

Instigator of fatal Kansas swatting receives prison sentence

Enlarge / A police SWAT Team at work.

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The teenager who arranged for someone else to phone in a prank police call that resulted in a man's death is going to prison.

Casey Viner, now 19, will serve 15 months in prison and pay \$2,500 restitution, the US District Attorney for Kansas said. After release, Viner will also be barred from online gaming for a period of two years.

Viner admitted in court that in 2017 he argued with a co-defendant, Shane Gaskill, while playing *Call of Duty* online. He then contacted a third person, Tyler Barriss, and asked him to swat Gaskill. Viner, however, had an incorrect address for Gaskill, and Barriss instead sent a swat team to the house of 28-year-old Andrew Finch, who was then shot and killed by police.

Viner also tried to erase records on his phone of his communications with Gaskill following the event. He pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and one count of obstructing justice. (Gaskill struck a deal with prosecutors for deferred prosecution, and charges against him may ultimately be dropped.)

Barriss in March was sentenced to a 20-year prison term following his guilty plea for 50 felonies relating to his role in dozens of swatting crimes, for which he showed little remorse.

“Swatting, and soliciting others to swat someone, are more than foolish,” said US Attorney Stephen McAllister. “Such actions are reckless, dangerous and, as this case proves, potentially tragic. Swatting is not a prank, and it is no way to resolve disputes among gamers. Once again, I call upon gamers to self-police their community to ensure that the practice of swatting is ended once and for all.”

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