



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

6/12/17

**“WINNIE THE POOH” RAPIST SENTENCED TO 150 YEARS TO LIFE
IN PRISON**

On Friday, June 9, 2017, in Department 6 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Gary Paden sentenced Joseph Velasquez, age 28, of Tulare, to 150 years to life in prison for forcible rape and other violent sex crimes.

On April 28, 2017, Velasquez was convicted of one count of forcible rape, two counts of sexual penetration with a foreign object, three counts of oral copulation by force, fear, or duress, one count of sodomy by force, one count of assault with intent to commit a forcible sex act during the commission of a first-degree burglary, and one count of first-degree burglary with a person present. Each count is a felony. The jury also found true the special allegation that Velasquez committed a burglary with the intent to commit a forcible sex offense. The court also found Velasquez possessed a prior prison term in 2013 for stalking in which he called the victim's place of employment repeatedly, arrived at the victim's workplace, and made lewd actions toward her.

At 5:30 pm on July 27, 2014, Velasquez knocked on the door of a Tulare home, and the adult female victim, who was alone and did not know Velasquez, answered. After asking for water and aspirin, Velasquez, who was wearing an ankle monitor, forced his way in to the residence and locked the door. He then sexually assaulted and raped the victim. Velasquez was apprehended in Hanford the next day. He was identified by his tattoos including one of Winnie the Pooh.

In addition to his sentence, Velasquez must register as a sex offender for life.

The case was prosecuted by Supervising Deputy District Attorney Cindy Underwood and investigated by the Tulare Police Department and the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigations.

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