



**Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Prosecutor Summary**



Officer-Involved Critical Incident – 780 Taylor Road,
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

To: Shayla Favor, Franklin County Prosecutor
Cc: SAS Kevin Barbeau, Special Agent Supervisor, Ohio BCI
From: SA Kyle Douglass, Special Agent, Ohio BCI
Date: April 9, 2025
Involves: Alex Taylor Russell
Case Title: Officer Involved Critical Incident
780 Taylor Road, Gahanna, Ohio 43230 (L)
BCI Case Numbers: Special Investigations (SIU): 2024-3996
Crime Scene (CSU): 2024-3996
BCI Laboratory: 24-127171

Investigative Request

On Thursday, December 19, 2024, Chief Jeffrey Spence of the Gahanna Police Department (GPD) requested the assistance of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation's (BCI) Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Crime Scene Unit (CSU) in conducting an independent investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding an officer-involved critical incident (OICI). The incident reportedly occurred on December 19, 2024 in the area of 780 Taylor Road in Gahanna, Ohio, and resulted in the death of Alex Russell (Russell).

Preface:

This report serves as a synopsis of the investigation into the December 19, 2024 officer-involved shooting in Franklin County, Ohio. This report only summarizes the information that the investigative team determined to be the most useful in achieving an overall understanding of what occurred in this incident. Every fact and detail is not presented in this summary report. Therefore, it is recommended that each individual report from which this document is derived be read in order to obtain a complete understanding of this investigation. Further, audio and/or video recordings exist for the majority of the interviews conducted, revealing further details of statements given regarding the incident.

This investigation was conducted with the purpose of determining, to the extent possible, the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident. As unbiased collectors of fact, the investigative team has not and will not render any opinion of the legality of officers' actions. Instead, it is anticipated that this investigation will provide the basis of information for decisions to be rendered by the appropriate authorities.

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Investigative Team

BCI Special Agent Kyle Douglass (SA Douglass) was assigned as the lead SIU case agent. SA Douglass received assistance in the investigation from SA James Gore (SA Gore), SA Matthew Collins (SA Collins), SA Chad Holcomb (SA Holcomb), SA James Poole (SA Poole), and SA Aja Chung (SA Chung). BCI Special Agents Sarah Taylor (SA Taylor) and SA Brittney VanBibber (SA VanBibber), as well as Crime Scene Technicians Dylan Wical (CST Wical) and Holly Ryczek (CST Ryczek) of the Crime Scene Unit (CSU) processed the scene of the incident, documenting, preserving, and collecting possible evidence. The investigation was supervised by Special Agent Supervisor Kevin Barbeau (SAS Barbeau). Additionally, various personnel from the BCI crime laboratory performed scientific analyses on submitted items of potential physical evidence.

Summary of Process

The following is a partial list of investigative activities or methods which were employed during the course of this investigation, by the investigative team, in an effort to thoroughly and accurately locate and document all pertinent facts and circumstances regarding this incident:

- Recorded interview(s) of all officers who discharged their weapons
- Recorded interviews of all officers who were involved in the incident, at the scene, or otherwise deemed to potentially have relevant information
- Neighborhood canvass of the area surrounding the scene
- Interviews of multiple civilian witnesses to the incident
- Interviews of family members or associates of the decedent
- Special agent attendance to post-mortem examination (autopsy) of the deceased
- Obtained and reviewed post-mortem examination (autopsy) and toxicology lab reports
- Obtained and reviewed open and closed-source biographical information on the involved subjects, to include criminal history reports, OHLEG, driving records, etc.
- FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC) checks on any non-law enforcement weapons involved in the incident (to determine if reported stolen)
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) trace on any non-law enforcement weapons involved in the incident (to determine ownership history)
- Review of all available dash cameras involved in the incident
- Review of all available body cameras involved in the incident
- Review of all available surveillance video which captured any portion of the incident

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- Processing of the scene for potential evidence (photographing, searching, measuring, documenting, and collecting)
- 3D scans / model of incident area
- Processing of involved vehicle(s) for potential evidence
- Bloodstain pattern analysis
- Shooting reconstruction and trajectory analysis
- Reviewed audio communications on the radio frequencies utilized during the incident
- Review of 911/phone communications related to the incident
- Review of dispatch/CAD records pertaining to the incident
- Review of Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) communications relative to the incident
- Issued preservation letters for phone records of the numbers believed to have some relevance to the incident
- Reviewed phone/text records obtained via search warrant from wireless service provider
- Obtained search warrants for the subject's phone and performed an analysis of the data present
- Conducted forensic laboratory examinations to include:
 1. Firearm identification testing of involved firearms, casings, and bullets
 2. Firearm operability testing
 3. Chemistry (drug identification)
 4. Gunshot residue testing (GSR)
 5. Fingerprint analysis
 6. DNA
- Obtained search warrant to analyze electronic evidence, to include:
 1. Cellular phones
 2. Social media and/or email accounts
- Reviewed data obtained from aforementioned items of electronic evidence
- Collected and reviewed the departmental personnel files of the officers involved in the shooting, to include training and disciplinary records (if any)
- Reviewed firearm qualification and training records for involved officers
- Verified the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) certification status of the officer(s) who discharged their weapons
- Obtained the department's policies and procedures regarding use of force for prosecutorial review
- Reviewed tips, social media posts, and pertinent statements made in the media regarding the incident

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Incident Summary/Overview

On December 19, 2024, at approximately 0932 hours, GPD officers responded to SpringHill Suites at 665 Taylor Road for an allegation of a hotel guest using fraudulent identification and a stolen credit card. Hotel staff requested the guest, later identified as Alex Russell (Russell), be “trespassed” from the hotel property. When GPD officers attempted to make contact with Russell at Room 112, Russell fled out of the building via the hotel room window.

