

The evening of June 28, 2012, Claudia Valdez-Sandoval called the police for help. She had been fighting with her husband. The fight had turned physical, and she feared for the safety of herself and her three young children. So, she ran to her neighbor's house with her kids in tow and asked her neighbor to call the police for help. Arapahoe County law enforcement arrived and ended up arresting Claudia on a misdemeanor domestic violence charge, which was dismissed soon afterwards.

Claudia had never been arrested before. She had also never been away from her children for more than 24 hours. But, because she called the police for help, Claudia spent three nights in jail.

Claudia saw a judge on the domestic violence charge the next morning, June 29. Her husband admitted in open court that he was the aggressor, and the judge ordered Claudia released on a personal recognizance bond. But the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office refused to release Claudia. Instead, it held her for three additional days because Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), a division of the Department of Homeland Security, had requested that the sheriff hold Claudia in jail while it investigated her immigration status. The sheriff's office, like most others in Colorado at the time, chose to comply with the federal government's request, and it imprisoned Claudia for three additional days without a warrant and without probable cause.

Those three days in jail were deeply painful for Claudia. She had been living in Denver since 1999, where her three children had been born. During that time, she had never had a run-in with the law, other than for minor traffic offenses. She never dreamed she would be imprisoned, especially for calling the police for help. As a result of this incident, she has come to believe that the police are not there to protect her; that she cannot trust them; and that she should avoid contact with them at all costs. This sense of isolation and vulnerability continues to plague Ms. Valdez to this day.