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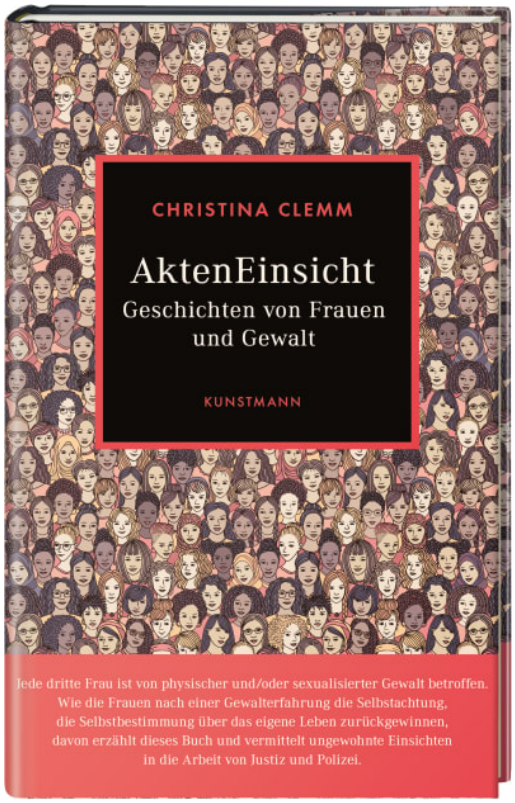

Christina Clemm
Opening the files

206 pages
Euro 20,00 € (D)
published in March 2020
ISBN 978-3-95614-357-1

Verlag Antje Kunstmann GmbH
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Violence against women is a fact of everyday life, though it rarely enters the public domain. Christina Clemm's AktenEinsicht (Opening the Files) tells the stories of women who have faced physical and sexual violence and provides surprising – and sometimes shocking – insights into the work of the judiciary and police.

According to the latest figures released by Germany's Federal Criminal Police (BKA), one in three women faces physical and/or sexual violence. With empathy and clarity, criminal lawyer Christina Clemm tells the life stories behind these appalling figures.

Alina came to Germany to earn money and realized that she'd probably have to work in prostitution. She could deal with that. What she hadn't reckoned with was being propositioned by someone she knew through her brother. When she rejected him, he tried to kill her on the street. Eva is pregnant; she leaves her boyfriend when he kicks her in the stomach. He pursues her with death threats. Eva reports him to the police no less than seventeen times, but to no avail. Eva's daughter finds her dead in her apartment. Faizah is badly mistreated by her German husband. She manages to flee their home, but he follows her, beating her on the street and attempting to strangle her until passers-by restrain him and call the police.

Having experienced such acts of violence, how do women regain their sense of self-worth? The ability to determine their own lives? How do you feel when the police don't take death threats seriously? When the judge turns a blind eye? When you have to face both the perpetrator of the crime and probing questioning about the events?

Christina Clemm leads us through court rooms and crime scenes, to the heart of the events themselves.

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Christina Clemm is a defence attorney, representing the victims of sexually and racially motivated violence. She specializes in criminal and family law and was a member of the commission set up by the German Ministry of Justice to reform laws on sexual offences.

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