GPD officers pursued and located Russell, who was walking eastbound through the parking lots east of TownePlace Suites. Russell was observed to be in possession of a handgun. GPD officers gave Russell numerous verbal commands to stop and drop his gun, to which he did not comply and continued to walk eastbound.

GPD officers followed Russell to the driveway area of 780 Taylor Road. Russell turned to face towards GPD officers and pointed his gun at his own head. GPD officers continued to attempt to gain compliance from Russell but were unsuccessful. A GPD officer attempted to deploy a “less lethal shotgun” at Russell. Russell then turned and ran eastbound into a grassy area east of the driveway. GPD officers pursued Russell, who then turned towards them and appeared to point his gun in their direction. At least one GPD officer fired at Russell multiple shots, who fell to the ground. GPD officers gave verbal commands to Russell to drop his gun before several additional shots were fired at Russell. Once Russell appeared to be unresponsive, GPD officers approached and secured Russell and then began rendering first aid until emergency medical personnel arrived.

Decedent

The decedent’s identity was determined to be Alex Taylor Russell, date of birth (DOB) April 23, 2001, of McMinnville, OR. Per the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG), [REDACTED]. Russell’s next-of-kin was determined to be his mother, Julie Ann Russell of McMinnville, OR.

Autopsy Report

The autopsy report for the decedent (Alex Taylor Russell) was obtained from the Franklin County Coroner's Office. A review of those documents revealed the following information:

The cause of death for Russell was determined to be [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
The manner of death was ruled [REDACTED]. The toxicology report indicated that

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[REDACTED]

Please refer to the actual autopsy report for additional information.

Physical Evidence

The BCI Crime Scene Unit was requested to respond to the scene of the shooting in order to document and preserve any items of potential evidence. Multiple agents responded and processed the scene, to include photographing and mapping the area, as well as the search for, documentation, and collection of items of possible evidence. Detailed crime scene reports were completed with the below information only summarizing some of the more significant findings.

Firearms discharged by GPD officers involved in the incident were collected by BCI's CSU. One additional firearm was recovered during the incident which reportedly did not belong to any law enforcement officers on scene, which was also collected by CSU. Firearms believed to be related to the OICI were subsequently submitted to the BCI Firearms Laboratory for analysis. While processing the scene, CSU also recovered cartridge cases and fired projectiles in the vicinity of the OICI. Numerous cartridge cases and fired bullet projectiles were collected and documented by CSU.

The actual BCI Laboratory reports should be consulted as the following synopsis does not include many of the details from the full reports.

BCI Forensic Scientist Kelsey Cramer (FS Cramer) identified the firearm with serial #JDZ1795, as Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield 9mm semi-automatic pistol, was purchased on May 29, 2020, by [REDACTED]. An FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC) check of the weapon was conducted by the BCI Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) to determine if the weapon was reported as being stolen. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This firearm was in Russell's possession during the incident and was moved away from Russell's body after the OICI had concluded.

The BCI Firearms Section performed an analysis of the officers' firearms, as well as the firearm-related evidence collected from the scene, vehicles, and autopsies (casings and bullets). By comparing evidentiary cartridge casings/projectiles to known standards from each weapon, identifications were able to be made as to which casings/projectiles were fired from each firearm. Of the casings/projectiles recovered, the following identifications were made:

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FS Cramer identified one (1) fired cartridge case and one (1) fired bullet as being source identified to the firearm with serial # [REDACTED], which is a Smith & Wesson M&P15 .223 caliber patrol rifle found on scene and is reportedly assigned to GPD [REDACTED]

FS Cramer identified three (3) fired cartridge cases and two (2) fired bullets as being source identified to the firearm with serial # [REDACTED], a Glock 17 9mm semiautomatic pistol which is assigned to GPD [REDACTED]

FS Cramer identified five (5) fired cartridge cases and one (1) fired bullet as being source identified to the firearm with serial # [REDACTED] a Glock 17 9mm semi-automatic pistol which is assigned to GPD [REDACTED]

FS Cramer identified nine (9) fired cartridge cases and three (3) fired bullets as being source identified to the firearm with serial # [REDACTED], a Glock 17 9mm semiautomatic pistol which is assigned to GPD [REDACTED]

Witnesses

Multiple witnesses, primarily employees of Doyle Human Capital Management (Doyle HCM) located at 735 Taylor Road, provided statements to BCI regarding the incident. Please refer to associated witness interview reports for additional information.

A civilian witness identified as Joshua Childs (Childs) of Gahanna, OH, provided a verbal statement to BCI regarding the incident. On December 19, 2024, Childs was driving eastbound on Taylor Road when he observed police activity in the area of 780 Taylor Road. Childs observed numerous GPD officers in the area, at least one armed with a rifle, on the north side of Taylor Road. Childs could hear GPD officers giving verbal commands or instructions to someone, but he was unable to see who they were speaking to. Childs also believed he heard a GPD officer making announcements about a weapon.

Childs recalled hearing multiple gunshots moments later. At the time of the incident, Childs believed he heard approximately thirty (30) gunshots. Childs was unable to observe who was firing their weapons from where he was inside his vehicle. After the gunfire had concluded, Childs believed he heard someone call out for a medical kit, and witnessed a GPD officer retrieve what appeared to be a medical kit from a GPD cruiser and return to the shooting incident location. Childs denied observing the individual Gahanna PD was involved in the encounter with, and did not know if the individual was in possession of a gun.

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Childs video recorded portions of the incident on his cell phone, which was provided to BCI prior to the interview.

Officer Interviews

The following paragraphs are extremely abbreviated versions of each officer's account of his or her actions pertaining to this incident and/or discharging their weapon. More detailed accounts can be found by reading the separate reports written by the interviewers and by reviewing the recordings of each interview.

