

# Routier's behavior not typical for grieving mom, nurses say

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KERRVILLE - A Rowlett mother, accused of stabbing her two young boys to death and claiming an intruder attacked them in their sleep, shunned her surviving son when he was brought to her bedside, two nurses testified in the woman's capital murder trial Thursday.

Although Darlie Routier was tearful at times and repeatedly asked who could have stabbed her and her sons, Routier's demeanor on June 6 was not typical for a grieving mother, the nurses from Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas said.

"I never recall her using a tissue to wipe her face," said intensive care unit nurse Lynnette Hollon, who treated Routier for what prosecutors contend were self-inflicted stab wounds.

"She never needed a Kleenex," added nurse Paige Campbell. "She was whining," but didn't show the hysteria common among mothers who have just lost children, she said.

Routier, 27, could face the death penalty if convicted in the murders of sons Damon, 5, and Devon, 7. Prosecutors contend Routier, under the influence of amphetamines and upset about financial and personal problems, killed her sons and tried to cover up her actions by blaming a fictitious attacker.

Hollon, a veteran ICU nurse, said she and Routier's family seemed more moved by the tragedy than Routier. In poignant testimony, the nurse cried as she recalled the defendant's demeanor that day.

"She never said anything about the boys . . . except when she told me how the older son would pick flowers for her at a neighbor's house," Hollon said. She said Routier's eyes welled with tears when she held a photograph of her sons, but she never burst into sobs.

When Routier's unharmed infant son, Drake, was brought to her bedside, Routier touched the baby's toes but "she never reached up. She never held her son," even though the baby reached out for his mother, Hollon said.

The defendant was hospitalized two days, mainly to keep the media away from her, not because her wounds were that serious, two doctors testified. When she was released, Rowlett police took photos of severe arm bruises that two doctors and five nurses said were not apparent during her hospital stay.

Prosecutors offered no explanation for the injuries, but the two doctors and some of the nurses speculated they occurred after her release from the hospital.

Defense attorney Doug Mulder, however, said he will argue that Routier was injured by an unknown attacker who broke into her home while she and the two boys were sleeping in the living room.

He also chided prosecutors for gathering the Baylor medical employees for a "brain-storming" session here on Tuesday to coordinate their testimony and review evidence.

"I think it's very clear to the jury what happened," Mulder said, calling the testimony "so coordinated."