13 siblings held captive were likely coerced to remain quiet

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOS ANGELES — Vilma de los Angeles, a 17-year-old girl jumped out of a window from the home where her parents allegedly starved and tortured her 11 children, she broke a silence that had barely lasted

3½ years or so the teenager waited

for so long to act, but psychiatrists say she behaves in unaccountable ways in cases of extreme deprivation.

People who have gone through severe hunger and thirst may have trouble

thinking straight or acting with certainty and are known to rapidly lose weight and muscle mass. Those who suffer under conditions of deprivation for a long time can even lose the ability to speak.

It was unknown whether the girl would immediately respond to an opportu

nity to act or whether she could find a way to escape from small cages near her home, in an immigration detention center.

It was not clear why she did or didn't.

“She was left with no choice but to act,” said the lawyer for the parents, who

have been charged with child abuse.

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