██████████

GPD ██████████ reported in his statement to BCI he was responding to a call at SpringHill Suites for an alleged use of a stolen credit card and/or stolen identity. When GPD officers attempted to make contact with Russell in his hotel room, ██████████ heard "a lot of shuffling" and believed the occupant may have escaped via the hotel room window. ██████████ immediately ran to an exit door on the eastern side of the hotel to pursue Russell.

██████████ stated he located Russell in an adjacent parking lot and observed Russell was holding a gun in his hand. ██████████ attempted to gain compliance from Russell with verbal commands and followed Russell to the driveway area of 780 Taylor Road. ██████████ observed Russell stopped and pointed his gun at himself. ██████████ attempted to de-escalate Russell and made numerous attempts to convince him to put his gun down. ██████████ believed Russell stated, "It's over," as ██████████ continued to try to reason with Russell.

██████████ believed GPD ██████████ deployed a less lethal shotgun round at Russell. ██████████ then heard "another shot" and Russell fell to the ground. ██████████ was moving behind ██████████ when he believed Russell raised his gun towards GPD officers. ██████████ recalled hearing other GPD officers fire their weapons at Russell. ██████████ described having "tunnel vision" during the shooting incident. After Russell appeared to no longer be a threat, ██████████ participated in rendering first aid to Russell. ██████████ assisted with the administration of the AED device. ██████████ explained that medics eventually took over medical aid to Russell.

██████████ confirmed Russell had pointed his gun at himself and made statements which could have been interpreted as suicidal. ██████████ did not fire his weapon during this incident. ██████████ confirmed he had unholstered his duty weapon but never fired it.

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GPD Sergeant Pat Millenbaugh

GPD Sergeant Pat Millenbaugh (Sgt. Millenbaugh) reported in his statement to BCI he was responding to a call at SpringHill Suites for an alleged use of a stolen credit card and/or stolen identity. Sgt. Millenbaugh knocked on the hotel room door and attempted to make contact with the occupant. A male occupant, later identified as Russell, responded but did not come to the door. Sgt. Millenbaugh recalled one of the other Gahanna PD responders indicated the occupant may have escaped via the hotel room window.

Sgt. Millenbaugh exited the hotel when he heard [REDACTED] announce on the radio “code 40” (gun) and “code 44” (officer in trouble). Sgt. Millenbaugh ran and eventually located Russell walking through the parking lots to the east of SpringHill Suites. Sgt. Millenbaugh and other Gahanna PD officers gave several verbal commands to Russell to drop his gun. Sgt. Millenbaugh recalled Russell eventually crossed Taylor Road into the driveway area at 780 Taylor Road.

When Sgt. Millenbaugh arrived at Russell’s location, Russell had turned to face GPD officers and pointed the gun at his own head. Sgt. Millenbaugh instructed GPD officers to spread out. Russell had moved to the grassy area east of the driveway. Sgt. Millenbaugh asked for “less lethal” which he believed [REDACTED] deployed. Sgt. Millenbaugh believed Russell was struck by the less lethal “bean bag” round. “Then he turned towards Taylor Road and his gun came up,” Sgt. Millenbaugh stated. Sgt. Millenbaugh then heard multiple rounds of gunfire.

Sgt. Millenbaugh stood closest to Taylor Road with other GPD officers to his left standing in a line facing east towards Russell. After the gunshots had ceased and Russell had dropped his gun, GPD officers approached Russell and began rendering first aid. Sgt. Millenbaugh provided medical supplies while other officers administered CPR and utilized an AED device. GPD officers were eventually relieved by EMS medics. Sgt. Millenbaugh ensured no officers had been injured and began securing the scene.

Sgt. Millenbaugh did not fire his duty weapon during the incident. Sgt. Millenbaugh explained his duty weapon was never unholstered nor aimed at Russell during the incident.

GPD Sergeant Reuben Hendon

GPD Sergeant Reuben Hendon (Sgt. Hendon) reported in his statement to BCI he responded directly to 780 Taylor Road after hearing radio traffic codes for a person with a gun and officer in trouble. Sgt. Hendon arrived at 780 Taylor Road and retrieved his patrol rifle. Sgt. Hendon observed Russell crossing Taylor Road. Sgt. Hendon

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arrived at the driveway and saw several other Gahanna PD officers but could no longer see Russell.

Sgt. Hendon observed [REDACTED] was armed with a less than lethal shotgun. Sgt. Hendon was moving to find a position with other officers as he heard them giving Russell verbal commands. Sgt. Hendon then heard multiple gunshots, the first of which he believed was a less lethal shotgun bean bag round from [REDACTED], followed by several shots which he identified as handgun shots. Sgt. Hendon ran up to find a better position with his rifle when Sgt. Millenbaugh moved in front of Sgt. Hendon. "That's when the gun came up," Sgt. Hendon stated, regarding the gun in Russell's possession. Sgt. Hendon moved past Sgt. Millenbaugh and pulled his rifle trigger to engage Russell, but Sgt. Hendon's rifle did not fire due to the safety mechanism being on. Sgt. Hendon described a second volley of gunshots as he tried to fire his rifle. Sgt. Hendon retrieved a ballistic shield, GPD officers then approached and secured Russell before they began rendering first aid. Sgt. Hendon performed chest compressions before being relieved by another GPD officer.

Sgt. Hendon believed he saw Russell fall to the ground as the first series of gunshots occurred. Sgt. Hendon observed Russell was still moving around on the ground as GPD officers gave verbal commands to Russell to drop his gun. Sgt. Hendon explained Russell, who was on the ground, pointed his gun at himself then quickly pointed it towards Gahanna PD officers when the second series of gunshots occurred. Sgt. Hendon said he knew Gahanna PD [REDACTED] had fired his duty weapon but was unsure who else had fired during the incident.

