team is for the documentary to be the catalyst that can lead to the collaboration of knowledge and action. Knowledge that is developed through the CWAA stories of pain, tragedy, inspiration and triumph. Action that will lead to safer communities, homes and families.

## **NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS**

One in four women (25 percent) have experienced domestic violence in her lifetime.  
*(The National Institute of Justice, Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence)*

Up to 6 million women who are physically abused by their husband or boyfriend per year.  
*(U.S. Department of Justice)*

Women account for 85 percent of the victims of intimate partner violence, men for approximately 15percent.  
*(Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief)*

Women aged 16-24 are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence.  
*(Bureau of Justice Statistics)*

Approximately one in five female high school students reports being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.  
*(Journal of the American Medical Association)*

Forty percent of girls aged 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.  
*(Kaiser Permanente)*

Studies suggest that between 3.3 - 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually.  
*(National Crime Victimization Survey)*

Nearly 2.2 million people called a domestic violence crisis or hot line in 2004 to escape crisis situations, seek advice, or assist someone they thought might be victims.  
*(National Network to End Domestic Violence)*

Nearly three out of four (75 percent) of Americans personally know someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence. 30 percent of Americans say they know a woman who has been physically abused by her husband or boyfriend in the past year.  
*(Family Violence Prevention Fund)*



The health-related costs of intimate partner violence exceed \$5.8 billion each year. Of that amount, nearly \$4.1 billion is for direct medical and mental health care services, and nearly \$1.8 billion is for the indirect costs of lost productivity or wages.

*(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)*

About half of all female victims of intimate violence report an injury of some type, yet only 20 percent of them seek medical assistance.

*(National Crime Victimization Survey)*

Thirty-seven percent of women who sought treatment in emergency rooms for violence-related injuries in 1994 were injured by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend.

*(U.S. Department of Justice)*

On average, more than four women and one man are murdered by their intimate partners in this country every day.

*(Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief)*

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

### **DIRECTOR/PRODUCER – OLIVIA KLAUS**

Olivia Klaus' career began with extensive travel throughout Central 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 1990s. 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.

Olivia's production work includes numerous credits on various documentaries, films, cable series, international programs and DVD works including MTV, Showtime, The History Channel, E!, OLN, 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 own alma mater, where she received numerous awards for her undergrad work. Her teaching specializations include high-definition and digital production.

In 2004, Olivia created Quiet Little Place Productions with a visionary group of colleagues devoted to producing innovative and vibrant stories for the screen, the stage, the page and the web. SIN BY SILENCE is the company's first independent film endeavor.

For the past eight years, Olivia has attended Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA) meetings and built close relationships with each of the women featured in the documentary, carefully capturing their stories for SIN BY SILENCE.

## **FOUNDER, CONVICTED WOMEN AGAINST ABUSE – BRENDA CLUBINE**

When Brenda Clubine's husband Robert died, there were 11 restraining orders against him and a warrant for his arrest.

Brenda knew she should have trusted her instincts that night, when she met him to sign their divorce papers. She knew the abuse would never end. Defending herself, she hit Robert on the head with a wine bottle and fled for safety.

In 1983, Brenda Clubine received a sentence of 15 years to life after refusing a plea bargain that would have imprisoned her for only eight years. Brenda knew she was innocent. Her husband was twice her size, a retired police detective respected in the community, but a terror behind closed doors. During the years of abuse, Brenda endured broken bones, skull fractures, nights in hospitals. She had medical records, photos and witnesses. Yet, was still found guilty of murdering her abusive husband.

Upon incarceration at the California Institution for Women in Chino, Calif., Brenda was sure that she was the only one in her situation. Yet Brenda soon discovered that she shared common experiences of love turning violent with many of her fellow inmates. They shared their whispered stories in the yard, but didn't have a way to work through their pain and learn from it. Brenda knew this was a crucial step in their recovery and she decided to organize a group where the women could learn about the cycle of violence and free themselves from its clutches.

A prison support group had been never created from the inside, and Brenda endured a three-year battle with the prison bureaucracy to ensure that the women who needed help could find solace. In 1989, the first weekly meeting of Convicted Women Against Abuse began with just a few inmates and has now multiplied to over 60 members.

This support group, the first of its kind in the entire US prison system, began to help women inside prison break their silence about abuse and learn more about what they needed to do to help others stop the cycle of violence. Brenda, and many others, wanted to heal from their past and look forward to a promising future...even if that was in prison.

