

Artist Statement: 27th Annual Exhibition of Artists in Michigan Prisons

Artist Name: Susan Bardo

All too often, people stay in abusive relationships. I know because it happened to me. Those on the outside have said, "Why didn't she just leave?" This is due to ignorance of the realities about domestic violence. Many victims, like me, suffer in silence; and, for whatever reason never reach out for help until it is too late. I was too afraid to ask for help because, like so many others, trusting "outsiders" was not an option. Money, transportation, support systems, etc., are all ways of control. Victims, like I was, are trained to be compliant and obedient or face severe consequences. My life, my son's life, and my family's lives were frequently threatened. Since victims stay, out of fear and isolation, prosecutors need to remove, "why didn't she just leave?" from their vocabulary. The prosecutor in my case used my education against me: "She's intelligent. She's educated. Why didn't she just leave?" Prosecutors need better training about domestic violence realities instead of instantly condemning. My piece shows some of these realities about domestic violence. As a survivor, I have overcome; I have risen, and I shine out my joy of life. I refuse to be quiet any longer.

Please edit your Artist Statement to fit the space provided.