GPD [REDACTED]

In his written statement to BCI, [REDACTED] wrote:

"Both [REDACTED] and Sgt. Millenbaugh knocked on the door of room 112 and identified us as Gahanna Police. Sgt. Millenbaugh ordered the patron out of the room several times. The patron failed to comply and said he was packing his belongings to leave. After a few more moments, I could hear glass breaking and I assumed the suspect had fled out the window. I ran down the hallway and through the lobby to the back (south side) of the building, which was a mostly empty parking lot. I ran to the west side of the building where my cruiser was parked. I drove to the parking lot to the east of TownPlace Suites, which was just to the east of the SpringHill Suites hotel with my emergency lights activated."

[REDACTED] continued in his statement, *"The suspect, who was a heavy-set male in gray pants and a black sweatshirt, was on the eastern side of the parking lot. I could see*

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what appeared be a black semiautomatic pistol held in his right hand at his side pointed at the ground. With my weapon pointed at the suspect, I ordered him to put the gun down multiple times. The suspect took off his black sweatshirt with the gun still in his hand and dropped it in the parking lot. Underneath he was wearing a black t-shirt. He continually refused to comply with my commands. He kept walking east, eventually over the grass separating two parking lots. I aired that we were in the parking lot of 735 Taylor. I kept tracking him in the grass area between the parking lot and Taylor Road. He continued east through several parking lots. It appeared to me that he racked the slide of his weapon at some point, which I aired. At the parking lot of the Columbus MEPS center, the suspect turned to the north towards Taylor Road. I continued to order the suspect to put down his gun, which he continually failed to do. The suspect continued north walking across Taylor Road to a residence, which upon review of the video appears to be 780 Taylor Road. The residence was set far back from the street and was accessed by a long asphalt driveway. Large hedges stood to the side of the driveway down the length of the property to east (parallel to Taylor Road)."

██████████ explained the circumstances leading up to the shooting incident and the firing of his duty weapon, *"I was standing in the roadway nearest the north sidewalk and the suspect, who was approximately 30-40 feet north of me on the driveway, turned towards me, putting the gun to his head with his right hand. Several officers including ██████████ and I gave numerous commands to the suspect to put his gun down, urging him to talk, and to not to kill himself. He said something to the effect of "it's too late or I've gone too far." He walked east just north of the row of hedges with the gun still to his head. To my left, ██████████ used a shotgun to deploy a less lethal "bean bag" round. It appeared to me that the bag hit the suspect near his right arm. This did not seem to have any effect on the suspect. The suspect stopped pointing the gun at himself and turned to run east. At this point, I had yet to see the suspect point his weapon at anyone other than himself. However, as he continued to run east, he turned back towards ██████████ and myself (to the west) and raised his weapon in our direction. I fired a volley of shots. The suspect fell to the ground initially on his back with his head towards the south. When he fell, the gun was no longer aimed at any officers and I stopped firing. I ordered him again to put down his weapon. The suspect racked his slide. He began to roll on his left side and again pointed his gun in my direction, I fired again. I stopped firing when the suspect no longer appeared to be a threat. The suspect was not moving at that point and was still laying on his left side facing officers. The suspect was no longer holding the gun and it appeared to be underneath him."*

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██████████ discussed his decision to fire his duty weapon, *“I now know that I fired a total of fifteen (15) times. At the time I fired, I had followed the suspect, who had a gun in his hand, through multiple parking lots. I repeatedly ordered the suspect to put down the gun, which he repeatedly failed to do. Once we arrived at 780 Taylor Road, the suspect put a gun to his head and still did not comply with the directions of officers to put down his weapon. ██████████ deployed a less lethal “bean bag” round which was ineffective. When the suspect turned and pointed his gun in my direction, I fired. I would estimate that I fired half of my rounds during this first volley. I fired from a standing position using both hands. I used my red dot sites. I did not fire from cover. I fired to the east at the suspect’s center of mass. At the time I fired, I estimate that the suspect was 30-40 feet from me. My backdrop was the ground behind the suspect (as he was laying on the ground on his side) and the empty yard beyond. I did not see anyone in my backdrop.”*

██████████ explained why he stopped firing his duty weapon, *“I stopped firing after the suspect fell to ground and was no longer pointing his weapon in my direction or the direction of any other officer. The suspect then racked his slide, turned towards us from the ground, and pointed his gun again in my direction. I fired again. I estimate I fired half of my rounds during this time. I fired from a standing position using both hands. I used my red dot sites. I did not fire from cover. I fired to the east at the suspect’s center of mass while he was laying on the ground. At the time I fired, I estimate that the suspect was 30-40 feet from me. My backdrop was the ground behind the suspect (as he was laying on the ground on his side) and the empty yard beyond. I did not see anyone in my backdrop. I stopped firing when the suspect was no longer a threat.”*

GPD ██████████

In his written statement to BCI, ██████████ wrote:

“As soon as I exited my cruiser, ██████████ told me to grab the less lethal. I retrieved the shotgun from the trunk and immediately chambered a less lethal round into the chamber. I then started to walk towards the suspect. The suspect was a white (or perhaps Hispanic) heavysset male wearing a black shirt and grey sweatpants. The male was holding a black semiautomatic handgun in his right hand pointed at his head. He was standing facing my direction (pointed to the south) on a residential driveway just to the north of Taylor Road. Upon review of the video, it appears the address of the residence was 780 Taylor Road. There was a row of tall hedges to the east of the suspect that were difficult to see through or over. At that time, there were several officers giving the suspect commands to drop the gun.”

