



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



2023-2057

Officer-Involved Critical Incident- 6900 Block S. High St, Columbus

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer

Involves: ██████████ ██████████

Activity Date: 8/15/2023

Activity Location: Law Offices of Harshman and Wannemacher

Authoring Agent: SA Matt Collins, #151

**Narrative:**

On Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 0954 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Matt Collins (SA Collins) and SA Chad Holcomb (SA Holcomb) interviewed City of Columbus-Division of Police (CPD) ██████████ (██████████ ██████████ (██████████), who was accompanied by his attorney, Lathan Lipperman, from the Law Offices of Harshman and Wannemacher, contracted with the Fraternal Order of Police. The interview took place at the Law Offices of Harshman and Wannemacher. The interview was audio recorded.

██████████ ██████████ read, understood, and signed the BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form.

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. Also, ██████████ did not know the subject's name at the time of the incident. For clarity purposes, the subject's name, Zachary Bryson's (Bryson), will be utilized in this report.



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**Preliminary and Demographic Information:**

<b>Name:</b> [REDACTED]	<b>Rank:</b> [REDACTED] ([REDACTED])
<b>Badge Number:</b> [REDACTED]	<b>Cruiser/Vehicle Number:</b> [REDACTED]
<b>Radio Call Sign:</b> [REDACTED]	<b>Immediate Supervisor:</b> Jennifer Mancini; Matt Jenkins
<b>Radio Channel Utilized:</b>	
<b>Cruiser Description:</b> SUV	<b>Occupants of Cruiser and Seating Positions:</b> 1
<b>Assignment:</b> Midwatch Patrol	<b>Normal Shift:</b> 1900-0500; Z5E2-5
<b>In-Car Camera:</b> Operational, But Not Used	<b>Spotlight:</b> Present & Utilized
<b>Emergency Lights:</b> Present & Utilized	<b>Siren:</b> Present; Not Used
<b>Shift Day of Incident:</b> 1900-0500; Would have been his Monday	<b>Duty Status:</b> On-Duty
<b>Days Off:</b> Tue/Wed/Thurs	<b>Prior Overtime or Extra Details within Preceding 48 Hours:</b> No
	<b>Consider Self Well Rested?:</b> Yes
<b>Total Length as Officer:</b> 16yrs	<b>Length at Current Agency:</b> [REDACTED]
<b>Physical Disabilities (to include hearing aid):</b> No	<b>Corrective Lenses:</b> No Corrective Lenses
<b>Uniform Worn:</b> Summer patrol uniform; Navy pants, navy short-sleeved shirt with badge, including a CPD Hat	<b>Equipment and Less-Lethal Options Carried on Person/Belt/Vest:</b> equipped with a baton and not a taser
<b>Ballistic Vest:</b> Concealed Armor	<b>Body Worn Camera:</b> Present & Used
<b>Other Recording Devices:</b> No	<b>Partner:</b> No
<b>Injuries:</b> No	<b>Equipment Damage:</b> No
<b>Training or Areas of Specialty:</b> CIT	<b>OPOTC Certification:</b> [REDACTED]
<b>Military Experience/Training:</b> Army National Guard	<b>Use-of-Force Training:</b> Academy;
<b>Medications, Prescriptions, or Drugs that might Impair Your Duties at Time of Incident:</b> None	<b>Medications, Prescriptions, or Drugs that might Impair You Now for Interview:</b> None
<b>Alcohol in Past 24 Hours?</b> None	



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**Officer's Firearm(s):**

**Weapon #1**

<b>Make:</b> Smith & Wesson	<b>Model:</b> 2.0
<b>Caliber/Gauge:</b> 9 mm	
<b>Type:</b> Semi-Auto Handgun	<b>Method of Carry:</b> Hip
<b>Magazine Capacity:</b> 17	<b>Total Rounds as Carried (including chamber):</b> 17+1
<b>Extra Magazines:</b> 2	<b>Number of Rounds in Extra Magazines:</b> 17
<b>Discharged During Incident?</b> Yes	<b>Primary or Backup Weapon:</b> Primary
<b>Rounds Remaining After Incident:</b> 15	<b>Number of Rounds Fired:</b> 3
<b>Right/Left-Handed Carry:</b> Right-Handed	<b>Ownership:</b> Department Owned
<b>Last Qualification Date:</b> Advised Current	<b>Type of Holster, if any:</b> External

