



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



2022-0407
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 1783 Penfield Rd, Columbus
(L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Ofc. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (S)
Date of Activity: 04/13/2022
Activity Location: – 3360 Tremont Road Suite 230, Columbus, OH 43221, Franklin County
Author: SA James Poole

Narrative:

On April 21, 2022 at approximately 1834 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) Special Agent James Poole (SA Poole) interviewed Columbus Division of Police (CPD) Officer [REDACTED] (Officer [REDACTED]) in response to an Officer Involved Critical Incident (OICI). The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this individual. Also present for the interview was Officer [REDACTED] Attorney, Nicole Wannemacher.

On Thursday, February 24, 2022, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation Special Investigations and Crime Scene Units were requested by Columbus Police Department to respond and investigate a potential critical incident at 1783 Penfield Road, Columbus, Ohio. Special Agent Supervisor Kevin Barbeau spoke to CPD Sgt. Terry McConnell, who explained CPD officers were engaged in a vehicle pursuit with a subject from a domestic complaint. While the involved party was fleeing, he was involved in a traffic crash where his vehicle went off the roadway and struck two (2) occupied homes. CPD officers located the driver, Jajuan Ball, (Ball) who was ejected and transported to Grant Medical Center. Ball died from unknown injuries.

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.

Prior to beginning the interview, SA Poole provided Officer [REDACTED] with a BCI "Criminal Investigation Notification" form. SA Poole advised BCI was conducting a criminal investigation separate from any internal investigation that CPD may be conducting. Officer [REDACTED] was told his interview was voluntary and he could stop answering questions at any time. Officer [REDACTED] verbally confirmed he understood the contents of the form and signed the document further acknowledging his understanding. A copy of the signed Criminal Investigation Notification (CIN) is attached to this report.

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Attorney Nicole Wannemacher provided SA Poole with a written statement from Officer [REDACTED] regarding the OICI. SA Poole reviewed the statement upon receipt. Officer [REDACTED] signed his statement provided to BCI, and he verified the statement was a true and accurate depiction of the OICI. Please refer to Officer [REDACTED] statement for further details. A copy of the signed written statement was saved within the case file and is attached to this report.

Officer [REDACTED] wrote in his statement, "At a little before 2:00 a.m., I was driving in the area of James Road, and Officer [REDACTED] was in the passenger seat. We had just been dispatched on a call for service for property destruction when we heard Cruiser [REDACTED] air that he had a visual on a vehicle from what was believed to be a carjacking and the victim was injured. We decided to provide backup to Cruiser [REDACTED] as the information sounded as if this was going to be a felony stop. Officer [REDACTED] knew the area well, as he had previously worked 9 Precinct. He directed me where to go to get to the area that Cruiser [REDACTED] had spotted the vehicle, as we were only 2-3 miles away. As we were en-route, I believe Sgt. Lucci (S-13) aired that the suspect may have a weapon. From James Road, I believe I went north and turned right (east) onto Langfield Drive. I drove from Langfield Drive to Bexvie Avenue, north on Zettler Road, and then east on Deshler Avenue. As I was driving East on Deshler Avenue, I saw headlights coming towards us. Based off of the location that Officer [REDACTED] (Cruiser [REDACTED]) was airing, I knew it was the suspect coming at me. The suspect turned south onto Barnett Road and Cruiser [REDACTED] and then Cruiser [REDACTED] turned south onto Barnett Road behind the suspect. I turned south onto Barnett Road, but I was still a good distance (200-250 yards) behind Cruiser [REDACTED]. I believe Officer [REDACTED] aired that he was going to attempt to swope the suspect vehicle at the next intersection. At this point, I had closed some of the distance but was still approximately 150 yards behind Cruiser [REDACTED]. I saw Officer [REDACTED] (Cruiser [REDACTED]) position his cruiser alongside of the suspect car (I believe to get into position for the swoop), but the suspect accelerated and Officer [REDACTED] was not able to execute the swoop. I believe that Officer [REDACTED] and Cruiser [REDACTED] accelerated then activated their lights and sirens. I then activated the lights on my cruiser. The suspect continued to accelerate as if he was attempting to flee. He quickly turned west on Penfield Road and Cruisers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] followed behind him. That is the last time that I believe I had a visual on the suspect's vehicle."

Officer [REDACTED] also stated, "As I drove south on Niagara Road, I saw a male running in the road and at first I thought it may be the suspect. However, as I continued down Niagara Road, I saw flames at the end of the road near Penfield Road. I quickly accelerated towards the flames and parked the cruiser just north of 1783 Penfield Road. I exited the cruiser and quickly approached the suspect's vehicle that was crashed into the front east corner of 1783 Penfield."

SA Poole asked if Officer [REDACTED] believed his actions were consistent with his training and policy guidelines. Officer [REDACTED] stated, "Yes."

SA Poole asked if Officer [REDACTED] believed the officers around him during the incident took actions that were consistent with training and policy guidelines. Officer [REDACTED] stated, "Yes."