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██████████ wrote in his statement about firing his less-than-lethal shotgun, *"I walked up the driveway to the home to see around the hedgerow. I was standing to the left of C ██████████ who had his gun drawn. I aimed the less lethal shotgun at the suspect and took what I believed to be a well-aimed shot near his stomach area. I estimate that I was about 40-50 feet away from the suspect, who was north/northeast of my location, when I deployed the less lethal round. The suspect did not have an immediate physical reaction to the shot. I initially thought that I could have missed. The suspect then started to walk/jog to his left at an angle (to the east) parallel to the hedgerow with the gun pointed down. At this point, I had not seen him raise his weapon at anyone. I immediately decided to attempt to shoot him again with the less lethal shotgun to get him to comply in dropping the gun. I "racked" the shotgun to load another round into the chamber. I could not successfully load another round into the chamber. I could tell there was some type of malfunction with the shotgun. I then visually checked the chamber area and noticed there was a hull partially stuck in the chamber, sticking out about an inch or so. I tried to rake it out with my finger but was unsuccessful."*

██████████ described firing his duty weapon during the incident, *"While trying to repair the shotgun, the first volley of shots from officers occurred. I did not see what the suspect did to initiate these shots and I am not sure which officers fired. When the first shots started, I dropped the shotgun and transitioned to my duty weapon. The suspect then fell to the ground initially on his back, and he then turned onto his left side and was facing us (with his head pointed to the south). The suspect while on the ground raised the gun with his right hand and pointed it towards us. I fired a total of three (3) rounds. I could hear other officers also fire. After I fired my last round, I brought my gun to a chest ready. The suspect was not moving at that point and was still laying on his left side facing officers. The suspect was no longer holding the gun, but it was sitting under his right arm. I thought I heard someone say to wait for a shield before approaching the suspect. I waited in my position until Sgt. Hendon positioned himself in front of me carrying the shield. Sgt. Hendon started to walk towards the suspect, and I walked just behind him to his left and pointed my weapon towards the suspect while we approached. As we got close to the suspect, I holstered my weapon and took the suspect's handgun with my right hand and moved it behind me a few feet so he would no longer have access to the weapon."*

██████████ explained his decision to fire his duty weapon, *"At the time I fired, officers had previously aired that the suspect had a gun. When I arrived, the suspect was standing with the gun to his head and not complying with the directions of officers to put down his weapon. I deployed a less lethal "bean bag" round at the suspect's center*

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mass. I could not tell whether the round hit him or not, but he gave no reaction other than to turn away from officers. Though I wanted to fire again, the shotgun jammed. When I heard gunshots while attempting to fix the shotgun, I saw the suspect fall to the ground and quickly moving onto his left side facing me. From the ground, he pointed his weapon west in the direction of several officers including myself. I fired three (3) rounds from a standing position using both hands. I acquired my red dot sight on my third and final shot. I did not fire from cover. I fired to the east towards the suspect's center of mass/head area. At the time I fired, I estimate that the suspect was 40-50 feet from me. My backdrop was the ground behind the suspect (as he was laying on the ground on his side) and the empty yard beyond. I did not see anyone in my backdrop. At the time I fired, I did not believe I had any other reasonable choice other than to fire to protect my own life and the lives of my fellow officers from death or imminent bodily harm."

GPD [REDACTED]

In his written statement to BCI, [REDACTED] wrote:

"Sgt. Millenbaugh knocked on the door several more times and told the suspect to open the door. We waited a minute or two, but the suspect refused to open the door. The manager handed me a room key and gave me permission to open the door. I unlocked the door, and Sgt. Millenbaugh began to push it open and announced we were coming inside with the manager's permission. The suspect had the door deadbolted, so it only opened a few inches. I could smell marijuana coming from the room. Sgt. Millenbaugh again instructed the suspect to open the door and told him we just needed to talk. The suspect responded that he needed to grab a few things first and put his computer away. I believed the suspect was trying to stall, and moments later I heard what sounded like a window open inside the room. I told the others that I thought he might have escaped through a window."

[REDACTED] continued in his statement, *"I ran east and seconds later saw the suspect in the parking lot adjacent to (and east of) the hotel: He was holding a pistol (what appeared to be a black semiautomatic handgun) in his right hand. He was a heavier set white male, possibly Hispanic, wearing a black shirt and light-colored pants. At that time, the suspect had the gun at his side, with the barrel aimed towards the ground. I was about 50-100 feet west of the suspect, and [REDACTED] was about 50 feet south of me. The suspect was walking north through the parking lot, towards Taylor Road. [REDACTED] was repeatedly yelling "drop the gun!" but the suspect would not drop the weapon. I took cover behind a backhoe and covered the suspect. I ordered him to drop his weapon, but he would not comply."*

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██████████ discussed the attempt to gain compliance from Russell before the shooting encounter and wrote, *“The suspect walked approximately 10-15 yards up the driveway before turning back to face me and the other officers, raising the gun to his head. He was saying something like “it’s over.” Officers ordered him to drop his weapon and tried to deescalate by telling the suspect it was not too late and that we only wanted to talk (or words to that effect). Just as I neared the other side of Taylor Road, I heard ██████████ yell “less lethal” and saw him deploy a bean bag round at the suspect (though I could not see the suspect through the brush). An instant later I heard several gunshots ring out in rapid succession. As I ran up the driveway, I saw one or two officers firing their weapons, but because I could not see the suspect, I was unsure if he was also shooting.”*

██████████ explained his involvement in the shooting incident, *“Just as I trained my rifle on him, he raised his weapon toward me and the other officers. I believed he intended to shoot me and the others, and it was then that I fired. I believe at least one other officer fired at nearly the same time. I fired only 1 round. Right after I fired that round, several officers stepped into my line of fire. As I stepped aside to get a better vantage, several officers fired at the suspect, stopping a moment later. The suspect had fallen to the ground and was on his (I believe) left side. Sgt. Millenbaugh aired for medics and yelled for an officer to grab a shield. I also said to grab a medkit. The other officers and I approached the suspect. He did not appear to be moving.”*

