



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



2024-1814
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 8401 South Dixie Highway,
Rudolph, Ohio 43462

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Christopher Reynolds (W)
Date of Activity: 06/21/2024
Activity Location: Wood County Sheriffs Office – Business – 1960 East Gypsy Lane
Road, Bowling Green, OH 43402
Author: SA Joshua S. Rammel, #175

Narrative:

On June 21, 2024, Special Agent (SA) Josh Rammel (Rammel) and SA Jason Snyder (Snyder) conducted an interview with Sergeant Chris Reynolds (Reynolds) of the Wood County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) regarding the Officer Involved Critical Incident (OICI) involving the WCSO and deceased individual George Eric Taylor (Eric) that occurred on June 16, 2024, at 8401 South Dixie Highway, Rudolph, Ohio.

The interview was conducted at the WCSO located at 1960 East Gypsy Lane Road, Bowling Green, Ohio. Also present during the interview was George Gerken (Gerken) of the Ohio Patrolman's Benevolent Association (OPBA).

The interview was recorded using a digital audio recorder. A copy of the recording was attached to this investigation.

The interview began with everyone present introducing themselves. SA Rammel then informed Reynolds that the interview was completely voluntary, and that Reynolds was not under any criminal investigation, nor was he a suspect of an investigation. SA Rammel continued with telling Reynolds that the door was only closed for privacy reasons and that Reynolds could end the interview at any time. Reynolds advised that he understood and agreed to continue with the interview.

Reynolds provided basic identification information such as his date of birth (June 20, 1991), unit number W27, and that he has been a police officer for 11 years all with the WCSO and became a Sergeant in July 2022. Reynolds advised that during the course of the OICI on June 16, 2024, he was wearing his uniform-of-the-day which is an Ohio Deputy Sheriff's uniform. Reynolds stated that he worked the 6pm-6am shift and his days on duty were June 14-June 16 that week. Reynolds indicated that he was well rested and did not work any overtime

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leading up to the day of the shooting. Reynolds said he does wear corrective lenses but that the residence was well lit. Miller stated that he was wearing a body camera assigned directly to him and it was active. Reynolds confirmed that he was certified in Critical Incident Training (CRT), but he did not remember how long ago the training was.

Reynolds was provided the opportunity to start at the very beginning of the call-for-service to 8401 South Dixie Highway and described the events leading up to the death of Eric and all that occurred.

Reynolds indicated that the WCSO was originally dispatched when a "third party caller" who was speaking with Eric contacted 911 for a wellness check on Eric due to comments that Eric was making that were suicidal. WCSO Deputies Michael Shaffer (Shaffer) and Samuel Miller (Miller) were the first on scene and were inside the residence speaking with Eric and Eric's friend Matt Patton (Patton) when Reynolds arrived.

Shaffer eventually requested that Reynolds switch positions with him inside the residence due to Eric having a negative reaction to Shaffer's presence, and no progress being made. Reynolds took Shaffer's place as Shaffer went to the driveway area outside the garage. Reynolds advised that Miller was approximately 20 feet from Eric with a coffee table between them and Reynolds was about 40 feet from Eric near the front door of the residence with a couch between him and Eric.

Reynolds mentioned that he initially saw Eric holding a large straight blade knife to his own neck and had a letter attached to his hoodie. Reynolds noticed that Miller had his firearm ready in a low position and Shaffer also had his firearm out, so Reynolds decided not to pull his firearm. Patton was present near Shaffer's location attempting to help calm Eric. Reynolds indicated that Eric also had a large glass bottle of "Tito's" vodka that Eric would keep picking up and putting back down. Reynolds believed that Eric drank a large amount of the Tito's and appeared to be highly intoxicated.

Reynolds told SA Rammel that "they were there for a long time", approximately two hours and apologized if his memory of events were out of order from when they actually occurred. SA Rammel expressed that it was not an issue.

