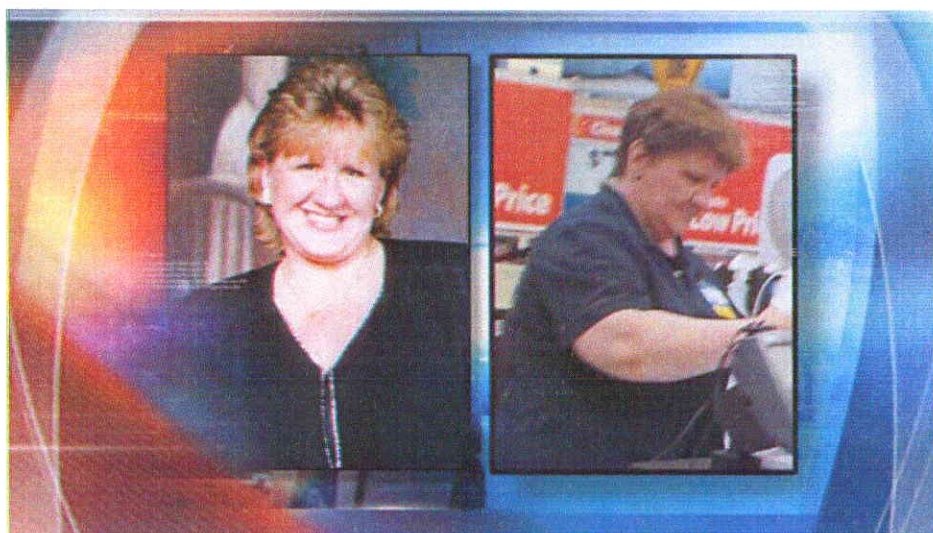




## Mother who killed her child found working in area Walmart



by BRETT SHIPP and TERESA WOODARD

WFAA

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DALLAS - This past weekend, one Terrell Walmart shopper snapped a photo of a checkout cashier whose face she found familiar. Hours later, her suspicions were confirmed.

She had just encountered one of the most notorious characters in North Texas of the past decade: Dena Schlosser, the former Collin County mother who in 2004, used a knife to sever her 10-month-old daughter's arms during a religious frenzy. She said God had told her to.

"I cut her arms off," Schlosser told a police dispatcher in November 2004.

"You cut her arms off?" he asked.

"Mmmhmm," she repeated.

Schlosser was diagnosed with postpartum psychosis.

In 2006, a judge found Schlosser not guilty, by reason of insanity. She was put in a mental institution.

In 2008, the judge, based on doctors' recommendations, agreed to let Schlosser out of the institution as an outpatient. She had to follow strict guidelines, but she got a job. She was working when the outpatient status was revoked in 2010. She was then re-institutionalized at Terrell State Hospital. She is now back on outpatient status.

In late June, she was hired by Walmart as a store associate.

But psychiatrists have declared her not to be a risk.

Still, word spread quickly on the Internet, and area residents we talked with expressed concerns.

"For her to be in the hospital for such a short time, and then have the freedom that you and I enjoy, after what she did, I think is a shame and there should be an outcry from the public," said Natalie Elmoghrabi, a former Terrell resident who was in town for the day.

Others expressed disappointment in Walmart for hiring someone who committed such an act.

"I think they would have delved farther into, or something wasn't disclosed maybe," said Kaufman resident Rebecca Rodden. "Maybe Walmart just doesn't know."

Late Monday, Walmart confirmed that Schlosser, going now by the name Laettner, was hired in June.

"Mrs. Laettner is no longer employed by the company," said Lorenzo Lopez, a Walmart spokesman.

Lopez defended Walmart's employment of Schlosser.

"All associates must pass a criminal background check as a condition of employment," Lopez said. "If a charge does not result in a conviction, then we have no way of knowing an applicant's previous criminal charges."

They fired Schlosser sometime before Monday.

As to why the state has cleared Schlosser to mix with the general population, Department of State Health Services officials say patients are thoroughly assessed before a judge grants permission for their work release.

Former Dallas County prosecutor Toby Shook did not try the Schlosser case.

The crime happened in Collin County, but Shook has had decades of trial experience. He said because Schlosser has no felony conviction to a point, "she has the same rights as everyone else, though the judge will always retain jurisdiction."

"Just like you might have a relative committed that's become mentally unbalanced if they prove to be dangerous, it's the same criteria in this case," he said. "Primarily, what a judge has to rely on are the doctors that are taking care of the person and any other experts that can give reports and testimony at a hearing."

Shook said it's understandable why some would feel uneasy about Schlosser's employment.

"You have a horrible, horrible crime that occurred," he said. "You naturally want that person brought to justice or locked up for the rest of their lives, but that person is suffering from a mental disease. They weren't acting in their right mind."

"So we've reached this compromise in the law where they're found not guilty," Shook continued. "They're not legally responsible, but a judge retains jurisdiction, so that hopefully society can be protected from something like this happening again."

The State of Texas said the goal for patients in mental care facilities is for them to get better, so as they progress, they are given opportunities to re-integrate with society.

Shook said because Schlosser was found not guilty, she still has freedom, but a judge will always determine how much.

E-mail [bshipp@wfaa.com](mailto:bshipp@wfaa.com) and [twoodard@wfaa.com](mailto:twoodard@wfaa.com)