

Man charged with trying to kill family

by UPI

BELLEVILLE, Ill. -- An Illinois man has been charged with attempting to kill his wife and 5-year-old daughter by disconnecting a gas line to the kitchen stove. Gary Smith was in custody in St. Louis County in Missouri, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported. Smith was severely burned when his house in Belleville exploded May 2. At the time, police believed the blast was accidental. Darline Smith and her daughter, Courtney, escaped with minor injuries. Investigators say that Smith tied his wife's wrists and ankles, leaving her in the kitchen, in an effort to kill the entire family. A court in St. Clair County in Illinois granted Darline Smith an emergency order of protection Tuesday. The order allows Smith to talk to his daughter on the telephone. Smith's family released a letter Wednesday saying that he denies the charges. "This is so unbelievable, so unrealistic that this would happen," Smith's sister, Lisa Bates-Smith, told the Belleville Democrat. "I don't know what was definitely going on in their household, but as far as we know, they were a loving couple and this is so hard to believe."

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