



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



2023-1792

Officer-Involved Critical Incident- I-70 At Mound Street, Columbus, OH

Investigative Activity: Interview with Witness

Involves: Keaton Lee Wheeler

Activity Date: 7/6/2023

Activity Location: I-70 near Mound Street, Columbus, OH

Authoring Agent: SA John Butterworth

Narrative:

On Thursday, July 06, 2023 at 1831 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) John Butterworth (SA Butterworth) interviewed Keaton Lee Wheeler (Wheeler), relative to the officer-involved shooting which took place on Thursday, July 6, 2023. The interview took place at I-70 near Mound Street, Columbus, OH. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this individual.

On Thursday July 6, 2023, SA John Butterworth along with other Agent's from BCI responded to the area of I-70 and Mound Street in Columbus, OH in regards to an Officer-Involved Critical Incident that had occurred in that location. Upon arrival at the scene, SA Butterworth met with a witness to the incident and identified him as Keaton Lee Wheeler. Wheeler had been driving eastbound on I-70 when he witnessed a shooting take place between an unknown person and police officers. Wheeler was asked to provide a statement about the incident and agreed to do so. SA Butterworth activated a digital recorder to record Wheeler's statement about the incident.

At approximately 1831 hours, SA Butterworth and Wheeler spoke about what Wheeler had observed and heard during the incident. According to Wheeler he was driving his 2008 gold in color BMW X3 (bearing Ohio registration JUL2162) eastbound on I-70 when he was passed by a "luxury" black SUV that was travelling at a high rate of speed. The SUV came to a stop and so did the traffic that had been driving in the same direction. When Wheeler stopped his vehicle, he observed police officers approach the black SUV. As police officers were coming to the black SUV, Wheeler described two African American males exit the SUV and jump the barrier. Upon observing who Wheeler described as two early 20's "African American males" hop the barrier, Wheeler said he heard shots fired and observed a police officer fall to the ground. Wheeler observed rounds being exchanged between police officers and a Black male who stayed with the car (SUV). Wheeler said he observed the Black male from the SUV "take" (being struck by bullets) about the entire magazine" and fall to the ground. Wheeler said then a mass of police officers arrived on scene.



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SA Butterworth asked Wheeler if he could observe the driver of the SUV, which Wheeler said he could not see who the driver was. SA Butterworth asked Wheeler if he observed a crash involving the black SUV and he stated he did not. When the SUV stopped, Wheeler said the car stopped diagonal across the most left lane. SA Butterworth clarified from Wheeler when the SUV stopped, the police officer came up and from a police car. When the officer's exited their vehicles, two males jumped the barrier and ran. The shots were fired during the time the males took off running. According to Wheeler, he did not see who fired a weapon first but saw the officer hit the ground and the exchange of gunfire happened. Wheeler said he heard two distinctive sounds of gunfire. Wheeler said he observed three Black males come from the black SUV. Two of them jumped the barrier on the south side of I-70 eastbound and one stayed at the black SUV. Wheeler did not see the men carrying a firearm but they were moving fast. Wheeler reported one male wearing black pants and a black top. He could not recall what anyone else was wearing.

Wheeler said the Black male that stayed with the SUV believed was wearing a purple "doo-rag." Wheeler said he did not have a very good look at the male, but had a good view of the police officer. Wheeler said he observed the police officer get hit by gunfire. Wheeler again said he heard two distinctive sounds of gunfire. Wheeler described the amount of police officers on scene as going from two to six, to a mass. Wheeler did not know if his vehicle had been struck by gunfire or not. (Upon observing the vehicle, SA Butterworth did not observe any ballistic events on Wheeler's vehicle.) Wheeler thought the time the black SUV passed him to be between 4:30 and 5:30 (P.M.).

SA Butterworth reviewed Wheeler's statement with him before completing the interview and stopping the recording. Wheeler clarified that he observed the police officer fall to the ground first. Then the third Black male from the SUV fell as well. Wheeler said he observed the police officers provide aid to both the police officer and the man from the SUV. Wheeler also said he heard the police officers yell "stop" as the gunfire happened. Wheeler thought the total time between the time the SUV stopped and gunfire was a minute or less.

The interview concluded at approximately 1843 hours.

The interview was audio recorded. The recording is attached to this report. Please see the attachment for further details.