

Children, ages 5, 6 and 7, had their throats cut ear to ear

By LARRY PHILLIPS • Leader & Times A Liberal man who cut the throats of his three young children in October of 2010 will have many years to think about his actions. District Judge Clint Peterson sentenced Garcia Friday to 294 months, or 24.5 years, on three counts of attempted first-degree murder. Garcia had caused the injuries to his children around 6 p.m. Oct. 18, 2010, when officers received a call regarding a report of children being seriously injured in the 300 block of McCray Blvd.

The day after the incident, Liberal Police Capt. Patrick McClurg released a statement: "Responding officers were confronted in the front yard by a 30-year-old man. The man had apparent self-inflicted life threatening wounds. He was subdued by the officers and was taken to Southwest Medical Center by Seward County Emergency Medical Services. He was later flown to Wichita for further medical care." Garcia had cut his own throat after harming the children. "Three children, ages 5, 6 and 7, were located in the residence," McClurg added in the release. "Each of the children had apparent injuries. They were transported to Southwest Medical Center in serious condition. They were later upgraded to stable condition." McClurg said Garcia was arrested upon his release from a Wichita hospital on Friday, Oct. 21, (2010) at approximately 4 p.m.

At his arraignment in early September of 2011, LPD Capt. Jon Antrim testified to the grisly sights he found. Two of the small children were laying face down on the living room floor with large lacerations to their necks. Antrim said while he was trying to stop the bleeding of those two, a third child walked up to him with a "large laceration across his neck," as well. Antrim said all three children had similar injuries and no other injuries were apparent.

Antrim testified all three children had been cut from ear to ear.

Following Antrim's testimony, all three children involved took the stand and stated their father, Garcia, had been responsible for their injuries.

Capt. Antrim testified there was a moderate amount of blood on the living room floor and the

children's clothing and carpet were wet. He also testified he had smelled natural gas at the residence. LPD Officer Sarah Cooley explained her findings to further explain why the children may have been wet.

"There was water running in the bathroom, it was very hot and humid in there," Cooley said. "There was an electrical cord draped over the side of the tub and the water was red. The children were wet."

One of Garcia's children had testified his father had ordered all three of them into the bathtub, but the water was very hot.

"He told us to go into the bathtub," the child said. "I don't know why."

Garcia's common-law wife and mother of the three children testified she had been in Lawrence when he notified her of the children's injuries.

She said Garcia had confronted a man she had begun speaking to late that afternoon. She then said she received a text message from him stating, "I hope you have a happy life." She said approximately two to three minutes later, she had received a text message from Garcia stating he had killed the children.

Garcia's wife said the couple had not been living together since May or June of 2010.

Garcia was kept in jail on a \$1 million bond.

He was found guilty at his trial last month, and he faced his penalties Friday morning.

"He was sentenced on three counts of attempted first degree murder," Seward County Attorney Don Scott said Friday. "He received 172 months on the first count and then 61 months each on the other two counts."