**Narrative:**

██████████ stated he was working patrol in the area of S. High Street and Fornof Road when he was dispatched to the area of Eldorado/Scioto Downs Casino on South High Street. ██████████ stated he was sent to that area for a report of a White male wearing a blue shirt and khaki shorts, who was reportedly walking into traffic. ██████████ stated, ██████████ Craig Gibson was also assigned to the call/run. ██████████ stated he responded to the area but initially did not locate anyone walking on S. High Street. ██████████ stated he had traveled south and turned around at the water treatment facility before heading back north. While traveling northbound on S. High (State Route 23), he witnessed a subject on the east side of the roadway (northbound lane) walking south. The subject was described as a White male, wearing a blue shirt and khakis. ██████████ described passing the individual before completing a U-turn to head south, before completing another U-turn, to again head northbound.

██████████ stated he advised dispatch of his location and that he had located the subject (Bryson). ██████████ stated he activated his rear lightbar and his "takedown light" or the white light on the front of the lightbar. ██████████ said, "As soon as I did so, the suspect seemed to tense up and assume an aggressive posture by blading the (I believe) left side of his body towards me while keeping his right arm bent and cocked back." ██████████ stated he exited his patrol vehicle and identified himself as, "Columbus Police." ██████████ stated Bryson was approximately 10 yards away from him and he asked him if he was okay. ██████████ told Bryson to come toward him, because he did not want him to get hit by a passing vehicle.



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However, Bryson instead “backpedaled a bit and kept moving left and right along the shoulder.” [REDACTED] stated, “These acts and his demeanor led me to believe he was under the influence of drugs/alcohol and/or undergoing a mental disturbance.” [REDACTED] recalled advising dispatch to send a medic to his location because Bryson may have “excited delirium.”

[REDACTED] stated he witnessed Bryson holding something in his right hand. [REDACTED] stated he did not initially identify what the object was and did not “register the object as a weapon at first.” [REDACTED] stated Bryson “tensed up like he was going to attack then suddenly lunged forward and stopped within about 10-15 feet.” [REDACTED] said he told Bryson to calm down and [REDACTED] advised dispatch Bryson was becoming combative.

[REDACTED] described Bryson “staying back for a few moments” before Bryson again tensed up and “launched forward a few feet like he was going to attack.” [REDACTED] stated it was about this time when he noticed the object in Bryson’s hand was a broken bottle. [REDACTED] described the broken bottle further as having only the neck and shoulder intact, “with several jagged pieces jutting out of the neck.” He further stated, Bryson was holding the bottle in such a way as having the jagged pieces facing upwards. [REDACTED] advised dispatch of the broken bottle and his belief Bryson was trying to fight him.

[REDACTED] said he got out his baton and told Bryson “don’t do it.” Whereas Bryson responded, “Shoot me.” [REDACTED] said he told Bryson he was not going to shoot him and he wanted to help. [REDACTED] described Bryson continuing to pace or step back and forth toward and away from the roadway. [REDACTED] said he again told Bryson to stop and to move away from the roadway. He said Bryson acted like he was going to charge [REDACTED] again and [REDACTED] told Bryson to stay back. Whereas, Bryson replied, “what are you going to do?” [REDACTED] said he again told Bryson, he did not want him to get hurt and wanted to help him. Bryson was taking steps toward the second lane of travel and [REDACTED] told him to stop. [REDACTED] said vehicles were occasionally passing by in that particular lane and he was concerned Bryson “was either deliberately trying to get hit or would be inadvertently struck.”

