

Man sentenced in wife's death

Woman had filed restraining order before stabbing

Matt Elofson

meflofson@dothaneagle.com

About six weeks before a 40-year-old Ozark woman was stabbed to death, she filed a restraining order against the man convicted of killing her.

Ozark police Investigator J.C. Culbreath

read the restraining order out loud Thursday at a Dale County Circuit Court hearing, which included Allison Johnson saying she had been afraid of her husband in the weeks before her death.

"I am extremely worried when my husband goes through fits of rage when he doesn't get his way," Culbreath read from the order. "I am frightened to what he might do to me. He is utterly unpredictable."

Judge P.B. McLauchlin, Jr. sentenced Darrin Johnson, 42, to serve 42 years in prison for the stabbing death of his wife, Allison Johnson. The Newton man pleaded guilty to the murder last month.

Culbreath said the Christmas Eve 2007 assault left Allison Johnson with multiple stab wounds on her body, including her chest, back, neck and hands. Allison Johnson separated from her husband about two months before her death, and moved in with her mother and brother on Bradford Drive, which is where she was killed.

Culbreath also said the restraining order had not been served at the time of the murder.

McLauchlin said he con-

sidered several factors as he handed down the sentence, including Johnson's lack of a criminal record, that Johnson turned himself in to police and that he pleaded guilty. McLauchlin said he specifically sentenced Johnson to what he believed Allison Johnson's life expectancy would've been.

William White, who represented Johnson, said his client told Dr. Doug McKeown, a psychologist, that an "overpowering emotion" led him to murder after he'd discovered his wife had been involved with another man for at least six months. White said the doctor's report also showed his client went to the home to go shopping for his son's Christmas presents.

More than two dozen people attended the hearing, including several friends and family who testified.

"I know on that day, Darrin killed the person he loved most in the world," said Dennis Johnson, Darrin's brother. "For someone to do what he did, there had to be a snap. He could not have been in his right mind."

White asked the court for mercy, leniency and a 20-year sentence for his client.

"We're disappointed we didn't get what we felt would've been a more fair sentence, which would have been in the 30 years or below range," White said after the hearing. "It's a just a sad day for everybody."

Clayton Fuller, Allison's brother, testified at the hearing that he, along with one of the couple's young children, watched Allison Johnson get stabbed to death.

"I just want to thank the judge for giving my sister some peace," Fuller said. "He needs to sit and think you got to know what you're doing before you go off in a fit of rage. The only burden I have is I didn't do anything to stop it."



Darrin Johnson