



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



2024-2255

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 818 Cherryberry Dr.,
Columbus, OH 43228 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Lieutenant Tim Sansbury (W)
Date of Activity: 08/26/2024
Activity Location: – 2609 McKinley Ave., Columbus, OH 43204
Author: SA Kyle Douglass, #126

Narrative:

On August 1, 2024, the Columbus Division of Police (CPD) requested the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) involving law enforcement officers from CPD SWAT and Benjamin Wheeler (Wheeler), which occurred at 818 Cherryberry Drive in Columbus, OH. It was reported to BCI that Wheeler was armed with a knife and injured at least three CPD SWAT officers. One CPD SWAT team member discharged his firearm in response during the incident, which resulted in Wheeler's death.

On August 26, 2024, BCI Special Agents James Poole (SA Poole), Aja Chung (SA Chung), Kyle Douglass (SA Douglass), and Craig Call (SA Call) spoke with the members of CPD SWAT directly involved or witness to the shooting incident. The interviews took place at a CPD facility and the officers were accompanied by legal counsel from the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP). CPD Lieutenant Tim Sansbury (Lieutenant Sansbury), accompanied by FOP attorney Lathan Lippman, was identified as one of the responding officers present during the shooting and was interviewed by SA Call and SA Douglass.

The interview began at approximately 1149 hours. Lieutenant Sansbury was advised his statement was voluntary, and he agreed to answer questions regarding the incident.

This interview was audio recorded, and a copy of the recording was saved electronically within the case file. Please refer to the recording for specific quotes. The following is a summation of the interview.

Lieutenant Sansbury, CPD badge #5098, has been employed with CPD for 34 years. He is the assigned Lieutenant for CPD SWAT and oversees the operations of all three CPD SWAT teams. On the date of the aforementioned incident, Lieutenant Sansbury was the mission commander along with CPD Lieutenant Dan Hargus (Lieutenant Hargus). Lieutenant Sansbury began the mission being stationed at the CPD SWAT command bus.

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Lieutenant Sansbury reported CPD SWAT was requested to assist CPD patrol officers for an arrest warrant service for domestic violence which had become a barricade situation. Lieutenant Sansbury explained there were attempts to negotiate with Wheeler to surrender which were made by phone and by the CPD armored vehicle [Bearcat] PA system. Lieutenant Sansbury indicated these attempts to convince Wheeler to surrender himself to CPD were unsuccessful.

Lieutenant Sansbury recalled the front door of the residence was breached with the CPD Bearcat, and CPD SWAT officers entered the residence in an attempt to apprehend Wheeler. Wheeler began throwing items including knives at CPD officers near the front door of the residence. During this initial entry attempt, Lieutenant Sansbury recalled CPD [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was struck and injured by an object (presumed to be a knife) thrown by Wheeler, and a medical evacuation was required for [REDACTED]. Lieutenant Sansbury said CPD SWAT officers making entry used baton rounds, "CS" gas canisters, and eventually flashbangs in an attempt to subdue or incapacitate Wheeler so he could be taken into police custody. Lieutenant Sansbury indicated the entry team retreated to regroup after [REDACTED] was injured.

Lieutenant Sansbury estimated approximately three hours passed before CPD SWAT officers attempted a second entry of the residence to apprehend Wheeler. Lieutenant Sansbury was in the SWAT command bus when he was told shots had possibly been fired, and two CPD officers were "down" (had suffered stab injuries). Lieutenant Sansbury reported CPD [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had been injured by Wheeler during entry and had to be medically evacuated.

Lieutenant Sansbury decided to move up to the front of the structure with CPD K9 units who were providing scene security. Lieutenant Sansbury later learned CPD [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had also been injured during the second entry. Lieutenant Sansbury was officially informed shots had been fired, which was confirmed by CPD [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reported to Lieutenant Sansbury that he believed he struck Wheeler when he fired his duty weapon.

It was discovered Wheeler had retreated to the basement of the residence, where he was eventually located and pronounced deceased by medics from the Columbus Division of Fire (CFD). Lieutenant Sansbury denied entering the residence at any point during the shooting incident, and was not involved in locating Wheeler after he had retreated to the basement of the residence.

Lieutenant Sansbury indicated he did not recall having any previous law enforcement encounters with Wheeler. Lieutenant Sansbury had learned Wheeler may have identified as a "sovereign citizen" and also suffered from mental illness which he may not have been taking medication for.

Interview concluded at approximately 1207 hours.

References:

No references.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2024-08-26 CPD Lt Tim Sansbury Interview