[REDACTED] said, Bryson, while on the shoulder of the roadway, “dragged the jagged part of the bottle along the ground as if he was trying to sharpen an edge.” Then Bryson began “slashing” his left arm. [REDACTED] placed his baton on the top of his patrol car and unholstered his firearm. According to [REDACTED] Bryson bladed his body, pulled his right arm back and “flung himself forward” but stopped within 10-15 feet away from [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] said he ([REDACTED] stepped back and had his weapon at a “low ready position.” [REDACTED] stated he ordered Bryson to “Stop! Don’t do it!” However, Bryson “charged me with the bottle still in his



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right hand before stopping again about 7-10 feet away." ██████████ said he again backpedaled and said, "Don't do it!" ██████████ said it was a "fraction of a second later he lunged at me while raising the bottle. I quickly backpedaled but the suspect was rushing toward me and closing the gap. I believe he intended to stab me and that I would be seriously injured or killed, and it was at that moment I raised by weapon and fired at the suspect."

██████████ stated he fired three (3) rounds in rapid succession. He approximated all his rounds were fired within one second. He stated he believed Bryson had got to within five (5) feet of him when he fired his weapon. ██████████ stated he stopped firing because Bryson had gone to the ground. ██████████ further stated, "I was in fear for my life at the times I fired my weapon." He said, "In the instant before I fired, the suspect had rushed in my direction and gotten within several feet of me despite my backpedaling. He had the bottle raised such that I believed he intended to stab me and that I would be grievously injured or killed. I did not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect my life from the deadly threat presented by his actions, and it was then that I fired."

██████████ stated he aimed at Bryson's center mass when he fired in a northeastern direction with the roadway and field in his backdrop.

██████████ initially intended to wait for backup before rendering aid, because he could not see the bottle and Bryson was not responding to his commands. However, after some time had passed, ██████████ approached Bryson and rendered aid. He'd first secured Bryson and found the bottle was lying underneath Bryson.

The interview concluded at approximately 1014 hours.

The interview was audio recorded. The audio recording was attached to this report. The signed BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form is also attached to this report. Please see the attachments for further details.



**DAVE YOST**

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL



Bureau of Criminal Investigation  
Office (740- 845-2000  
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### 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).

[Redacted Name]

Printed Name of Interviewee

8/15/23 0955

Date / Time

[Redacted Signature]

Signature of interviewee

SA Matt Collins

BCI Agent (Printed)

[Handwritten Signature]

BCI Agent (Signature)

STATEMENT OF [REDACTED] [REDACTED], BADGE NO. [REDACTED]

This statement regards my involvement in an incident that occurred on Saturday, August 5, 2023, from approximately 1:00 a.m. until 1:15 a.m. I am voluntarily providing this statement as part of the investigation being conducted by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI).

I was hired by the Columbus Division of Police ("CPD" or the "Division") on [REDACTED]. I got my Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy certificate about six months later when I graduated from the CPD Police Academy. I have not worked for any other law enforcement agency. While working for CPD, I also enlisted in the Army National Guard in [REDACTED]. I am currently inactive ready reserve until my enlistment is set to end in July of 2024.

My regular assignment is Z5E2-5, an evening midwatch position. My regular duty hours are from 7:00 p.m. until 5:00 a.m. My regular days off are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. I did not work any special duty or overtime on the day before or day of this incident.

I was wearing the CPD summer patrol uniform and was readily identifiable as a police officer. My uniform consisted of navy pants and a navy short-sleeved shirt that displayed my badge. I was also wearing a hat that said "COLUMBUS POLICE" on the front and an internal vest. Finally, I was equipped with a body worn camera (BWC) mounted to my chest. My BWC was on and recording during the entirety of this incident.

I was carrying my Division-issued service weapon: a Smith & Wesson 2.0 9mm handgun, loaded with Division-issued ammunition. My range qualifications were current with that weapon. I did not have any backup firearm. Division policy requires me to carry a taser or an impact weapon. On this day I was equipped with a baton and not a taser.

I was not assigned a partner on the day of this incident, and I was the only officer present when the event occurred. I was in Cruiser [REDACTED], a marked cruiser.

I do not suffer from any disabilities, and I am in good health. I do not need glasses/contacts or hearing aids as I have good vision and hearing. I was not under the influence of alcohol or any medications that could impair the performance of my duties. I was well rested when I arrived at the start of my shift.