██████████ wrote in his statement regarding his decision to fire his rifle, *“At the time I fired my weapon, I believed the suspect intended to shoot me and that he posed a deadly threat to my life and to the lives of the other officers on scene. In the minutes before I fired, the suspect had refused to comply with our orders to come to the door and instead escaped from his hotel room before presenting officers with a firearm. He was given repeated, loud commands to drop his weapon by numerous officers, but he continuously refused to comply. When I cut around the shrubs a moment later, the suspect was standing about 20-30 yards to the east, facing and looking toward me and the other officers. He raised and levelled the barrel of his weapon at me and the other officers an instant later. I believed he intended to shoot me and the other officers. I feared that I and possibly one or more officers would be seriously injured or killed, and it was then that I fired my weapon. I did not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect my life or the other officers’ lives from the deadly threat presented by the suspect’s actions.”*

██████████ clarified his recall of the incident after reviewing video evidence, *“After this incident, I had the opportunity to review BWC footage of the event. After doing so, I now realize that the suspect was already on the ground by the time I came around the*

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thicket of brush. However, my recollection of the suspect aiming his weapon at me and the other officers just before I fired remains accurate.”

GPD [REDACTED]

In his written statement to BCI, [REDACTED] wrote:

“I saw the suspect walking east with a black handgun in his right hand, pointed towards the ground. I believe [REDACTED] was behind him. I turned into a parking lot to the east of Towne Place Suites. I got out of my cruiser with my weapon drawn. I pointed it at the suspect and ordered him to stop. He kept walking. I got back into my car. I heard someone air that the suspect just racked the slide and to lock down the Columbus MEPS (military entrance processing station). I drove east to Columbus MEPS and turned into the parking lot. I drove to the front of the building and yelled to a civilian to go inside. I got out of my cruiser to get a visual on the suspect.”

[REDACTED] continued in his statement, *“I saw the suspect start walking north and he crossed Taylor Road. I got into my cruiser and drove back to the front of the Columbus MEPS parking lot entrance. I parked and exited my cruiser with my weapon drawn. I ran north across Taylor Road. I saw the suspect to my west and I saw [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were behind him. I aird that the suspect was in the driveway of 780 Taylor (the driveway is very long as the house is approximately 100-120 yards from the road). There was a long line of large bushes and trees that ran east/west along edge of the yard of 780 Taylor, separating it from the sidewalk on the north side of Taylor Road. I could see the suspect through the branches and I kept my weapon pointed at him. I walked a couple feet west (closer to the other officers) who were telling the suspect to put down the gun and that they wanted to talk. I saw the suspect standing in the driveway of 780 Taylor with a gun in his right hand that was pressed up against his right temple. The suspect said something like “it’s all over for me” or words to that effect. I told him to put the gun down so we could talk and that it was ok and not a big deal.”*

[REDACTED] wrote in his statement regarding the shooting incident, *“I saw [REDACTED] pull up to my right (east). I asked if he had less lethal and he got the bean bag shotgun out of the back of his cruiser. He ran behind me with the shotgun and got with [REDACTED]. They began walking north. The suspect turned and started advancing east. I was concerned about the house at 820 Taylor Road, as it is located much closer to the sidewalk and the suspect’s path would lead him directly to that home. I started walking east, paralleling the suspect. [REDACTED] fired the beanbag round at the suspect and the suspect started running east. I yelled to hit him with 2 more and began running east. I did not hear the shotgun discharge again and a second*

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or two later I heard multiple gunshots. I could not see the suspect or other officers at the time gunfire erupted. My view was partially obstructed due to the bushes and trees but at times I could see the suspect between the branches. I stopped just south of the suspect, where there was a bit of an opening in the bushes and trees. Through the branches I saw the suspect was down on his left side (I did not see him go down). I saw him start to lift his right arm to point his gun at the officers who were to his west. I yelled at him to drop the gun and I discharged my weapon at the suspect. The suspect's arm went down and I stopped firing. The suspect did not appear to be moving. I ran west to the driveway and joined the other officers on scene."

██████████ discussed his decision to fire his duty weapon, *"I believe I fired 5 rounds at the suspect. This is based on my review of the BWC footage. I fired all of my shots in controlled succession. I would estimate I fired all of my rounds in 3-4 seconds. I would estimate I was approximately 20-25 feet from the suspect at the time I fired. I fired from a standing position with a two-handed grip at a downward angle. I believe I used my sights. I did not have any cover but may have had some concealment from the bushes and trees that separated the suspect and me. My backdrop was the ground. The direction of my shots was north. My target was the suspect's back/right shoulder, as he was laying his left side in with his back towards me. I stopped firing because the suspect's arm (which had the gun pointed at officers near the driveway) went down and he did not appear to be moving."*

██████████ continued regarding firing his weapon, *"Immediately prior to firing at the suspect, I heard multiple rounds being fired and I did not know who was firing. At the moment I fired, the suspect had just gone to the ground and was raising his gun towards officers. Prior to this, he had been given numerous opportunities to comply and drop the gun. He refused. Even after an exchange of gunfire and being on the ground (presumably from being hit), he chose to again raise his weapon and point it at officers. At the time I discharged my weapon, I was in immediate fear for the lives of the officers who were near the driveway, directly to the west of the suspect, as he was raising his firearm at them. I believed that he was going to shoot and kill or seriously injure one of them. I do not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect the lives of those officers in the driveway at the time I discharged my weapon. I believe my actions were consistent with the law, as well as my training and experiences as a law enforcement officer. I did not have a taser with me at the time of this incident, it was in my cruiser, as I had been preparing to leave for the day. In addition, use of the taser would not have been appropriate in this situation because the suspect was armed with a deadly weapon and the taser requires an unobstructed path to be utilized and there were trees/bushes separating the suspect and me."*

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Dispatch-Related Information

