



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



2024-2620
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 4206 Northridge Rd.,
Alexandria, OH 43001 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Deputy Nicholas Dewitt (W)
Date of Activity: 08/30/2024
Activity Location: Licking County Sheriff's Office – Business – 155 East Main Street,
Newark, OH 43055
Author: SA Craig Call

Narrative:

On August 30, 2024, the Licking County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) requested the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) at 4206 Northridge Road, Alexandria, Ohio, involving officers with the LCSO, the Johnstown Police Department (JPD), and Doug Plott (Plott). Plott was ultimately shot by responding officers and succumbed to his injuries.

There were three initial responding officers. LCSO [REDACTED] and JPD [REDACTED] were identified as officers discharging their firearms during the incident with LCSO Deputy Nicholas Dewitt (Deputy Dewitt) being witness to the incident.

On September 9, 2024, Deputy DeWitt, accompanied by Attorney Bob Sauter, met with BCI Special Agents Craig Call (SA Call) and Aja Chung (SA Chung) in order to provide BCI with a statement of his involvement in the above incident.

Prior to the interview, SA Call provided Deputy DeWitt with BCI's Criminal Investigation Notification (CIN) form and asked him to review the form and ask any clarification questions he may have. Deputy DeWitt acknowledged he understood the purpose of the CIN and signed the CIN at approximately 1012 hours.

Prior to the date of the interview, Deputy DeWitt prepared a written witness statement detailing his involvement in the above incident. The written statement is approximately seven (7) pages in length with one sentence continuing onto the eighth (8) page, which Deputy DeWitt signed and provided to SA Call for the case file. The first two pages of the statement contains employment background, training history, and other foundational information about Deputy DeWitt while the remaining information is related to the above incident. Quotes from

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the statement will be used during this report, however the statement in its entirety has been attached for further reference.

Deputy DeWitt agreed to answer any follow up questions with Attorney Sauter present. The audio interview began at approximately 1018 hours.

In reference to the events immediately surrounding the shooting, Deputy DeWitt wrote the following:

"██████████ and ██████████ got the East side screen door open. I moved to the East side of the house to give cover to ██████████. They then went into an entry mudroom. The mudroom was filled with items and another thicker door facing the north that I suspected led into the main house. I did not like how small the mudroom was and the angle I would have to take on the door was a tactical nightmare so I stayed back at the screen door. ██████████ informed me that he wanted my rifle up at the main door with them. I was now at the door facing opposite the handle and I knew that I would be the first one seen, and the first to see someone.

██████████ advised he was kicking the door and I confirmed that he was good to do so. ██████████ kicked the door open and I saw Mr. Plott standing immediately off to the left of the door. Mr. Plott was holding two (2) long kitchen knives and waiting for someone to come through the door. I began yelling at him to drop the knives. I yelled multiple times.

I told ██████████ to start backing out of the room since they were close to Mr. Plott and I was not able to shoot with them in front of me. As they were backing up, Mr. Plott was telling us to kill him. I kept repeatedly telling him to drop the knives and he turned around and ran west into the darkness of the home.

I then heard Mr. Plott call out, "Now we're both going to die." After he said this, I heard a loud bang that sounded like a door being kicked in. This occurred in the Southwest side of the home. ██████████ entered the home and I followed after. I went through the threshold and saw a large fire burning in the living room. Smoke had filled the top of the room and everything was turning black. Since I had lost sight of Mr. Plott and I knew ██████████ were in front of me, I began looking down the halls to ensure Mr. Plott was not going to run up on us from the darkness.

I then heard a female screaming followed by a lot of yelling and two (2) gunshots from within a room. I moved into the room to see ██████████ standing with his gun pointed towards the Southwest corner of the room. ██████████ was off to his left. In the corner was Mr. Plott and Ms. Bell, he was lying on her and there was blood coming out of his head.

I had to set my rifle down to assist ██████████ with getting Ms. Bell out of the home. I left ██████████ to hold the room while I went outside with Ms. Bell and ██████████. In the driveway, Ms. Bell told us she was okay. She had blood all over her so I had her take off her robe to make sure she was not unknowingly stabbed or cut. I left ██████████ outside with Ms. Bell and I went back inside."

Deputy DeWitt did not fire his firearm during the incident, has since reviewed his body worn

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Approved By SA James A. Mulford on
09/24/2024

camera, and wrote the following in reference to his involvement:

"I had no prior contact with Mr. Plott before the incident.

