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**MAN CONVICTED OF ATTEMPTED MURDER OF TWO-YEAR-
OLD DAUGHTER**

Gerardo Ruiz-Lopez, 42, of Merced, was convicted of attempted murder and felony child abuse, by a Merced County jury on Wednesday afternoon, after he attempted to kill his two-year-old daughter in 2016, Merced County District Attorney Larry D. Morse II announced.

Ruiz-Lopez began sending his ex-girlfriend and the mother of his daughter disturbing texts messages, followed by phone calls on July 10, 2016, while he had custody of their daughter for the weekend. Due to the nature of the text messages and calls, the mother called the Merced Police Department to do a welfare check on Ruiz-Lopez and their daughter.

Once the police arrived at Ruiz-Lopez's home and could not get anyone to answer the door, they forced entry into the home because they feared the child may be in danger. During their search of the home, they found Ruiz-Lopez and his daughter unresponsive and shut in the walk-in closet upstairs. Inside of the closet with them, were two five-gallon propane tanks that were both freely releasing propane gas due to the safety lines being purposely cut. Also in the closet were toys, a tablet and pillows.

The officers immediately picked up the victim's limp body and took her outside, where she received treatment and ultimately survived. When officers spoke to Ruiz-Lopez, he claimed that he did not remember sending the texts, the calls, or taking the propane into the closet, however, the jury did not find that to be true. Ruiz-Lopez also attempted to plead insanity, and the jury found him not legally insane.

"I want to thank the police officer who acted quickly to save the child's life," said Deputy District Attorney Caleb Hegland who prosecuted the case. "I would also like to thank the jurors who gave their time and attention to this trial. The defendant is now facing a life sentence and will hopefully never have the chance to harm a child again," he added.

Ruiz-Lopez will be sentenced at 8:30 a.m. in courtroom 3 of the Merced County Superior Court and faces 7 years-life.