According to the notes from Gahanna PD's CAD (computer-aided dispatch) report, the call for service reason was documented as check/identity fraud and the "Priority" number was "1" (one). The time of the call was 0859 hours and the location of the incident was Springhill Suites at 665 Taylor Road and the caller was identified as Leigha Lautzenhiser (hotel manager). All Gahanna PD officers dispatched to the call were documented in the report. The following was documented in the narrative notes:

- 12/19/2024 0900 – guest in rm 112 used a fraudulent credit card to book the room
- 12/19/2024 0952 – blk hoodie gray pants, has a gun
- 12/19/2024 0952 – walking eb on taylor hisp male
- 12/19/2024 0953 – handgun on him per [REDACTED]
- 12/19/2024 0953 – walking eb, cpd chopper, just racked the slide
- 12/19/2024 0954 – S45 adv c40 on his right side
- 12/19/2024 0955 – walking northbound crossing towards taylor
- 12/19/2024 0955 – right side of body gun in hand
- 12/19/2024 0956 – 780 taylor rd and S45 req medics and he is threatening 58A // spoke to capt higgins and they are enr
- 12/19/2024 0957 – shots fired susp down
- 12/19/2024 1001 – 780 taylor rd behind the hedge, ois

GPD received one (1) 911 emergency call regarding this incident, from Leigha Lautzenhiser (Lautzenhiser), general manager at Springhill Suites. Lautzenhiser advised she had a guest attempt to use a fraudulent credit card to pay for his hotel room. Lautzenhiser advised the guest was in room 112. Lautzenhiser reported the actual owner of the credit card used by the guest called Springhill Suites and asked why his credit card was being charged because he was not at the hotel. GPD dispatcher advised Lautzenhiser she was sending a police officer to her location.

Video Recordings

BCI received body-worn camera (BWC) video evidence related to the incident from GPD, which was subsequently reviewed. Please review the actual videos and the correlating investigative report documenting BCI's review of these videos for specific details.

BWC video shows GPD officers making contact with Russell at hotel room 112 inside SpringHill Suites, where Russell flees via the hotel room window. GPD officers locate Russell in a parking lot east of SpringHill Suites, where they issue numerous verbal commands in an attempt to gain compliance with Russell. Russell can be seen carrying

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a black handgun in his right hand as he walks eastbound through multiple parking lots south of Taylor Road. GPD officers follow Russell and give Russell continuous verbal commands to drop his gun, to which Russell does not comply. Russell crosses Taylor Road and stops at the driveway area at 780 Taylor Road. Russell turns to face GPD officers and can be seen pointing his gun at his own head.



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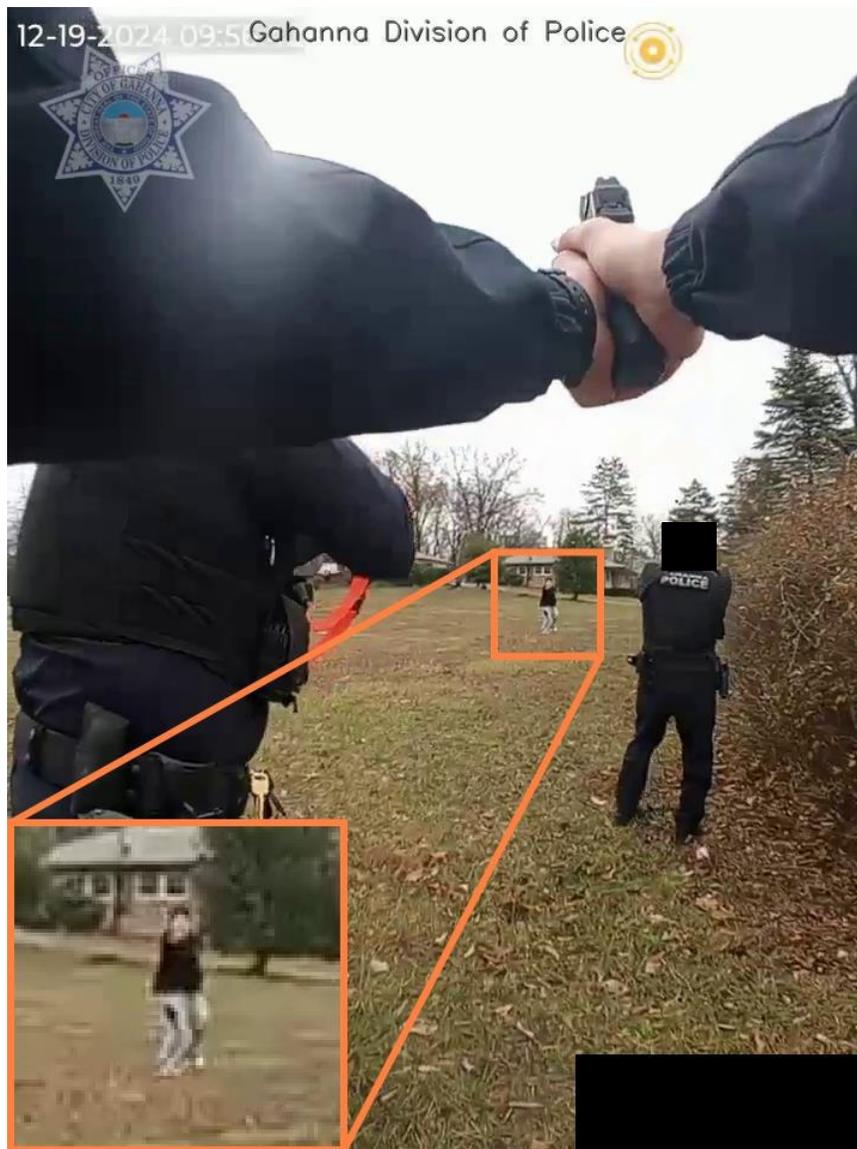


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GPD officers attempt to de-escalate Russell and instruct him to drop his gun. Russell can be heard speaking to GPD officers, reportedly making suicidal statements, to which GPD officers try to convince Russell not to harm himself. Russell is then seen running into the grassy area east of the driveway. [REDACTED] approaches with a "less lethal" shotgun and deploys a "bean bag" round at Russell. Russell runs several yards before turning to face GPD officers, then appears to point his gun in the direction of GPD officers.