Around 1:00 a.m. on August 5<sup>th</sup>, I was parked in a lot near the intersection of South High Street and Fornof Road completing paperwork when dispatch assigned me to a run: Specifically, a male white wearing a blue shirt and khaki shorts was reportedly walking into traffic near the Eldorado/Scioto Downs Casino on South High Street. Officer Craig Gibson was also assigned to the run.

I left the parking lot a moment later and started travelling south on S. High Street. I got to the casino a few minutes later, but I did not see anyone walking on S. High Street in the area. I continued south and turned around in a water treatment plant about a half mile south of the casino. A few seconds after I turned around and started driving north, I saw someone walking south along the eastern side of S. High Street. I drove by that individual and saw he matched the suspect's description: a male white wearing a blue shirt with khaki shorts.

I did a U-turn, briefly drove south, then did another U-turn. I pulled onto the eastern side of the street and parked in the far right lane. I parked facing north about 10-15 yards south of the suspect. I quickly radioed my location and reported that I had found the suspect. I also turned on my rear light bar as well as my takedown light (the white light on my lightbar). As soon as I did so, the suspect seemed to tense up and assume an aggressive posture by blading the (I believe) left side of his body towards me while keeping his right arm bent and cocked back.

I got out and introduced myself as "Columbus Police." I walked in front of my cruiser towards the suspect and asked whether he was okay. He was on the right (eastern) shoulder



facing me about ten yards ahead. I told him to walk towards me because I did not want him to get hit by a car. He did not comply. Instead, he backpedaled a bit and kept moving left and right along the shoulder. These acts and his demeanor led me to believe he was under the influence of drugs/alcohol and/or undergoing a mental disturbance. I believe I radioed and requested a medic and relayed the suspect might have excited delirium. I recall adding that it might be a "16B" (mental disturbance).

The suspect was holding something in his right hand, but I could not tell what it was. In any case, I did not register the object as a weapon at first. After I asked the suspect to come towards me a few times, he tensed up like he was going to attack then suddenly lunged forward and stopped within about 10-15 feet. I told him to calm down. I also radioed that the suspect was getting combative and requested backup.

The suspect stayed back for a few moments, but then he again tensed up and launched forward a few feet like he was going to attack. It was about that time I noticed the object in his right hand was a broken bottle. The bottle was broken such that only the neck and shoulder were intact and there were several jagged pieces jutting out of the neck. The suspect was holding the bottle by the neck with the jagged pieces facing upwards.

I radioed that the suspect had a bottle in his hand and was trying to fight me. I also got out my baton and told the suspect "don't do it." The suspect said "shoot me" once or twice in response. I said that I was not going to shoot him and that I only wanted to help. He continued moving about and stepped several feet west as if he was going to run into traffic. I again told him to stop and move out of the street. He acted as if he was going to charge me again, and I told him to stay back. He said something like "what are you going to do?" I reiterated that I did not want him to get hurt and just wanted to help him. The suspect again quickly took several steps west

toward the second lane, and I told him to stop. Vehicles were occasionally passing by in that lane, so I was concerned the suspect was either deliberately trying to get hit or would be inadvertently struck.

The suspect stepped back toward the shoulder. A moment later he dragged the jagged part of the bottle along the ground as if he was trying to sharpen an edge. Then he immediately started slashing his (I believe) left arm. I told him not to cut himself as I put my baton on the roof of my cruiser and unholstered my weapon. The suspect then bladed the left side of his body towards me and again cocked back his right arm/hand while grasping the broken bottle like he was preparing to attack. And an instant later he flung himself forward then stopped within about 10-15 feet. I took a step back and kept my gun in a low ready position. I ordered, "stop! don't do it!" But a second later he charged me with the bottle still in his right hand before stopping again about 7-10 feet away. I backpedaled a few steps and yet again loudly said, "don't do it!" I thought he might comply, but a fraction of a second later he lunged at me while raising the bottle. I quickly backpedaled but the suspect was rushing toward me and closing the gap. I believed he intended to stab me and that I would be seriously injured or killed, and it was at that moment I raised my weapon and fired at the suspect.