I did not use lethal force or discharge my weapon in this incident.

My statement is made from the best of my recollection as to the incident on August 30, 2024. After preparing the statement, I viewed the body camera footage and other video on September 3, 2024.

After viewing the videos, I note the following changes to my statement:

- *I was with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] when they opened the screen door to the mudroom;*
- *When Mr. Plott ran West into the house, his statement of "Now we're both going to die," was made after the loud bangs that I believed to be him kicking in the door, not before;*
- *I was behind [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] when I heard the shots fired, as we were moving in a single file line into the room;*
- *Sergeant Snodgrass entered the mudroom as I was checking Ms. Bell for injuries and he then followed after me when I went back into the house;*
- *[REDACTED] was the one who moved the chair out of the way so we could move Mr. Plott;*
- *Three (3) total shots were fired, not two (2)."*

Deputy DeWitt did answer some clarification questions which were consistent with his signed written witness statement.

The interview was concluded at approximately 1040 hours.

References:

No references.

Attachments:

- Attachment # 01: Dewitt CIN
- Attachment # 02: Dewitt Signed Statement
- Attachment # 03: LCSO Deputy Dewitt Interview

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Ohio Attorney General's Office Bureau of Criminal Investigation



Criminal Investigation Notification

1. This investigation is being conducted in order to determine whether any criminal laws have been violated on the part of those involved in this incident. Specifically, to collect facts and information to be provided to the prosecutor and/or grand jury in order for them to determine whether the conduct involved is authorized or prohibited by criminal statutes.
2. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may decline to answer or cease the interview at any time. You are entitled to have an attorney present if you wish.
3. The criminal investigation is separate from any internal, administrative investigation which your employer may or may not be independently conducting. You are not being compelled to give any statement or answer any questions. This is not a "Garrity" interview (where you could be required to answer).

Nicholas DeWitt
Printed Name of Interviewee

09/09/2024 10:12
Date / Time

Nicholas DeWitt
Signature of Interviewee

SA. T. Call
BCI Agent (Printed)

SA. T. Craig Call
BCI Agent (Signature)

Statement of Deputy Nicholas DeWitt, Licking County Sheriff's Office,
Regarding Incident on August 30, 2024

I. Background.

I began my employment with the Licking County Sheriff's Office ("Licking County SO"), as a Reserve Deputy, on or about July 7, 2020. I started my full-time employment with the Licking County SO as a Deputy Sheriff on or about June 5, 2021. I completed my Basic Police Officer Training at Columbus State Community College Police Academy, graduating in May 2019.

I attended Pickerington High School Central and graduated in 2017. I also attended Columbus State Community College for two (2) years, where I received my OPATA certification. I have no prior military service.

My current supervisor is Sergeant John Snodgrass. My regularly assigned work hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. My regularly assigned workdays are Thursday through Monday with Tuesday and Wednesday off.

My current assignment is as a Patrol Deputy. I also serve as a Field Training Officer ("FTO") and as part of the Crisis Intervention Team ("CIT").

I wear prescription glasses. I do not wear any hearing aids. I am under no physical disability. I take two (2) prescription medications which are known to the Licking County SO. These prescription medications do not impede my ability to perform my duties as a law enforcement officer. I had consumed no alcohol within eight (8) hours prior to the beginning of my shift on the date of the incident.

As a law enforcement officer, I have never received any discipline relative to use of force. I have never been the subject of any Internal Affairs investigation relative to use of force. In my law enforcement career, I have never before used lethal force. However, there have been occasions in which I have used less than lethal force, by use of my hands. Such uses have been reviewed and been found to be within Departmental Policy.

I am familiar with the Licking County SO's Use of Force Policy, as we are trained on it yearly. I was most recently trained on the policy on March 11, 2024.

I carry a Glock 19 handgun as my primary duty weapon which was issued to me by the Licking County SO. I last qualified for this weapon in June of 2024. I carry three (3) magazines, one (1) of which is in the firearm, with fifteen (15) rounds of ammunition in each magazine. I do not carry a backup weapon.

At the time of the incident, I was carrying a Black Rain rifle which was also issued to me by the Licking County SO. I last qualified for this weapon in October or November of 2023.

On my duty belt, I carry (clockwise) the following: magazine pouch, keys, taser, tourniquet, radio, flashlight, handcuffs, baton and handgun. On my outer vest, I carry a personal knife.

