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Rowlett mother accused of stabbing two sons to death

The woman said her children's killer was a white man

ROWLETT (AP) — At a graveside birthday party for one of her two murdered sons, Darlie Routier sprayed Silly String and clutched her sons' photograph while family members sang "Happy Birthday."

"They wouldn't want us to be down here being sad even though our hearts are breaking," Routier said at Friday's party.

On Wednesday, she was in jail, accused of stabbing the boys to death then wounding herself to cover the crime.

Routier had told police that an intruder came through a window and stabbed 6-year-old Devon and 5-year-old Damon while they slept in the living room, then stabbed her before fleeing.

She said the attacker was a white man, who wore dark clothes and a baseball cap. Police say he never existed.

"On the one hand we had a community thinking that there was a psychopathic killer walking the alleyways at night," said Sgt. Dean Poos, a spokesman for the police department in this suburb about 20 miles east of Dallas.

"On the other hand, we had a crime scene ... telling us that what Routier was telling us didn't happen."

News reports quoting unidentified sources have said blood evidence showed Routier was stabbed in the kitchen, not in the living room as she told police, and that the only set of bloody footprints found in the house belonged to Routier.

Reports also said investigators found a knife in a kitchen drawer with metal fragments on it that matched a cut window screen Routier said the attacker came in through.

The 26-year-old homemaker spent two days in the hospital recovering from the wounds police now say were self-inflicted.

At the time of the killings, her husband, Darin Routier, was sleeping upstairs with the couple's 8-month-old son. He is not a suspect but the investigation is continuing, police said.

Routier was arrested late Tuesday and is being held on $500,000 bail, charged with murder in the June 6 slayings. She could face the death penalty if convicted.

The case bears some resemblance to that of Susan Smith, the South Carolina woman convicted last year of murdering her 3-year-old and 14-month-old sons. Before confessing to rolling her car into a lake with the boys inside in October 1994, she claimed that a carjacker had abducted the boys.

Authorities would not comment on a possible motive in the Routier case or on reports that the family had been in financial trouble and took out life insurance policies on the sons.

"We haven't been able to establish that that's a part of this at all," First Assistant District Attorney Norm Kinne said.

There were no files on the couple or Routier's small electronics business on file in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Dallas.

Wave

Continued from Page 1

simulated wind, current and water conditions to aid in setting design requirements.

Dr. Wayne Duncan, associate director of the OTRC, said the testing done in the wave tank is crucial to creating a design appropriate for ocean drilling.

"We (OTRC staff) try to tell them how to build safe platforms ... and not to over-design or under-design them," Duncan said. "Our primary concern is developing ways to drill in six to ten thousand feet of water. This is the only wave basin in the world that can generate wind, waves and currents simultaneously."

Although the primary purpose of the tank is to research ways of improving ocean drilling techniques, companies with no connection to the oil industry can use the wave tank to help design their products.

NASA has used the tank find out if their Assured Crew Return Vehicle, which was designed to make trips back to earth in case of medical emergencies on the shuttle or the proposed space station, could withstand oceanic conditions.

Kay Choate, staff assistant, said Boeing is currently using the center to test a recovery tool designed to save objects ejected from the space shuttle during lift-off.

"They (Boeing) are testing a device that will help save objects falling off the space shuttle into the ocean," Choate said.

The center is available to professors and students from the two Universities conducting research.

Oriol Rijken, graduate student of Civil Engineering, said the facility is very important to his research.

"Without being able to do my experiments, I wouldn't have been able to graduate," Rijken said. "The reason I'm in College Station is because the center is here."

Lease

Continued from Page 1

Romero said these reasons are designated in section 31 of the Texas Apartment Assosciation's official lease.

"When you sign a lease, you are being promised a service and you will provide the money," Romero said. "A lot of times, the complaints deal with shoddy maintenance and incorrect security devices, also, if they are being obsessive and coming in at weird hours. The landlord has a right to come in and check on the unit, but it has to be reasonable."

Students having trouble with a landlord or manager can go to the Student Conflict Resolution Center (SCRC). There, tenants can utilize mediation or the campus attorney.

