

Contradictions cited in mother's stories

911 tape played in sons' slayings

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KERRVILLE - Minutes after reporting the stabbings of her two sons, Darlie Lynn Routier gave conflicting accounts to Rowlett police and seemed concerned that her fingerprints were on the murder weapon, witnesses in her capital murder trial testified Tuesday.

Routier, 27, trembled and sobbed quietly after a tape of her frantic call to 911 was played for jurors - a recording filled with her screams for help and indications she was shocked by the carnage. "Oh my God," she said repeatedly.

But the tape also corroborated testimony of the first police officer on the scene who said Routier had to be instructed to tend to her bleeding children, Devon, 6, and Damon, 5.

Routier's husband, Darin, who was asleep upstairs at the time of the attack, responded to his wife's screams and was assisting one of the boys when Officer David Waddell walked into the house about 2:30 a.m. June 6.

Waddell said he saw Routier standing near the kitchen, still on the phone with the 911 dispatcher to whom she had reported the stabbings. He said he asked her where the suspect went and what he looked like, and she said she did not know if he was black or white. She said a man had attacked her and was still in the garage.

After a cursory check turned up no intruder, Waddell said, he talked to Routier again. She said she struggled with the attacker in the kitchen and he dropped a knife as he fled, the officer testified.

"She said she picked up the knife and set it on the kitchen counter," Waddell recalled. "She said she had messed up the fingerprints."

The officer also stated that despite his repeated urgings that she get a rag to apply pressure to one of the boy's wounds, she never approached either boy in his presence and did not ask paramedics about their conditions.

Lt. Matt Walling, the second officer on the scene, quoted Routier as saying that she awoke with the attacker standing over her in the living room, where the boys were slain as she slept next to them, and fought with the assailant there.

Walling also testified that Routier described the attacker as a white male wearing a black shirt, dark ball cap and jeans. No one matching that description was found by officers after they searched the neighborhood, Walling said.

The officers testified that, other than a slashed window screen and a broken wine glass, they found no evidence of an intruder, who would have overlooked numerous valuables within easy reach, including a gold watch and car keys on the kitchen counter.

The testimony followed a prosecutor's assertion in Monday's opening statements that Routier was driven to murder out of frustration about her family's financial problems, the stress of raising three young children and her dissatisfaction with her inability to lose weight after childbirth. The prosecutor also said the knife used to cut the screen was found in the kitchen knife-holder.

But Routier's defenders have described her as a doting mother, who was snared by police in a rush to judgment on the basis of inconclusive circumstantial evidence.

It was Routier's lawyers who presented the 911 tape as a means of buttressing that contention. Despite muddled audio quality and voices talking over each other, she can be heard screaming "someone stabbed my children," and "my babies are dying."

If convicted of capital murder, Routier could face death by injection. The trial was moved to Kerrville because of extensive publicity in Dallas. Testimony is expected to last at least two to three weeks.