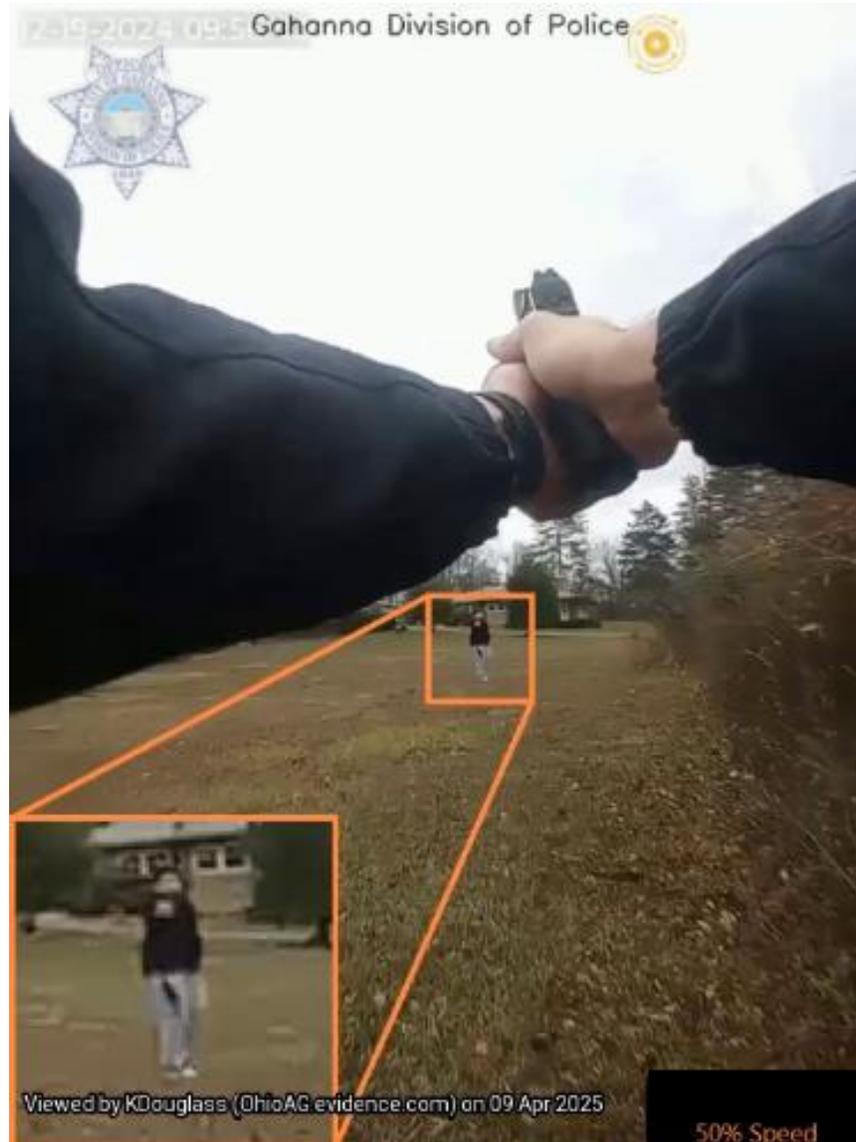
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Multiple gunshots can be heard as Russell points his gun at GPD officers. [REDACTED] appears to fire multiple shots at Russell, who falls to the ground. "Shots fired" is announced on the radio.

While on the ground, Russell appears to still be moving and manipulating the gun which is still in his hand. GPD officers give Russell verbal commands to drop the gun. Russell then appears to again point the gun at himself, then quickly point the gun in

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the direction of GPD officers. Several additional gunshots can be heard. [REDACTED] transitions to his duty pistol and appears to fire his weapon at Russell, [REDACTED] appears to fire at Russell with his rifle. [REDACTED] is positioned on the southern side of a tree/brush line along Taylor Road, where he fires several shots through the brush towards Russell.



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A GPD officer calls for other officers to stop firing their weapons. EMS response is requested via radio. When Russell is observed to no longer be moving, GPD officers approach his location. [REDACTED] moves a black handgun away from Russell's person. GPD officers secure Russell, then begin locating injuries and rendering first aid treatment. GPD officers bring medical supplies to Russell's location, which are administered to Russell's identified injuries. EMS medics arrive and take over first aid. Russell was transported to Mount Carmel Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

Conclusion

All persons known to have relevant information regarding this investigation have been interviewed (or attempted), and all known pertinent records and evidence have been obtained and reviewed. BCI will continue to offer investigative assistance into any newly identified witnesses or information relative to this criminal investigation. BCI's investigation into this Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) is concluded unless such new information/witnesses is/are identified through grand jury or other means.

Agents remain available for consultation and/or to perform any additional investigation, analysis, processing and/or other assistance/involvement which might be deemed to be necessary to the investigation.

Contact Information

The preceding information comprises only a portion of facts and circumstances collected during the investigation of the officer-involved critical incident (OICI). For further review of specific information or documentation collected during the investigation, please refer to the individual reports and documents from which this summary was derived.

Any questions regarding the content or context of the information contained in this document can be directed to the attention of Special Agent Kyle Douglass. SA Douglass can be reached via email at Kyle.Douglass@OhioAGO.gov or by telephone, at 614-949-6278.

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