

Jury urges death sentence for Jacksonville man who killed wife

There were 52 wounds on the victim after the gruesome stabbing.

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By [David Hunt](#)

A Duval County jury voted unanimously in favor of executing a man who'd posed as a pizza delivery driver to get into his estranged wife's apartment and stab her to death in front of her 5-year-old son.

Lesly Jean-Philippe, 24, showed little emotion but hung his head after Thursday's decision was read. The panel of seven women and five men was out for about 45 minutes before recommending the death penalty by a 12-0 vote.

Jean-Philippe was convicted last week of killing 24-year-old Elkie Jean-Philippe in August 2009 as she sought a divorce to escape what prosecutors described as an escalating pattern of violence in the marriage.

During a post-conviction hearing for the jury to choose between a life and death sentence, witnesses were brought in to describe how Jean-Philippe had attacked his wife before - even cutting her hair off with a knife.

Jean-Philippe's defense team called 16 character witnesses, running out the clock during the first part of the hearing Wednesday with testimony about his prowess as a high school athlete and generosity to friends and family.

In the end, Assistant State Attorney Bernie de la Rionda said the jury's decision sent a strong message about the community's intolerance of domestic violence.

Prosecutors said Jean-Philippe was in Rhode Island with family trying to collect himself as his wife threw her wedding ring in a trash can. Unbeknownst to even some of his closest friends who testified, he left on an airplane to Jacksonville Aug. 26, 2009, and took a cab straight to his wife's Southside apartment.

There, Jean-Philippe said he was a pizza delivery driver, then pushed his way in when the door was opened a crack. He had stolen a tire jack out of Elkie Jean-Philippe's car, which he used to smash her sister on the head as he barged into the apartment.

Medical examiners identified 52 incisions on his estranged wife's body. There were dozens of direct stab wounds and defensive wounds.

Neighbors testified she screamed for her life and her son's.

Jean-Philippe still has scars on his neck from a failed suicide attempt that followed the attack.

Circuit Judge Adrian G. Soud scheduled a sentencing hearing in May where he will have the final say over whether Jean-Philippe should die or spend the rest of his life in prison.

Elkie Jean-Philippe's family declined to comment.

Read more at Jacksonville.com: <http://jacksonville.com/news/crime/2011-03-17/story/jury-urges-death-sentence-jacksonville-man-who-killed-wife#ixzz1IHaWIKf9>