

Woman found not guilty in stabbing of baby son

[Email](#) [Facebook](#) 8 [Twitter](#) 3 [+1](#) 0

By Amanda Marrazzo, Special to the Tribune

March 22, 2013

A judge found a Harvard mother not guilty by reason of insanity Thursday in the stabbing of her infant son, agreeing with a doctor's evaluation that the woman was suffering from "severe postpartum depression."

McHenry County Judge Sharon Prather said Claudia Mejia, who was charged with attempted murder and aggravated battery of a child in the December 2011 attack on her 9-month-old, "lacked sufficient capacity to appreciate the criminality of her crime."

The illegal immigrant mother of four was ordered into the custody of social service officials and was to be transported to the Elgin Mental Health Center for evaluation. A hearing is planned for April 24 to determine how long Mejia, 38, will be in custody.

Mejia's husband, Osvaldo Mejia, was present at the court hearing but left without public comment. He has said he loves his wife and wants her to come home to their family.

Before the judge's ruling, prosecutor Sheryl Eisenstein had asked her to find Mejia guilty of the crimes.

Describing the morning of the attack, Eisenstein said, Osvaldo Mejia had heard a strange noise, went to check on it and discovered the baby bloodied and his wife trying to work the TV remote control. When he asked her what happened, she did not respond.

When police arrived, they found Osvaldo "hysterical" and holding the boy, who was bleeding profusely, while Claudia "stood there saying nothing," Eisenstein said, adding that Mejia later told officers that she "wanted her son to be with God and put a knife in his mouth."

Eisenstein said the baby's artery and tongue were severed, and doctors did not think the baby would survive the next day, though the child ultimately recovered.

"She admitted what she did was wrong," Eisenstein said.

But defense attorney Wes Pribla read from a psychologist's evaluation of Mejia, which found her delusional, paranoid and psychotic as a result of severe postpartum psychosis.

"She had paranoid beliefs," Pribla quoted from the report. "She said to police she was trying to be a good mother by sending her child to God."

Pribla, who said he believes "justice was served," added that Mejia still faces up to 30 years in the health facility, depending on her mental health.



MCHENRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PHOTO

Claudia Mejia.

