



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: [REDACTED] (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 [REDACTED], accompanied by FOP attorney Lathan Lipperman, was identified as one of the officers present during the shooting and was interviewed by SA Call and SA Douglass.

The interview began at approximately 1246 hours. [REDACTED] 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.

[REDACTED], CPD badge [REDACTED], has over [REDACTED] of law enforcement experience and has been with CPD [REDACTED]. He is the assigned to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reported CPD SWAT was requested by CPD patrol officers to assist with a barricade situation which had evolved from an attempt to serve a felony arrest warrant. [REDACTED] explained [REDACTED] was designated for entry into the residence where

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Wheeler had barricaded himself. [REDACTED] was positioned on the "1-side" (street side) of the residence during the incident. [REDACTED] acted as a door breacher for CPD SWAT Green Team. During the first entry attempt, [REDACTED] deployed "knee-knockers" (baton rounds) and gas canisters into the residence in an attempt to subdue or incapacitate Wheeler so he could be taken into police custody. [REDACTED] also breached the basement windows on the "2-side" of the residence. [REDACTED] later found out that CPD SWAT [REDACTED] was injured during the first entry by a knife which had been thrown by Wheeler.

[REDACTED] explained responders from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) had deployed a drone into the residence. Wheeler knocked down and disabled the first drone, and FCSO deployed a second drone into the residence.

[REDACTED] was part of the second entry attempt. [REDACTED] described he was at the "end of the stack" and had limited visibility of what was occurring inside the structure from where he was positioned. [REDACTED] knew there was a struggle and a commotion, with CPD SWAT officers moving around in front of him inside the residence. [REDACTED] recalled CPD SWAT [REDACTED] fell and presumably injured, and [REDACTED] moved up in response. [REDACTED] said he recalled seeing the "flash of a knife" in Wheeler's possession, who was in the kitchen. [REDACTED] believed Wheeler lunged at him while he was trying to engage Wheeler with a taser. [REDACTED] saw Wheeler, who was still holding a knife, and then saw CPD SWAT [REDACTED] fire three to five rounds at Wheeler. [REDACTED] then fired his taser at Wheeler, who had fled the kitchen area away from where CPD SWAT officers were positioned. [REDACTED] recalled seeing a large amount of blood throughout the kitchen. "We knew he was hit," [REDACTED] stated. [REDACTED] also reported dragging CPD SWAT [REDACTED] out of the residence, [REDACTED] believed [REDACTED] had been shot or injured.

[REDACTED] explained Wheeler had retreated into the basement of the residence. A "throwbot" (tactical robot camera) was deployed, and Wheeler was eventually located in the basement unresponsive. Wheeler was handcuffed by [REDACTED] and secured before medics from the Columbus Division of Fire (CFD) arrived and pronounced Wheeler deceased. [REDACTED] and other CPD officer searched and secured the residence.

[REDACTED] did not recall having any previous law enforcement contact with Wheeler prior to the incident on August 1, 2024.

Interview concluded at approximately 1305 hours.

References:

No references.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2024-08-26 CPD [REDACTED] Interview