Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Investigative Report

2022-1564
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 1132 Ashwood Drive, South Charleston, OH (L)

Investigative Activity:	Interview with Officer
Involves:	Det. Brian Melchi (W)
Date of Activity:	08/16/2022
Activity Location:	East District CCSO – Business – 3130 East Main Street, Springfield, OH 45502, Clark County
Author:	SA Kenneth J. Smith, #53

Narrative:

On July 24, 2022, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) was requested to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) that took place at 1132 Ashwood Drive, South Charleston, Clark County. During the OICI, Deputy Matthew Yates was shot and killed by subject Cole White after White had killed his mother Jodie Arbuckle. Multiple agencies and SWAT teams responded and attempted multiple rescue attempts of Deputy Yates. During the standoff, the mobile home caught fire and White was killed in the fire.

On August 16, 2022, at 1209 hours, BCI Special Agents Richard Ward (SA Ward) and Kenneth Smith (SA Smith) interviewed Clark County Detective Brian Melchi (Detective Melchi) regarding his involvement in the OICI. FOP OLC Attorney John Sauter was present. The interview was conducted at the CCSO East District Office at 3130 E. Main Street, Springfield. The interview was recorded on a handheld digital recording device.

The details below summarize the pertinent portions of the recorded interview and are not a verbatim account. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview and may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full audio recording be reviewed to clarify the content of the interview.

Detective Melchi has been employed with the Clark County Sheriff's Office for 22 years. He has been assigned as a general assignment Detective for 8 years. His normal workdays are Monday through Friday from 8am to 4pm.

On the morning of July 24, 2022, Detective Melchi was working an extra duty detail at Ohio Edison with his radio on when he heard the shots fired call to 1132 Ashwood Drive dispatched. He was dressed in his BDU pants and sheriff's office polo in his unmarked detective vehicle. He

was approximately 6 to 7 minutes away. Det. Melchi called Sgt. Stalder and told him that he would respond. Det. Melchi was also aware that the road deputies typically have to run short handed on the weekends. Sgt. Stalder and Deputy Yates were responding and Deputy Risner had agreed to leave Morefield Township (where she was a contract car) to assist.

When Detective Melchi arrived on scene, Deputy Yates and Sgt. Stalder had been on scene for a minute or two. They were over talking to a lady who was screaming, gathering information, while Detective Melchi talked to a neighbor who reported hearing two to three shots, then a single shot after a pause. Detective Melchi relayed the information to Sgt. Stalder thinking they could possibly be dealing with a murder–suicide. The woman screaming at Stalder and Yates was yelling that her wife had been shot and that they had to save her. Detective Melchi asked for a phone number for the guy, which no one had. Sgt. Stalder asked, "Do we want to clear the house?" Detective Melchi suggested that they wait for Deputy Risner, so that they would have four people on scene.

Once Deputy Risner arrived, the four of them stacked up on the door. There were windows open on the residence and they were announcing, "Sheriff's Office make yourself known". Deputy Yates goes up and tries the door which was locked. Deputy Yates then tried to kick the door in but it proved difficult. Deputy Yates was armed with a shotgun and the others all had their handguns. Deputy Risner tells Deputy Yates to "just mule kick it," Deputy Yates does and gains entry. While still announcing themselves the deputies enter the door. There is an open living room area to the right and a blind corner to the left. Sgt. Stalder told Detective Melchi to watch the window to the left. Deputy Yates goes in and Sgt. Stalder was on the platform. Deputy Yates took maybe two steps in and turned to the left and that's when Detective Melchi heard two shots and then Deputy Yates went down and all he could see was his feet near the doorway. Sgt. Stalder called out, "shots fired". Detective Melchi stated that he had seen nothing in terms of where the shots had come from. The others retreated and begin calling for additional units.

Eventually the CCSO SWAT vehicle pulled up right in front of the trailer and several CCSO SWAT members stacked up to go get Deputy Yates out of the mobile home. As they got to the doorway the subject again began firing at deputies. The SWAT deputies retreated under fire and Detective Melchi stated that the fire then seemed to be directed towards the armored vehicle, he believes through the window. Detective Melchi's unmarked explorer had it's windshield shot out.

Detective Melchi later retrieved a drone for one of the SWAT operators on the CCSO Team. He was relieved of his perimeter position and he remained on scene until he was directed to go to the school for the debriefing.

Detective Melchi, nor Deputies Yates, Risner or Sgt. Stalder fired their weapons according to Detective Melchi.

The interview was concluded at 1226 hours.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2022-08-16 / Det. Brian Melchi audio interview

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.