I fired three rounds in rapid succession. I would estimate about one second passed between my first and last shot. I believe the suspect got within about five feet of me when I fired, maybe closer. I believe I was backpedaling when I started firing. I was positioned on the passenger side of my cruiser, on the right (eastern) shoulder. I recall using my gun's sights. My target was the suspect's center mass. I used a two handed (right strong) grip. I fired in a slightly downward and northwesterly direction. My backdrop was the road and an open field. Besides the suspect, there was no one else on scene. I do not recall seeing any vehicles in my backdrop. I do

not think there were any streetlights in the immediate area, but my headlights and takedown light provided ample lighting such that I could clearly see the suspect at all times. I had no cover or concealment during this incident.

I stopped firing after the suspect went to the ground. I aired "shots fired" and requested medics. The suspect was lying on his back. I covered him and ordered him to put his hands out, but he was not responsive. Initially, I held in place for backup since I could not see the bottle and did not know if the suspect still had access to the weapon. But after some time, it appeared the suspect was still not moving, and though I could not see the weapon and backup had not arrived, I approached so that I could render aid. I turned the suspect onto his stomach so that I could handcuff him, and I saw the bottle under his body. I handcuffed the suspect, gloved up, then started performing chest compressions.

Backup arrived a brief time later. Another officer relieved me and rendered aid in my place. I went to a cruiser and sat on the back bumper/trunk for several minutes as medics and additional officers arrived. I told an officer to make sure the suspect's weapon was secured. Within minutes, Sgt. Jenkins with Officer Support arrived and later transported me from the scene. I later met with an investigator from BCI so my weapon could be collected as evidence and photos could be taken. This ended my involvement with this incident.

I was in fear for my life at the times I fired my weapon. From the time I turned on my takedown light and stepped out of my cruiser, the suspect assumed an aggressive posture towards me. He either kept his body bladed towards me with the weapon in his hand and cocked back as though he was preparing to charge me, or he actually lunged forward or stepped toward me like he was going to attack. For the brief moments he was not engaging in those acts I thought he might deliberately try to run into traffic since he moved towards the left lane.

His actions throughout this encounter—for example his aggressive posture, acting like he was going to run into traffic, telling me to shoot him, slashing himself—led me to believe he was either intoxicated (whether from drugs and/or alcohol) or his mental health was impaired (or perhaps both). I tried to keep the suspect calm and reassure him that I only wanted to help. This had no effect, though. The suspect would not comply and in fact he only became more aggressive as time went on. After the suspect charged me a few times, I realized the item in his hand was a broken glass bottle with several jagged pieces, a deadly weapon.

Even once I realized the suspect had a deadly weapon, I continued to try to keep him calm and out of traffic. I hoped to stall him until backup arrived so that he could be taken into custody. But instead, after charging me several times and continuously refusing to obey my commands, the suspect started slashing himself moments before he lunged at me while raising the bottle as though he was going to stab me. At that time, I was alone and there was nowhere to retreat or take cover: There was an embankment to my right (east) and there was a major four lane road to my left (west). Even though it was late, there were still vehicles travelling in both directions at times. And in any case, in the moments before I fired, I tried to create distance by backpedaling, but the suspect was moving too quickly towards me.

Finally, I was not equipped with a taser since I was carrying a baton, consistent with Division policy; but under those circumstances my training dictates that a taser would not be reasonable since the suspect had a deadly weapon, I had no cover/barrier, and I was alone and without any lethal cover or other necessary conditions. Similarly, under my training a baton would have also been unreasonable under those circumstances to match a deadly threat.

In the instant before I fired, the suspect had rushed in my direction and gotten within several feet of me despite my backpedaling. He had the bottle raised such that I believed he

intended to stab me and that I would be grievously injured or killed. I did not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect my life from the deadly threat presented by his actions, and it was then that I fired.

I did not learn the suspect's name during this incident. I later learned his name is Zachary Bryson. I did not recognize the suspect, and I do not think I have ever met him before.

I have now had the opportunity to review the footage of this incident. After doing so, it appears that a pickup truck driving north in the left lane passes by in the instant after I fired my last round. I had no recollection of seeing that vehicle since I was focused on stopping the deadly threat. In any case, I believe my weapon was angled downwards and that the truck entered my backdrop only after I was finished firing.

This concludes my statement.

[Redacted Signature Block]

[Redacted] Badge # [Redacted]