On Wednesday, August 28, I was on my day off. On Thursday, August 29, I worked my regular shift from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with approximately one (1) hour of overtime thereafter. Prior to the incident on August 30, I performed routine patrol duties. At the time of the incident, I was in the process of responding to my first call of the day.

I was well-rested prior to the incident as I had slept approximately six (6) to six and one half (6.5) hours Thursday night through Friday morning.

On the date of the incident, I was dressed in my prescribed regular Licking County SO uniform.

I was wearing a body camera in accordance with the Licking County SO policy. My body camera, both audio and video, was working during the incident. I carried no personal recording device.

My cruiser, Unit 274, did have in-dash video and it was recording at the time of the incident. My call number is 42.

II. Incident Narrative.

On August 30, 2024, I was dispatched to 4206 Northridge Rd for a physical domestic. Dispatch advised the caller's sister, later identified as Diane Bell, was trapped in her bedroom at this location. The caller stated his brother, later identified as Douglas Plott, had knives and was trying to kill Ms. Bell along with himself. Dispatch advised the caller was receiving the information from his mother, who was on the phone with Ms. Bell. There were also notes that Mr. Plott may have had a gun as well.

Prior to my arrival, Dispatch and Sergeant Snodgrass asked the Johnstown Police Department ("Johnstown PD") to assist me since I was the only West Unit in the district and I was not far from the home. Johnstown PD [REDACTED] marked on the radio and advised he would be enroute with me.

I was the first to arrive on scene and noticed the driveway was U-shaped. Pulling into the North driveway to ensure I had better cover and was not heading directly to the house, I stopped at the Northeast corner of the property. I did not see anyone outside nor did I hear any sound coming from the house.

I withdrew my Glock from its holster and began walking around the house. I started looking for possible points of entry into the home and I was trying to see if anyone was inside. I walked counterclockwise around the home starting from the North side. While doing my initial surveillance, I still did not hear or see anyone inside the home.

After I walked around the home, I stayed near the Northeast corner and waited for [REDACTED] to arrive on scene. Once he was on scene and with me, I got my rifle out from my cruiser. We then made another trip around the house, though we still did not see or hear anything.

While waiting on the East side of the home, Dispatch informed us that they were now on the phone with Ms. Bell. Dispatch stated that she had seen Mr. Plott outside her window and he had a gun. I

had not heard any doors or windows open and close. I informed Dispatch that it was most likely me that she had seen.

I asked Dispatch to have Ms. Bell open her window, but they advised she had an air conditioning unit on the only window in the room and she was unable to open it. I then moved to a window on the Southwest corner of the home and began knocking on it, but I received no response and I still did not see anyone inside. Dispatch also never informed me if Ms. Bell was able to hear me.

I moved back to the East side of the home. [REDACTED] arrived on scene and parked her cruiser near us. [REDACTED] began giving loud verbal commands for Mr. Plott to come outside.

[REDACTED] moved to the back door with [REDACTED] while I stayed a distance away with my rifle and covered them. While I did think Ms. Bell had seen me outside her window, I did not feel comfortable not watching the North side of the house just in case Mr. Plott was outside with us. Dispatch asked if Mr. Plott's Buick was in the driveway; I found it to be on the North side.

I moved to the North corner and was informed that Ms. Bell was able to hear a smoke alarm. I moved up to the corner itself and peered out around the North side of the house where I found no one. I would have done this from further away, but there were too many windows on the home. I also started to suspect Ms. Bell's bedroom was on the North side of the home since I got no reaction to the Southwest. Due to multiple windows having ac-units on them, I became even further confused with where she could be.

Just after checking the North side, I was near a window with an AC-unit on it. For the first time, I could smell smoke from what I know is caused by fire. I informed Dispatch that I could hear the fire alarm and smell smoke.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] got the East side screen door open. I moved to the East side of the house to give cover to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They then went into

an entry mudroom. The mudroom was filled with items and another thicker door facing the north that I suspected led into the main house. I did not like how small the mudroom was and the angle I would have to take on the door was a tactical nightmare so I stayed back at the screen door. [REDACTED] informed me that he wanted my rifle up at the main door with them. I was now at the door facing opposite the handle and I knew that I would be the first one seen, and the first to see someone.

