



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



2024-1658

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 2212 Tryon Rd.,  
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004

**Investigative Activity:** Interview with Lieutenant Zachary Ropos  
**Involves:** Lieutenant Zachary Ropos (W)  
**Activity Date:** 06/20/2024  
**Activity Location:** Lake County Sheriff's Office-104 East Erie Street,  
Painesville, Ohio  
**Authoring Agent:** SA Cory Momchilov #64

### Narrative:

On June 20, 2024, at 1156 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Cory Momchilov (Momchilov) and SA Jesse Bynum (Bynum) interviewed Lake County Sheriff's Lieutenant Zachary Ropos (Lieutenant Ropos) The interview took place at the Lake County Sheriff's Office located at 104 E. Erie Street, Painesville, Ohio. The Interview was audio recorded.

Lieutenant Ropos was identified as being a police officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the June 1, 2024, officer-involved shooting which occurred in the area of 2212 Tryon Road, Ashtabula, Ohio. Reportedly, Lieutenant Ropos did not discharge a firearm during the course of the incident. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this officer.

Lieutenant Ropos stated his radio call sign on June 1, 2024, was "Ropos" He has been employed by the Lake County Sheriff's Office for approximately 10 years. Lieutenant Ropos has been a member of the Lake County Reginal SWAT Team for approximately 8 years. Lieutenant Ropos was wearing an "operation uniform" which consists of a long-sleeve shirt, external ballistic vest, duty boots and a helmet. Lieutenant Ropos also stated he was armed with a 40-millimeter gas launcher. He stated he was not under the influence of any substance that would impair his memory or judgment during the incident or during the interview with BCI. He does not wear corrective lenses.

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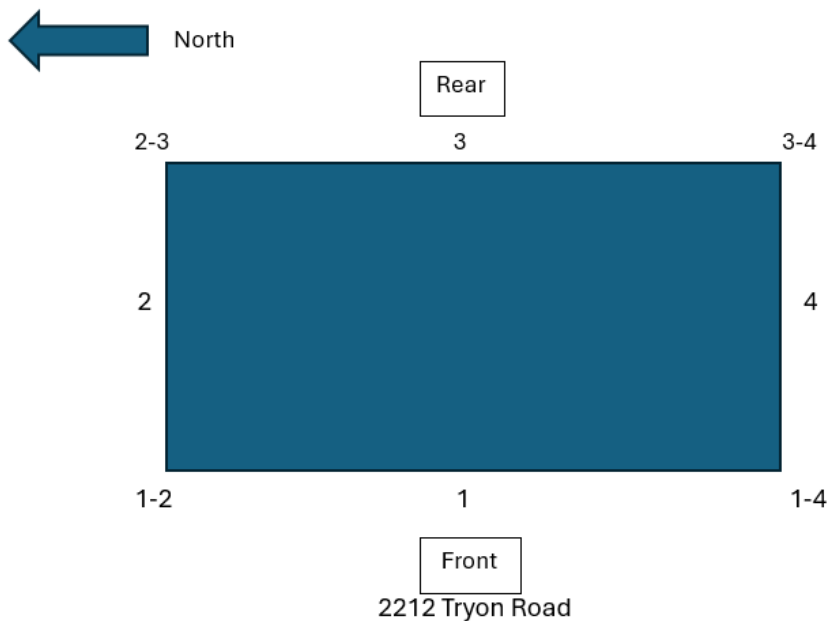
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**Precursor Information**

During tactical situations, a tactical numbering system is often utilized to quickly identify positions around a residence. The main entrance of the residence is usually referred to as the "1 side", counting clockwise around the house, the sides are then sequentially numbered. The corners are then designated by indicating which sides meet at that corner, e.g. corner 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 1-4. This number system was utilized by the Lake County Reginal SWAT Team during this incident (See diagram below).



The Lake County Reginal SWAT Team had two armored vehicles on scene. A smaller armored vehicle, which team members refer to as "David" and a larger armored vehicle which is referred to as "Goliath."

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SA Momchilov asked Lieutenant Ropos if he describe how he became involved in the incident and what actions he took.

Lieutenant Ropos explained that he was dispatched to Tryon Road in reference to a barricaded male with a firearm and was one of the first team members to arrive. Lieutenant Ropos stated he initially deployed with a 12 gauge less lethal shotgun and was driven to the scene in Assistant Commander Tichel's pickup truck (Deputy Tichel). While on scene, waiting for the arrival of the armored vehicle, he took a position near an Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office cruiser near the 1-4 corner of the residence.

