



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



2022-0826

Officer-Involved Critical Incident - W. 46th Street, between Collins Blvd. and Valley View Blvd.

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer  
 Involves: APD Ofc. Brandon Zukoski  
 Activity Date: 7/26/2022  
 Activity Location: Diemert & Associates, 1360 SOM Center Road, Mayfield Heights, Ohio 44124  
 Authoring Agent: SA Jon Lieber #50

**Narrative:**

On Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at 1018 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Jon Lieber (Lieber) interviewed Ashtabula Police Department (APD) Officer (Ofc.) Brandon Zukoski (Zukoski), who was accompanied by his attorney, Tom Hanculak, from the Fraternal Order of Police. The interview took place at Diemert & Associates, 1360 SOM Center Road, Mayfield Heights, Ohio 44124. The interview was audio recorded.

Zukoski was identified as being a police officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the April 13, 2022, officer-involved shooting which occurred in the area of W. 46th Street between Collins Blvd. and Valley View Blvd., Ashtabula, Ohio. Reportedly, Zukoski 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.

Zukoski stated his radio call sign on April 13, 2022, was P6. He has been employed by the APD for about five and a half years. He has been a police officer for a total of about seven years. During the incident, Zukoski wore his standard police uniform with a metal police badge affixed to it. He also wore a concealed ballistic vest and duty belt. He drove APD unit #P6, a 2015 Dodge Charger, marked with APD and K9 emblems and emergency lights. He considered himself to be well-represented as a police officer during the incident. 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. Zukoski was wearing a body camera but it was not activated during the incident. Zukoski said that the battery on their body cameras usually do not last a full shift. Zukoski said that during the incident, he could see that APD Lieutenant ██████████ (██████████) had his body camera activated and therefore Zukoski had his off. Zukoski said that when their cameras are activated, a red light can be seen illuminated on the front of the camera.

Zukoski stated that he and ██████████ were at the APD when they received a service call for a suicidal male on the 46<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. ██████████ walked to the west end of the bridge, while Zukoski drove his cruiser to the bridge. Ultimately, ██████████ walked back to the APD and got

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his cruiser. Zukoski said that they did not activate their lights or siren because they wanted to keep their location unknown to the suicidal subject.

Upon arriving at the west end of the bridge, Zukoski saw a person in the distance. Zukoski then retrieved his rifle from his vehicle and used the optic, which is able to magnify at 4x power, to observe the subject. Zukoski stated that he believed the subject to be approximately 80 yards away from him. Zukoski later learned that the subject was farther away than 80 yards. Zukoski said that he learned the subject's name, David Ward (Ward), from hearing it on radio traffic. Zukoski could not recall having any prior contact with Ward. SA Lieber asked about the lighting conditions on the bridge. Zukoski said that the bridge is partially lit so there are both illuminated, as well as dark sections.

Zukoski observed the subject on the north side of the bridge in a darker area. Zukoski recalled hearing radio traffic that Ward told dispatch that he would shoot the first officer that he sees. As other officers began arriving, they were told to block off the east side of the bridge. Zukoski said that Ward was smoking cigarettes while he was talking to APD Ofc. Sheri Allen (Allen) on the phone. As time passed, Ward would walk westbound toward Zukoski and [REDACTED] and then stop. Ward did this several times. Zukoski stated that they called in the Ashtabula Fire Department (AFD), as well as the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) and the Ohio Highway Patrol (OSP), to help block off nearby streets.

Zukoski recalled one point where Ward put the shotgun down and smoked a cigarette. Ward then picked up the shotgun and began to move toward Zukoski and [REDACTED]. Zukoski yelled to the subject to stop. At this time, Ward slowed down. Ward then saw the OSP trooper. Zukoski stated that the trooper was parked under a street light at West 45<sup>th</sup> Street and Collins Boulevard. Ward then moved toward Zukoski and [REDACTED] at a speed faster than walking but not a full run. Zukoski said that he was positioned on the ground next to his cruiser. Zukoski stated that he took his rifle off of safe and began to press the trigger. Zukoski then heard [REDACTED]'s shot and Ward fell.

Zukoski confirmed that he was using his 4x magnifier at the time [REDACTED] fired at Ward. Zukoski estimated the distance to Ward to be between 60 and 80 yards at the time the shot was fired. Zukoski stated that Ward had the shotgun in his hands at the time he was shot. Zukoski said that Ward did not have the shotgun shouldered and pointed at them at the time, but he couldn't remember in exactly what position Ward had the shotgun. SA Lieber asked what prompted Zukoski to begin to press his trigger to take a shot. Zukoski said that Ward had a shotgun; and, the closer Ward got to them, the more dangerous the situation was. Zukoski knew that they couldn't let Ward continue to walk into the city. Zukoski also said that the closer Ward

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is with the shotgun, the more effective the shotgun would be. Zukoski stated that he believed that Ward was going to do harm to the officers.

Zukoski also said that Ward told dispatch that he would shoot the police. Zukoski said that if a person is willing to shoot the police, the person would be willing to shoot anyone. Zukoski said that during the incident, Allen texted him that she turned her radio down because she was trying to negotiate with Ward and also block traffic. Zukoski said that Allen also texted him the following:

12:37 AM – Allen messages that she is on the phone with Ward and she doesn't want him to hear the radio traffic. Allen also says that Ward is drunk.

12:44 AM – Zukoski messages Allen asking for an update.

12:52 AM – Allen messages that Ward is wanting suicide by cop.

12:55 AM – Allen messages that Ward will calm down and then flip out again.

12:58 AM – Allen asks for an additional officer because she is talking to Ward and also stopping traffic.

1:12 AM – Allen messages that Ward is talking about walking to Zukoski and [REDACTED] and forcing them to shoot him.

1:19 AM – Allen messages that Ward stated that he sees Zukoski and [REDACTED] as well as the trooper.

1:20 AM – Allen messages that Ward says that he has a 12-gauge.

1:22 AM – Zukoski messages Allen asking if she still needs someone to assist her with traffic.

Zukoski said that as he was receiving the text messages from Allen, he would pass that information along verbally to [REDACTED]. Zukoski said that he was approximately 15 feet away from [REDACTED] during the incident.

After Ward went to the ground, Zukoski called the OSP trooper over to their area. Zukoski and the trooper moved closer to Ward; so that just in case another shot had to be taken, the backdrop would be clear. Zukoski then saw officers approaching from the east side of the bridge. Zukoski and the trooper then backed off. The fire department arrived and provided treatment to Ward. Zukoski stated that the fire department was already on scene and staged nearby.

The interview concluded at approximately 1043 hours.

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