

Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence**██████████ Prison****Anonymous (██████████)****9 June 2016**

I have lived in two cases of domestic violence.

My first, was actually my mum. It was emotional and controlling violence. She is a very controlling woman. It is only now, since doing *Out of the Dark*, that I have realised how she likes control over me and what I do and money. I am ██████ years old. I assumed it was normal. I never knew I could seek help.

I suffer from ██████. I was never medicated, so my mum would just tell people I was nuts. She liked to play the victim. It was really hard. I was diagnosed when I was ██████. I have felt great since I have been on medication.

I met a man when I was ██████. He had similar traits to my mother. He was physically violent. I had ██████ of my own kids and then I had ██████ with him.

I think the justice system let me down. I called the police many times. They would turn up. He would tell them I wasn't taking my medication and that it was all my fault. They would leave. In one day, the police turned up three times. The police would walk away.

He would threaten to kill himself often.

I couldn't leave. He wouldn't let me leave. I ended up offending and that was how I got me and my children out. That was in ██████. My ██████ boys went to my Dad. My eldest ██████ went to my Mum. And my youngest ██████ went with her Dad.

When I got out of prison, I got custody. If my daughter had been visiting with him, she would come back with bruises. I went to the police but they said there wasn't any evidence. One day when I met him at the meeting point, he held me up against my throat and told me if I ever tried to take his daughter he would hurt me and my children. I went to the police station to make a complaint. I made a statement. He made a completely different statement and nothing ever happened.

I applied for full custody. He lied and he now has full custody. That happened before I came into prison.

It was a horrible time. I didn't get help. I couldn't get support. It seemed that no one wanted to listen. They would call you a liar. "You've been to prison." "You've got a mental illness". And it's so hard to fight that. I had a mental health issue, and I know I did, and he used it against me. It's hard to prove you're taking your medication. And it makes you think you are crazy. You start to doubt yourself.

I needed more support from the police. One day, he came to my house and stripped all the furniture out of my house. The police could have taken out an intervention order.

There needs to be someone who can sit with you and help you make a statement. It's very scary. He told me if I made a statement, he would kill me.

I re-married [REDACTED] years ago. My husband is a beautiful man. He's a big man. In our marriage, we have had one incident. We both screamed at each other. The neighbours called the police. They came and took him away. My husband was taken away from me and he was charged with family violence. He now has a criminal record. In our case, mediation would have been better.

In all those years I struggled with my ex, the police never helped. My ex always talked his way out of it. In this marriage, we had one little incident and the police came and took him away. The police wanted me to make a statement straight away. I thought, where were you [REDACTED] years ago when I could have been dead? This time they called DHS. The kids weren't even home at the time.

I think it would be really helpful if they offered *Out of the Dark* on the outside. It would show women it's ok to leave before it's too late. And it would teach them how to say 'no'.