



City of Grinnell

...Jewel of the Prairie

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Media Release

Date: January 6th, 2022

Reference: **Press Release: PDI20220014- Police respond to fraudulent "Swatting" call**

Grinnell, IA - January 6th, 2022, 5:48 p.m., Grinnell Police received a call for service, through the Poweshiek County Communications Center, from a male subject claiming to have killed both of his parents with an assault rifle. The male also claimed to have his two siblings tied up as hostages, poured gasoline all over the house, and would kill police and set the house on fire if they approached. Grinnell officers and Poweshiek County deputies tactically deployed resources to the given address, 515 Harrison Ave., as well as requesting mutual aid from the Central Iowa Regional Tactical Team (CIRTT). Our response was substantial, contacting home owners to shelter in place, and setting up a perimeter in a one block area. After evacuating the two occupants and clearing the home, investigation determined the report to be fraudulent. The Pella Police Department reported receiving a similar call for service a short time later which was also proven to be fraudulent in nature. The male caller used actual names of individuals that lived in the home which made the fraudulent report very convincing to first responders.

The Grinnell Police Department is still trying to identify the person who placed the call and will be coordinating our investigation efforts with State and Federal law enforcement agencies.

The actions of this criminal caller created a very real and substantial risk to our first responders and the general public. We are taking all the necessary steps we can to ensure this doesn't happen again.

According to an F.B.I. Public Service Announcement (December 29, 2020)-

"Swatting is a term used to describe a hoax call made to emergency services, typically reporting an immediate threat to human life, to draw a response from law enforcement and the S.W.A.T. team to a specific location. Confusion on the part of homeowners or responding officers has resulted in health-related or violent consequences and pulls limited resources away from valid emergencies.

Swatting may be motivated by revenge, used as a form of harassment, or used as a prank, but it is a serious crime that may have potentially deadly consequences.

Offenders often use spoofing technology to anonymize their own phone numbers to make it appear to first responders as if the emergency call is coming from the victim's phone number. This enhances their credibility when communicating with dispatchers."

A criminal charge is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.