

Shooting killed gamers seeking money for college, support family

By **RUSS BYNUM**
Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — A California man who played video games to earn money for college and a West Virginian whose e-sports winnings helped support his young family were slain at a Florida tournament where a gunman specifically targeted fellow gamers, authorities said Monday.

David Katz, 24, of Baltimore fatally shot himself after killing the two men and wounding 10 others Sunday inside a pizzeria and bar that were hosting a “Madden NFL 19” tournament. Katz was among about 130 gamers attending the competition at a mall in Jacksonville.

Court records in Maryland reviewed by The Associated Press show Katz had previously been hospitalized for mental illness. Divorce filings from his parents say that as an adolescent he was twice hospitalized in psychiatric facilities and was prescribed antipsychotic and antidepressant medications.

Katz carried two handguns, including one equipped with a laser sight, into the tournament venue but only fired one of them, Jacksonville Sheriff Mike Williams told a news conference Monday. He said surveillance video revealed Katz was the only shooter, but his motive remains unknown.

“The suspect clearly tar-



AP Photo/John Raoux

A police officer walks by the front of a Chicago Pizza and GLHF Game Bar on Monday, Aug. 27, 2018, at the scene of fatal shooting on Sunday, at The Jacksonville Landing in Jacksonville, Fla. A gunman opened fire at a video game tournament, killing two people and then fatally shooting himself in a rampage that wounded several others.

geted other gamers who were in the back room” of the pizzeria, Williams said. “The suspect walked past patrons who were in other parts of the business and focused his attention on the gamers.”

Investigators determined Katz bought both guns in Baltimore within the past month. But Williams said there’s no indication he planned the shooting before Sunday.

In a statement Monday evening EA CEO Andrew Wilson said he is canceling the remaining qualifier events to focus on safety.

“We have made a decision to cancel our three remaining Madden Clas-

sic qualifier events while we run a comprehensive review of safety protocols for competitors and spectators.”

The sheriff had previously said nine people were wounded by gunfire, but told reporters Monday the total was 10. All of them, he said, were expected to recover.

The sheriff’s office identified the dead as 22-year-old Elijah Clayton of Woodland Hills, California, and 28-year-old Taylor Robertson of Giles, West Virginia.

Clayton’s parents and other relatives gathered outside police headquarters Monday in Jacksonville to give a brief statement. A cousin, Brandi Pettijohn, said the family was “devas-

tated by yet another senseless act of gun violence.” She said Clayton was a good, peaceful man who never had a fistfight.

“He loved football, and out of all the videogames he could play, he settled on and mastered ‘Madden,’” Pettijohn said. “He made a good living gaming, and he saved his earnings so he could afford to go to college to continue his education.”

Robertson, who used the gamer tag “Spotmeplzzz,” won the Madden Classic tournament in 2016. In a YouTube interview published by EA Sports, Robertson said he had played Madden NFL since he was 10 and started playing competitively a few years ago.

“It’s certainly possible for any player to do this,” Robertson said in the video. “You’ve just got to put in the time. You’ve got to grind. You’ve got to play a lot of games and just working on getting better.”

Fellow gamers described Robertson as a family man dedicated to his wife and children.

Gamer Derek Jones, who lost to Robertson in the 2016 tournament, said his onetime rival was “one of the nicest people I ever met.”

“There’s no way that guy did anything to deserve to get shot,” said Jones, who traveled to the Florida tournament from Santa Fe, New Mexico. “He’s got a family at home, and he just came out here to try to win some money for this family.”

China struggles to curb reliance on U.S. buyers, suppliers

By **JOE MCDONALD**
AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Faced with plunging U.S. orders, surgical glove maker Ren Jiding is hunting for new markets amid Chinese government calls to reduce reliance on the United States. But none can absorb the 60 percent of his sales that went to American customers last year.

“Other countries import much less than the United States,” said Ren, a co-owner of Hongyeshangqin Medical Science and Technology Co., Ltd. in the eastern city of Zibo.

From medical products to smartphone chips to soybeans, Beijing is responding to President Donald Trump’s tariff hikes by pushing companies to trade more with other countries. But there are few substitutes for the United States as an export market and source of technology for industries including telecom equipment makers Chinese leaders are eager to develop.

Beijing has announced tariff cuts and other changes while rejecting U.S. demands to scale back plans such as “Made in China 2025,” which calls for state-led creation of Chinese champions in robotics, biotech and other fields. American leaders say those violate Beijing’s market-opening promises and might erode U.S. industrial leadership.

The response highlights the cost the ruling Communist Party is willing to pay in lost sales and jobs to stick to plans that are fueling conflict with Washington, Europe and other trading partners.

“China sees its technology and industrial policies as fundamental to its growth,” Tianjie He of

Oxford Economics said in an email. “It is thus hard to see China’s leadership committing to significant changes.”

Trump has raised duties on a total of \$50 billion of Chinese imports including ultrasound scanners and industrial components that Washington says benefit from improper policies. China retaliated with similar penalties.

The U.S. is poised to raise duties on \$200 billion of imports including the gloves made by Ren’s company. Beijing has issued a list of American goods for retaliation.

The impact on China is “small and is containable, at least for the time being,” said Vincent Chan of Credit Suisse. He said the “worst case” outlook if all threatened U.S. tariff hikes go ahead would cut China’s growth by 0.2 percentage points this year and 1.3 percent in 2019.

Chinese leaders have tried to cushion the blow to their own economy by targeting American goods its importers can get from other countries — soybeans from Brazil, gas from Russia, cars from Germany and fish from Vietnam.

Beijing has promised to use revenue from the higher tariffs to help struggling exporters and has ordered banks to lend more freely to them.

The biggest jolt so far came from Beijing’s cancellation of orders for soybeans, the biggest American export to China at \$21 billion last year.

That hammered farm states that voted for Trump in the 2016 election. It also pushed up prices for Chinese farmers that use soybeans for animal feed and food processors that crush them for cooking oil.

Under pressure, Trump tersely recognizes McCain, lowers flag

WASHINGTON (AP) — Glowering in public and near-silent for two days, President Donald Trump relented under pressure Monday by tersely recognizing Sen. John McCain’s “service to our country” and re-lowering the White House flag.

While much of the nation remembered McCain’s record as a war hero, longtime senator and presidential nominee over the weekend, Trump had nursed his griev-

ances. McCain had been an infuriating foil in a long-running feud over style and policy that did not end with the senator’s illness and death.

Trump’s reluctance to participate in the national remembrance was awkward and uncomfortable, even by the standards of a leader who acknowledges he doesn’t act like a typical president. The episode highlighted the outsider president’s impulse to harbor personal resent-

ments regardless of political repercussions.

Before Trump’s Monday afternoon statement, his only commentary on McCain’s death had been a perfunctory tweet Saturday. The lack of a formal statement — combined with the fact that White House flags were flown at half-staff only briefly — drew strong criticism from Republicans and veterans’ groups as well as Democrats.

When he finally did com-

ment, in a printed statement, Trump was sparing with his praise for the six-term senator: “Despite our differences on policy and politics, I respect Senator John McCain’s service to our country.”

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-From the 2018 Umatilla County Fair Board & Staff-

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