[REDACTED] advised he was kicking the door and I confirmed that he was good to do so. [REDACTED] kicked the door open and I saw Mr. Plott standing immediately off to the left of the door. Mr. Plott was holding two (2) long kitchen knives and waiting for someone to come through the door. I began yelling at him to drop the knives. I yelled multiple times.

I told [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to start backing out of the room since they were close to Mr. Plott and I was not able to shoot with them in front of me. As they were backing up, Mr. Plott was telling us to kill him. I kept repeatedly telling him to drop the knives and he turned around and ran west into the darkness of the home.

I then heard Mr. Plott call out, "Now we're both going to die." After he said this, I heard a loud bang that sounded like a door being kicked in. This occurred in the Southwest side of the home. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] entered the home and I followed after. I went through the threshold and saw a large fire burning in the living room. Smoke had filled the top of the room and everything was turning black. Since I had lost sight of Mr. Plott and I knew [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in front of me, I began looking down the halls to ensure Mr. Plott was not going to run up on us from the darkness.

I then heard a female screaming followed by a lot of yelling and two (2) gunshots from within a room. I moved into the room to see [REDACTED] standing with his gun pointed towards the Southwest corner of the room. [REDACTED] was off to his left. In the corner was Mr. Plott and Ms. Bell, he was lying on her and there was blood coming out of his head.

I had to set my rifle down to assist [REDACTED] with getting Ms. Bell out of the home. I left [REDACTED] to hold the room while I went outside with Ms. Bell and [REDACTED]. In the driveway, Ms. Bell told us she was okay. She had blood all over her so I had her take off her robe to make sure she was not unknowingly stabbed or cut. I left [REDACTED] outside with Ms. Bell and I went back inside.

Sergeant Snodgrass was now on scene and inside the room when I went back in. The room was quickly filling with smoke. Sergeant Snodgrass stated we were going to lose the scene and we needed to get Mr. Plott out. He moved the chair out of his way and grabbed Mr. Plott by his legs, dragging him out of the room. [REDACTED] helped him. Before he left the room, Sergeant Snodgrass informed me to try and get as much of the room on my body camera before I left.

Due to getting both people out of the corner, one of the knives was sitting off the East side wall away from the corner Mr. Plott and Ms. Bell had been in. In the corner, there was blood on both walls and on the floor. I was unable to find the second knife that I had seen Mr. Plott holding when we kicked the door in.

The room was filled with smoke and I was now unable to breathe. I decided that I was no longer able to safely be in the house so I grabbed my rifle and made my way out into the main room. Black smoke had now completely filled the home and the fire was even larger. Fiery debris was falling from the ceiling as I made my way out to the mudroom.

Once I exited the residence, I put my rifle away and grabbed gloves. I began helping Deputy Williams #13 with doing CPR on Mr. Plott. I took over and did CPR for a few minutes before being relieved by Deputy Donahue.

Lieutenant Carson was now on scene and asked if I had shot my gun. I informed him no. I then went and found a medic to ask if they had albuterol since I did not have my emergency inhaler and I could feel my lungs tightening. The medics put me in a squad and I inhaled some medicine that helped.

After I was removed from the squad, I was placed into a cruiser along with Deputy Donahue, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Deputy Donahue then drove us back to the Licking County SO.

The weather on the date of the incident was warm and sunny and there was no significant change in the weather during the time of the incident. At the time of the incident, there was daylight outside. However, it was dark in the residence with some light coming from the fire. There was light in the room where the incident occurred coming from an overhead light and at least one (1) window.

I had no prior contact with Mr. Plott before the incident.

I did not use lethal force or discharge my weapon in this incident.

My statement is made from the best of my recollection as to the incident on August 30, 2024. After preparing the statement, I viewed the body camera footage and other video on September 3, 2024.

After viewing the videos, I note the following changes to my statement:

- I was with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] when they opened the screen door to the mudroom;
- When Mr. Plott ran West into the house, his statement of “Now we’re both going to die,” was made after the loud bangs that I believed to be him kicking in the door, not before;
- I was behind [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] when I heard the shots fired, as we were moving in a single file line into the room;
- Sergeant Snodgrass entered the mudroom as I was checking Ms. Bell for injuries and he then followed after me when I went back into the house;
- [REDACTED] was the one who moved the chair out of the way so we could move Mr. Plott;
- Three (3) total shots were fired, not two (2).

I wish to cooperate with this investigation and am prepared to answer any questions which you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

 #412

Deputy Nicholas DeWitt

09/09/2024

Date