Eventually the Lake County Regional SWAT Team's armored vehicle arrived on scene and Lieutenant Ropos deployed with a 40-millimeter launcher, which were filled with direct impact foam rounds. The team began giving verbal announcements. At one point, the individual from inside the house appeared in the front window of the residence with a knife in his hand. According to Lieutenant Ropos the individual made a slashing movement towards the front bay window and the team continued to hail the individual.

It was decided that Lieutenant Ropos would fire the 40-milimeter direct impact rounds at the residence in an attempt to get the individual's attention. Lieutenant Ropos stated he fired the direct impact rounds at the 1-4 corner bedroom window and at the front door.

Lieutenant Ropos stated, "There's a big bay window. We broke that out with a ram in order to get his attention. Still nothing. Um, we threw a throw phone in there. Um, he wouldn't answer it. Threw drones in there at which time, we see him level the shotgun at a drone, um, and he didn't fire the shotgun at that point, um, but then all of a sudden, he did emerge, fired one round at the windshield of the David truck."

Lieutenant Ropos explained, "Um, the chronologic of this, I don't know if it's spot on, but at some point, we became a, we, um, developed a plan, myself, Assistant Commander Tichel and, um, [REDACTED], to remove the electric panel from his house because, um, I guess, I'm gonna reverse a little bit. We threw a flash bag. I threw a flash bag from 1- 4 corner over here, um, at the front of the residence. We thought it wasn't loud enough. Maybe the impact rounds weren't loud enough. That'll get his attention. Once again, nothing. This Goliath truck pulled up over here. They also threw a flash bag underneath this window with no attention. He didn't give us any attention at that point. Um, we developed a plan to rip the, uh, electric meter off the house to disable power from the house because that team told us that there was loud music playing inside, so we didn't want him to say he couldn't hear us or anything like that giving him the, uh, announcements. We ripped the power, um, This document is the property of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and is confidential in nature. Neither the document nor its contents are to be disseminated outside your agency except as provided by law - a statute, an administrative rule, or any rule of procedure.



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and then we made our way back to the truck. Um, I don't know, I few years ago, we had a person attempt to blow up the house using gas, so we came up another gas, or plan to then disabled his gas on the house. We turned the gas meter off."

Lieutenant Ropos advised that "We then developed a gas plan. We put a gas plan together." Lieutenant Ropos then fired between 6 to seven rounds of gas, using the 40-milimeter launcher into the downstairs basement window.

Lieutenant Ropos continued, "We repositioned, um, seeing if that had an effect on him cause we wanted to eliminate the basement from him being able to go into the basement. Um, and then the other team moved around and, um, was taking out the bathroom. It has his like water source so he couldn't get water. Um, still no, still despondent towards us. So, we, we repositioned again, and I fired another 6 to 7 rounds inside the, there was two basements, um, just single pane windows. So, I went to this, uh, second basement window at that point, fired about 6 to 7 rounds in there, and, um, nothing happened. Um, later on in the night, we, we saw him taunting us on the drone footage. Um, just kind of moving around the house and waving the shotgun around, and, um, so then, um, this bedroom window, we believe that's where he was getting his ammunition from. Um, and that was, um, relayed to us as, um, we were most certain that was his bedroom. So, I fired one round of gas into that room, reloaded, fired a second round and contemporaneously with me firing the second round, he shot back at us."

Lieutenant Ropos further stated, "Um, I don't know if, it was definitely near us, um, but our truck was about right here. That's where I was firing from, and we heard it go through the wood line over here. So, at that point, we kind of regrouped because we had a sniper back in that area and we wanna make sure everyone was okay. Um, so everyone gave us the okay. Um, so everyone gave us the okay. They're good. Um, at some point, the, um, Goliath truck, their 40-millimeter gas can, or gas gun went down. There was a round stuck in it. So, we began moving our armored vehicle down the roadway. They met up with us about right here. Um, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were my lethal cover at that point, and I was directing, um, special, Special Agent Malita (Agent Christopher Malita) across to the other truck to go hand them a new 40-millimeter gun. Um, he made it there safely. I check with, um, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to make sure they were set on the house. Um, I gave Malita the okay to come across. I start to reposition on the house. At that exact moment, I see the male subject in the window start to his bring his shotgun up, and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] fire the rounds at him."

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SA Momchilov asked Lieutenant Ropos is he was outside of the armored vehicle during the entire incident. Lieutenant Ropos advised that he was. Lieutenant Ropos advised that he was by a tree, near the road, on the 1-4 corner of the residence.

