

Newton man convicted of stabbing wife to death over Christmas holiday

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A Newton man pleaded guilty Monday to stabbing his wife to death in front of their two young children on Christmas Eve.

Darrin Keith Johnson, 42, of U.S. 84 West, pleaded guilty to murder in front of Dale County Circuit Court Judge P. B. McLaughlin Jr.

Dale County District Attorney Kirke Adams said Johnson used a knife to stab Allison Fuller Johnson multiple times inside the family's home.

"He had come over to the house, was confronting her

about their pending divorce and it got violent," Adams said.

Adams said Johnson admitted guilt to the murder, which happened on Dec. 24, 2007. Johnson faces 10 to 99 years or life in prison for murder, along with a possible additional 20 years for use of a deadly weapon. Adams said the murder weapon was never found.

"This was a heinous crime, but what made it even worse was that he committed this murder on Christmas Eve in front of their two children," Adams said in an e-mailed statement. "These domestic situations are very dangerous and can result in serious violence, like this one did. I understand that Johnson is pleading guilty and taking responsibility for his crime, but it doesn't change the fact that he took a life."

Johnson will remain held

behind bars without bond. Adams said the couple's two boys, ages 5 and 14, were in the home at the time of the murder, but are now living with relatives. Johnson was not sentenced Monday. Adams, who will be seeking the maximum punishment of life in prison, said Johnson will likely be sentenced within four to six weeks.

William White, who represented Johnson, called his client remorseful for the murder. White said the defense would likely reveal why Johnson committed the murder at the sentencing hearing, which would not be as an excuse to but show "what was going through his mind."

"He was anxious to get the plea behind him, and he was always from the beginning accepting responsibility for his actions," White said.



Darrin Johnson