Brenda, and the CWAA women, played an active role in a statewide clemency movement for battered women in prison in the early 1990s. By 1992, Battered Women's Syndrome had become legally defined to recognize the psychological condition that describes someone who has been the victim of consistent and/or severe domestic abuse. This defense had become widely used in the cases of battered women who kill because it helps explain to a jury the circumstances that possibly 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. Brenda, and 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 6-8 year sentence of involuntary manslaughter.

In 2007, after spending 11 years at an institution in Northern California, Brenda was transferred back to the California Institution for Women and became involved in the documentary SIN BY SILENCE. The filmmakers, who were completing what they thought would be their last shoot inside the prison, realized Brenda completed a missing piece of the film, and they continued production in order to include the legacy of CWAA from the founder herself.

As Brenda came back into her own at meetings as the founder of CWAA, the son she had been told was dead by his adoptive parents found his mother through the SIN BY SILENCE website. A story of perseverance and belonging began to take shape. Through this story of the reuniting of Brenda and her son Joe, the film captured an incredible unfolding universal truth - the struggle to survive and be with the ones you love.

In October 2008, Brenda Clubine became the 20th CWAA member to be released from prison and now continues her advocacy efforts on behalf of domestic violence survivors beyond prison walls. Life in the free world is not easy, yet Brenda is experiencing moments she had only dreamed of: seeing the ocean for the first time, savoring food she'd only been able to see in magazines, being excited to sit in traffic, learning how to use a cell phone, and finally being able to hold her son in her arms for the first time since her incarceration. Now she faces many new challenges to bring the CWAA voices into the free world as she embarks on a new quest to help not only incarcerated survivors, but also victims on their path to independence.

### **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. Denise testified to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee for increased funding for the Violence Against Women Act. The outcome 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.

### **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. 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.

### **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER – MARKER KARAHADIAN**

In 1981, Marker Karahadian founded Plus 8 Digital, which became one of the most extensive inventories of digital motion picture equipment for rent worldwide. Plus 8 supplied the recording technology for "Star Wars Episode III," as well as, "Collateral," and "Miami Vice." Marker has also produced several television and PBS specials, including "Caesar's Writer's" and "M\*A\*S\*H, Tootsie & God: A Tribute to Larry Gelbart." In 2006, Marker became the Executive Vice President at Panavision - a leading designer, manufacturer and supplier of high precision film cameras for the motion picture and television markets.

### **CO-PRODUCER/EDITOR – ANN-CARYN CLEVELAND**

Ann-Caryn Cleveland is focused on creating documentary stories that educate and inspire action. She began in documentary film in the research rooms of directors Alex Gibney and Robert Kenner. She received her MFA

from USC's School of Cinema-Television in 2003 while working full-time for Sony Pictures Digital Entertainment. In addition to helping market blockbuster films at Sony, she helped design and build one of the first social networking sites that bridged the gap between consumers using their own media tools and infusing it with blockbuster film content.

Ms. Cleveland's wide range of creative work has been distributed by HBO, MTV, PBS, Fine Living Channel, CBC, BBC, Sundance Channel, Sony Pictures, and Women Make Movies and awarded honors. From 2006 - 2009, Cleveland co-produced and edited "Sin By Silence." In addition to the documentary film, Ms. Cleveland edited over 15 short films for educators, non-profit organizers and community leaders to use as an online learning initiative to stimulate dialogue and create action around the subject of domestic violence.

She currently serves as Assistant Professor of Cinema/Digital Media at Vanguard University and is working on a new film initiative called "Where We Come From." The initiative is an online collective of stories about family and race, including her own research about James Meredith, the first African-American to attend the University of Mississippi.

## **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.

### *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.

### *Peace Over Violence*

Peace Over Violence is a non-profit, feminist, multicultural, volunteer organization dedicated to a building healthy relationships, families and communities free from sexual, domestic and interpersonal violence. To achieve this mission our agency manages five departments delivering the services of Emergency, Intervention, Prevention, Education and Advocacy.

### *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.

### *National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women*

The National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women, a nonprofit organization founded in 1987, is a resource and advocacy center for battered women charged with crimes related to their battering. Through its work, the organization aims to increase justice for — and prevent further victimization of — arrested, convicted, or incarcerated battered women.

### *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.

### *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.