

2 brothers fatally stabbed, mother wounded in attack

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ROWLETT - Friends and neighbors who planned to gather this weekend to celebrate Devon Routier's seventh birthday expressed grief and bewilderment at the fatal stabbing Thursday of the boy and his 4-year-old brother.

The boys' 26-year-old mother, who was stabbed in the neck and shoulder, told police she fought off an attacker who entered the family's downstairs den as the trio slept in front of the television set. She called 911 about 2:30 a.m. to report the attack.

Darlie Routier's husband, Darin, told police he was upstairs with the couple's 8-month old son at the time.

"He heard his wife scream and came downstairs," said Police Chief Randall Posey, who described Darin Routier's condition as "in shock."

"He's been totally cooperative," Posey said. "The detectives have been able to interview him."

Investigators are talking to neighbors and scouring the Routiers' 5-year-old subdivision of \$130,000 homes for clues. No one has been arrested. Police said they haven't ruled out anyone as a suspect.

"We're looking at everybody right now," said Posey, who wouldn't comment on whether police have found a weapon that may have been used in the attack or discuss if blood was found outside the home.

Police said there is no history of domestic violence or any other police calls to the family's address.

Devon died at the scene, while his little brother, Damon, was pronounced dead on arrival at a hospital. Darlie Routier underwent surgery at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, where she was in critical but stable condition Thursday, police said.

Outside of a homicide earlier this year, which Posey said likely will prove to be a case of self-defense, the slayings were the first in two years in Rowlett, a lakeside town of 35,000 people about 20 miles east of Dallas.

An open window with a screen that appeared to be slashed diagonally is believed to have been used to enter the house, police said. The home's windows were unlocked, Posey said.

A family friend who works in the Routier's circuit-board business said one of the boys was killed in his sleep and that the other woke up when he was attacked.

""He killed the one - slashed his throat, then cut the other one," said Barbara Jovell, who served as the matron of honor at the couple's wedding. ""He woke up and woke his mommy. She was trying to fight him off."

The Routier's are from Lubbock, where Routier started the company in a garage, Jovell said.

Neighbor Virginia Cobb, 46, struggled to make sense of the stabbings.

""I always feel like if it's a gang member, they would not hurt the children," she said.