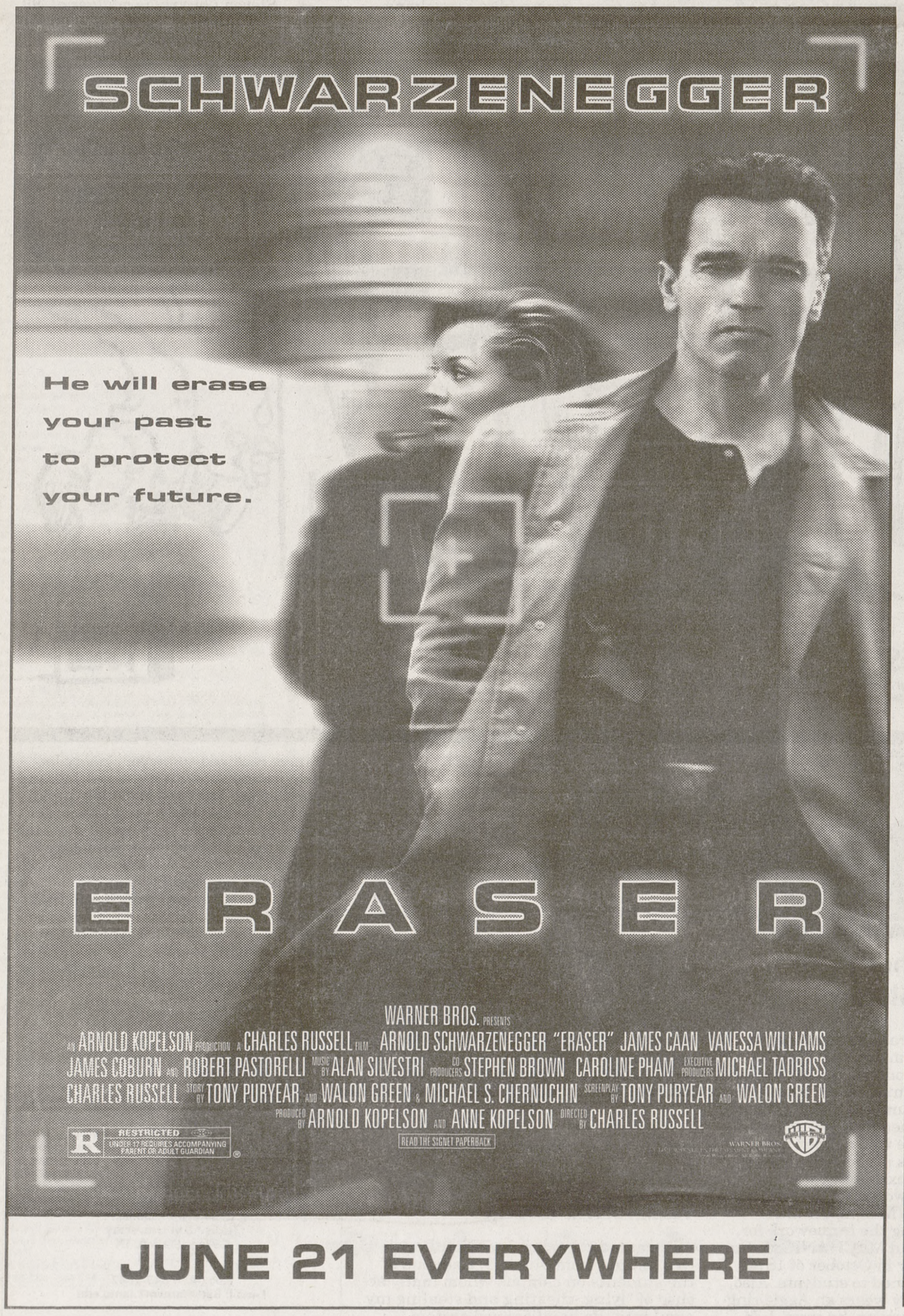
Bridget Jackson, coordinator for negotiation and mediation services in the department of student life, said mediation can work, but many times landlords are unwilling to try it.

"The only problem with dealing with landlords is that they have the lease and see it as non-negotiable," Jackson said. "They are supported by that legal document and they see there is not much discussion beyond that."

If mediation is not an option, the campus attorney can offer free legal advice to A&M students.

Rick Powell, coordinator of student legal services, also works in the SCRC.

"I can give them advice and counseling so they can be informed of their legal rights and responsibilities and know their options," Powell said. "Students can decide how they want to handle the problem after they know their rights and what they can do."



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