Reynolds indicated that Eric did not like Shaffer and was upset with the WCSO for being in his house. Reynolds described Eric's emotions as being "up and down" ranging from wanting help to appearing to want the WCSO to "kill him (Eric)".

Eric told Reynolds that if Reynolds followed the "instructions on my (Eric's) chest" he would put his knife down. Reynolds had Patton retrieve the note on Eric's hoodie and Reynolds attempted to read them in the room as he was paying attention to Eric as well. Reynolds decided to exit the living room and called Eric's wife Jessica Taylor (Jessica) in order to read her the note and inform Jessica about what was happening. Reynolds got Jessica's voicemail and read some of the note. Reynolds described some of the note and mentioned that it contained comments about how much he loved Jessica and her kids and that Eric apologized for their issues. Reynolds described the note as appearing to be a "suicide note".

After reading the note Eric put his knife down on a side table next to where he was standing,

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but still within reach. Eric remained emotional before picking the knife back up. Reynolds again expressed that Eric kept switching back and forth from wanting help to being standoffish. Reynolds advised that Eric kept making comments such as "are you ready?" or "it's time to play the game". Reynolds and Miller kept telling Eric that they did not want to play any games and just wanted to get Eric help. Eventually Eric wanted Shaffer to come back into the house, which Reynolds complied. Eric proceeded to challenge Shaffer again at which time Reynolds directed Shaffer to go back outside of the house. While Shaffer was outside in the garage, Patton informed him that Eric had several guns in the house and maybe had a firearm on his person. Shaffer provided that information to Reynolds through text as Reynolds and Miller were continuing to talk with Eric.

Patton eventually asked Eric where his handgun, which Patton knew Eric normally carried, was because it was no longer on the kitchen table where Patton saw it earlier in the day. Eric proceeded to reach into the storage compartment in the couch that Eric was sitting on. Eric kept "digging around" in the compartment and would "react" towards Reynolds trying to give the impression that he had a gun in his hand. Reynolds mentioned that he did not know what Eric's intentions were, but Eric kept acting like he had a gun in his hand behind his back and the visible knife in his other hand. Reynolds advised that Eric got up from the couch and kept walking towards Reynolds and Miller with the knife in one hand and acting like a gun was in his other hand. Reynolds told SA Rammel that he could see Eric's hand while he was reaching into the couch compartment so Reynolds did not believe that Eric had a handgun on him at that time, but he could not be absolutely sure. This caused Reynolds and Miller to back up out of the house, Miller through the garage and Reynolds through the front door. Patton was in the garage as well. Reynolds stated that after backing Miller and Reynolds up out of the house, Eric entered into the large bedroom near the garage and closed the door. Patton informed Reynolds that the bedroom Eric was in may be where all his guns were.

Eric eventually exited the bedroom and came to the doorway into the garage. Eric had a shotgun on his hand but holding it "like he (Eric) was presenting it" not in an offensive posture. Reynolds described his location as being on the right side of the driveway next to the white truck where Reynolds could see the garage door and the front door. Miller was on the left side of the driveway able to see into the garage and the garage door leading into the house. Miller kept telling Eric to "put the gun down" multiple times as Miller had his gun drawn on Eric. Patton was located at the entrance of the garage between Reynolds and Eric. Patton was also trying to get Eric to put the shotgun down and kept telling Eric that the deputies "were not going to play your game" and that they did not want to shoot Eric. Reynolds stated that his view was obstructed by the truck and could not clearly see everything that Eric was doing inside the house. Eventually Patton walked up to Eric to take possession of the shotgun with Eric's agreeance, but Eric "snatched it back" and closed the door leading into the house.

