

Woman accused of killing sons loses bid to move trial to Dallas

Staff

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

At the end of a day during which he swore in 180 Kerr County residents as prospective jurors in the case of 26-year-old Darlie Routier, state District Judge Mark Tolle quickly rejected defense attorney Doug Mulder's request for a second change of venue.

Tolle moved the trial to this Hill Country community last month after Routier's court-appointed lawyers said pre-trial publicity would make a fair trial impossible in Dallas.

A defense motion filed Monday, however, argued that a fair trial can be had in Dallas County and that most witnesses in the case live there.

Tolle ended a hearing on the matter by simply stating, ""Motion denied."

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 Ms. Routier wounded herself to cover the crime and that there was no intruder.

Investigators reported finding no blood in the garage, on the garage window or on the backyard gate. Window sills were covered with a layer of dust, and mulch on flower beds between the garage and gate were undisturbed, according to an arrest warrant.

Family members point to a bloodstained sock found near the Routier home as possible proof of Mrs. Routier's innocence. Her husband, Darin Routier, told police he was sleeping upstairs with the couple's infant son, Drake, at the time of the attack.

Before potential jurors arrived in court Monday morning, Tolle 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 in select the panel, that Mrs. 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.

Individual questioning is set for next Monday, and testimony in the case is set to start Jan. 6.

Darin Routier and Routier's mother and mother-in-law were watching the courtroom proceedings Monday. Darin Routier refused to answer questions about financial arrangements the family has with the new defense team.