SA Momchilov asked if Lieutenant Ropos observed any portion of the first shooting incident.

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "No, I did not. I heard it, but I did not see him level the shotgun at the truck or, um, him at that point.

SA Momchilov asked, "Okay. How do you know that he leveled the shotgun at the truck?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "Just from radio communication that you, we heard him, um, Raymond was the driver, um, and he gets on the radio and says he's pointing the shotgun at the truck. He's pointing the shotgun at the truck. They actually, and then we all heard the round go off and Raymond (Deputy Jeffrey Raymond) said, yep, direct contact, front right windshield."

Special Agent Momchilov: Okay. So, the second incident, you said you were lobbing, I don't know if lobbing is correct word, you were shooting gas inside the residence?

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "Correct.

SA Momchilov asked, "You were near the 1 - 4 corner shooting in that bedroom?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "Yes. Yeah, so we were in the roadway using David as our cover. Um, I was right off the driver's side front of the David armor."

SA Momchilov then asked, "How do you know he fired from that at that time?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "So I shoot one 40-millimeter into the window. Reload. Put another one in. I shoot. I see the hole I make, and then you, I already heard my bang from my gun and then you just hear another boom and then a second, another hole forms coming out of the window.

SA Momchilov asked, "In your opinion, do you think he was firing towards you guys or towards SWAT team members?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "I would assume so knowing the, I mean these, they're diesel trucks. They're very loud, and with the communications on, us talking over, um, a diesel truck. We're talking maybe louder than we should be, um, in our team communications. So yes, I do believe he was attempting to fire at us. Thankfully, he was unsuccessful in actually making contact with us."

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SA Momchilov asked Lieutenant Ropos where he was positioned at when the two trucks met to exchange the gas gun.

Lieutenant Ropos stated, "I am, so if the truck is moving up, they're, the driver side door, um, I'm following, cause I can see through the driver's side window, passenger side window, um, cause I'll, I'm solely armed to the 40 millimeter, my handgun, um, my job is to put a less lethal round on him, if he were to emerge from the residence, not a deadly force situation. Um, so I'm looking through that and directing, uh, Special Agent Malita across to the other truck."

SA Momchilov stated, "Okay, so you're behind the driver's side?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "The driver's side door pretty much, yep."

SA Momchilov asked, "And you said you could still see the front of the house through the glass?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "Yes sir, yep."

SA Momchilov then stated, "Okay. I think you said at one point, he then presents himself with a weapon or he?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "So during, when I see him present himself with a weapon, I am inches from [REDACTED] at that point. Um, cause he's on like the hood of the vehicle, um, and I'm using him, he's my lethal cover. I have all the confidence in the world in him and so I'm, I check with him to make sure we're good to move. I check with [REDACTED] to make sure we're good to move. I give him the lead of the command to move. I start positioning myself towards the residence and that's when I see him in the window.

SA Momchilov stated, "Okay. Are you positioning yourself, like, uh, are you moving from cover or you still looking through the windows?"

Zak Ropos "No, so I'm more at the hood at this point. When I was walking up with the vehicle, when we're actually moving, I was behind that driver's side door. When we get to our stopping location, I moved forward to provide [REDACTED] with support on his end."

SA Momchilov stated, "So your view was unobstructed at that point?"

Lieutenant Ropos replied, "Correct."

SA Momchilov asked, "Could you tell if he fired at that point, the, the individual from inside the house?"

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Lieutenant Ropos advised that the individual did not fire.

SA Momchilov asked if Lieutenant Ropos had spoken with any other team members about what occurred.

Lieutenant Ropos stated, "After the incident, yeah, we all were meeting, um, in the roadway but that's about it." Lieutenant Ropos advised that no one has asked him to lie or otherwise try to influence his statement.

Lieutenant Ropos advised that he was not wearing a body-worn camera during the incident.

SA Momchilov advised Lieutenant Ropos that he previously mentioned drone footage. SA Momchilov asked Lieutenant Ropos if he was actually viewing the drone footage or if the information was being relayed to him.

Lieutenant Ropos explained, "What can happen is if the second the drone goes up, all team leaders on the team get a notification on our phones saying it's called drone sense. That drone sense has been deployed. So, we can click on it. Uh, [REDACTED] and I were on this tree, and he actually put his phone up on the tree, so we were watching live footage inside the residence as we were holding that cover."

The interview with Lieutenant Ropos was audio recorded. The audio recording is attached to this investigative report.

**References:**

None

**Attachments:**

1. Interview with Lieutenant Zachary Ropos

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