A few minutes later Reynolds advised that Eric came back out of the door and put the shotgun down next to him. Eric kept telling Miller to come back into the house in order to talk with him, but Miller and Reynolds declined to enter the house again and kept trying to get Eric to come outside to speak with them. Reynolds mentioned that Eric took off his hoodie in order to show Miller that he did not have any additional guns in his waistband. Patton took that opportunity to approach Eric and take possession of the shotgun Eric had. Patton placed the

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shotgun next to Reynolds and the truck in the driveway. As Patton was removing the shotgun Reynolds stated that Eric reached around the corner of the garage door leading into the house and pulled out a "black AR style rifle". Reynolds described Eric holding the rifle different than he did the shotgun. Reynolds advised that Eric was holding the rifle in a "shooting posture" and kept repeating "are you ready Sam?" towards Miller. Eric proceeded to lift the rifle, aiming towards Miller, while continuing to be in the shooting posture. Reynolds described Eric as being partially behind cover in the doorway as Eric appeared to be raising the rifle aiming towards Miller. Reynolds stated at that time he took complete cover behind the truck and "stopped watching" what Eric was doing. Reynolds indicated that Miller kept saying "put the gun down, put the gun down, put the gun down". Reynolds said that Miller kept repeating the phrase trying to get Eric to put the gun down and that was when Reynolds heard the "pop" of a gunshot. Reynolds mentioned that Patton was in the process of walking toward Reynolds with his back to Eric when the gunshot occurred. Reynolds stated that he did not know who had made the shot, and from the way it sounded Reynolds initially believed it was Eric. Reynolds mentioned that he thought a shootout was going to occur and that was why he took cover. Reynolds believed that Eric had the advantage on them, and it was going to be "very bad".

Reynolds advised that after the shot occurred Patton asked, "who shot?" and Miller replied "he (Eric) pointed a gun at me". Patton started yelling and becoming emotional as Reynolds and Miller went to the front door to try and see if they could locate Eric inside the residence. The front door had been locked by Eric. Reynolds and Miller could see Eric lying on the floor, so they entered through the garage door. Eric was making a few noises like he was struggling for breath. Reynolds advised that Miller moved the rifle away from Eric's reach and Reynolds and Miller began to provide medical attention to Eric as they called for EMS. Miller unlocked and opened the front door so that EMS could enter quickly. Once EMS arrived, they appeared to know Eric, and one of the medics even asked, "why did you shoot him?". Reynolds described one of the medics "Kristy" as being hysterical and telling the WCSO that they should not have shot him.

Reynolds stated that during the course of the interaction with Eric, the WCSO gave Eric commands more than 20 times to either put down the knife and go to the hospital. Eric also made comments such as "are you ready?" or playing some form of game at least 20 times during the interaction. Reynolds stated that he was "analyzing every possibility" and considered contacting the Special Response Team (SRT). During that time Reynolds determined the best course of action was to keep talking with Eric because there appeared to be the possibility that Eric was going to agree to go to the hospital.

Reynolds stated that Patton being present was both a negative and positive. Reynolds advised that if Patton was not present it would have been easier to retreat in the event it was needed because they would not have to worry about Patton's safety. Reynolds described Eric as being "very protective" of Patton and that Reynolds did not think Eric would put Patton in harm's way. Reynolds also advised that Patton "was not going to leave his friend" so it would have caused more issues if the WCSO tried to get Patton to leave.

Reynolds indicated that he "considered" using less lethal on Eric but based on the rapport the WCSO appeared to have with Eric, Reynolds thought that using less lethal on Eric may not

work. Reynolds mentioned that due to Eric's location and clothing the less lethal may not work in general and they may lose the rapport they did have with Eric if the less lethal failed and caused Eric to get angrier.

Reynolds stated that he reviewed his body camera prior to the interview.

At that time SA Rammel inquired if there was any additional information that Reynolds believed was important that SA Rammel did not specifically ask. Reynolds indicated that he did not believe so.

Reynolds did not have any additional questions and the interview concluded with Gerken describing to the Reynolds how the process was going to proceed at this point.

This report only summarizes the information deemed by the author to be of the most relevance to the investigation and does not purport to contain all questions and answers from the interview. 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 recording be reviewed to clarify any content or contextual questions regarding the information from the interview.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: chris reynolds interview 2024-06-21