

Woman accused of killing sons hires new high-profile attorney

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KERRVILLE - A Rowlett homemaker accused of stabbing to death her two young sons got a new high-powered defense lawyer Monday who wants to move the capital murder trial back to Dallas.

The latest legal twist in the case of 26-year-old Darlie Routier came as jury selection got under way in Kerr County.

"We'll find out tomorrow whether or not we're going back to Dallas," defense attorney Doug Mulder told reporters outside the courtroom. He declined to discuss his reasons for wanting the trial relocated, noting the gag order imposed by state District Judge Mark Tolle.

A defense motion states that among other things a fair trial can be had in Dallas County and that most witnesses in the case live there.

Defense attorneys said they expect Tolle to hold a hearing today on the request to move the trial again. It came to this Hill Country community after Routier's previous lawyers sought to have it moved from Dallas because of pretrial publicity.

Routier is accused in the June 6 stabbing deaths of her sons Damon, 5, and Devon, 6. She claims an intruder killed them as they slept in the living room of the family's suburban home and that the attacker slashed her neck and shoulder before fleeing through the garage.

But police say Routier wounded herself to cover the crime and that there was no intruder.

Her husband, Darin Routier, told police he was sleeping upstairs with the couple's infant son, Drake, at the time of the attack.

Before a pool of about 85 potential jurors arrived in court Monday morning, the judge had granted a request that Mulder and a team of hired Dallas and Kerrville lawyers replace Routier's court-appointed counsel.

Among Mulder's well-known cases was that of Walker Railey, the former Methodist minister from Dallas who was acquitted on charges that he tried to kill his wife.

Wearing a black blazer and light-colored blouse, Routier expressed no emotion as the judge told potential jurors she is charged with capital murder and could face death by lethal injection if convicted.

Tolle reminded members of the jury pool, who were asked to fill out confidential questionnaires to help attorneys select the panel, that Routier may invoke her Fifth Amendment right not to testify.

"You can't hold it against her for any reason whatsoever if she elects not to testify," the judge said.

Another pool of potential jurors was scheduled to show up in court Monday afternoon. Individual questioning is set for next Monday with testimony scheduled to begin Jan. 6.

Darin Routier and Mrs. Routier's mother and mother-in-law were watching the courtroom proceedings Monday. Later, Darin Routier had kind words for the townspeople of Kerrville but said he would like the trial relocated.

"I would like to move it back to Dallas, too," he said. "Dallas has a vested interest in this case."