Officer [REDACTED] answered a few follow-up questions that were consistent with his written statement. The interview concluded at hours 1840 hours.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: Recorded interview Ofc. Nathaniel [REDACTED] 4-21-22

Attachment # 02: Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Signed Statement

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Attachment # 03: Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Signed CIN

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STATEMENT OF OFFICER [REDACTED] [REDACTED] BADGE NO. [REDACTED]

This statement is regarding my involvement in an incident that occurred on Thursday, February 24, 2022, between approximately 1:55 a.m. and 2:15 a.m. I am providing this statement voluntarily, as part of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) investigation into this matter.

My date of hire with the Columbus Division of Police (CPD or the Division) is June of 2013. My regular assignment is Z2E1-11. My regular duty hours are 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. My regular days off are Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.

On the day of this incident, I was wearing the winter uniform consisting of navy pants, a dark shirt, and a navy jacket with my badge on the outside of the jacket. I was also wearing an internal ballistic vest. I was carrying my Division-issued service weapon: a Smith & Wesson 2.0 9mm, loaded with Division-issued ammunition. I was not carrying a backup firearm, but I was equipped with a taser. I was in Cruiser [REDACTED] and Officer [REDACTED] was my partner.

I do not wear glasses or contacts and my uncorrected vision is good. I do not wear a hearing aid and my hearing is good. I do not suffer from any disabilities which would impair my ability to perform my duties as a police officer. I do not have any uses of force which have been found outside of policy. I did not consume alcohol or any medications—over the counter or prescription—that could impair the performance of my duties in the 24 hours before this incident. I worked special duty from noon to 6:30 p.m. the day before this incident. I arrived at the start of my shift well-rested.

At a little before 2:00 a.m., I was driving in the area of James Road, and Officer [REDACTED] was in the passenger seat. We had just been dispatched on a call for service for property destruction when we heard Cruiser [REDACTED] air that he had a visual on a vehicle from what was believed to be a carjacking and the victim was injured. We decided to provide backup to Cruiser

■ as the information sounded as if this was going to be a felony stop. Officer ■ knew the area well, as he had previously worked 9 Precinct. He directed me where to go to get to the area that Cruiser ■ had spotted the vehicle, as we were only 2-3 miles away. As we were en-route, I believe Sgt. Lucci (S-13) aired that the suspect may have a weapon.

From James Road, I believe I went north and turned right (east) onto Langfield Drive. I drove from Langfield Drive to Bexvie Avenue, north on Zettler Road, and then east on Deshler Avenue. As I was driving East on Deshler Avenue, I saw headlights coming towards us. Based off of the location that Officer ■ (Cruiser ■) was airing, I knew it was the suspect coming at me. The suspect turned south onto Barnett Road and Cruiser ■ and then Cruiser ■ turned south onto Barnett Road behind the suspect.

I turned south onto Barnett Road, but I was still a good distance (200-250 yards) behind Cruiser ■. I believe Officer ■ aired that he was going to attempt to swope the suspect vehicle at the next intersection. At this point, I had closed some of the distance but was still approximately 150 yards behind Cruiser ■. I saw Officer ■ (Cruiser ■) position his cruiser along side of the suspect car (I believe to get into position for the swoop), but the suspect accelerated and Officer ■ was not able to execute the swoop. I believe that Officer ■ and Cruiser ■ accelerated then activated their lights and sirens. I then activated the lights on my cruiser.

The suspect continued to accelerate as if he was attempting to flee. He quickly turned west on Penfield Road and Cruisers ■ and ■ followed behind him. That is the last time that I believe I had a visual on the suspect's vehicle. I followed behind Cruiser ■ and crossed Zettler Road. Cruisers ■ and ■ turned north onto Niagara Road and I followed. I believe it was as I drove down Niagara Road that Sgt. Lucci aired that the pursuit was no longer authorized as it

was a domestic violence incident, and the victim did not want to pursue charges. I drove up to the dead end on Niagara Road and turned around and began driving south on Niagara Road.

As I drove south on Niagara Road, I saw a male running in the road and at first I thought it may be the suspect. However, as I continued down Niagara Road, I saw flames at the end of the road near Penfield Road. I quickly accelerated towards the flames and parked the cruiser just north of 1783 Penfield Road. I exited the cruiser and quickly approached the suspect's vehicle that was crashed into the front east corner of 1783 Penfield. The front west corner of 1789 Penfield Road was heavily damaged with bricks missing and a damaged garage door, as the suspect's vehicle appeared to have hit it and ricocheted into 1783 Penfield Road. I tried to open the back driver's side door, but it was locked. I did not see anyone in the vehicle, and I presumed the suspect had fled on foot. I went to the front door of 1789 Penfield Road and alerted the residences to the accident and to evacuate the house. I believe I then aired requesting a suspect description as I believed he was on foot and would be relatively close.

I walked east on Penfield Road a couple of houses and turned south to go behind the houses and check the backyards. I noticed a fire hydrant in the side yard of one of the houses and realized that the suspect must have hit it. I did not notice anyone in the yards. I returned to the scene and spoke with the occupants of 1783 Penfield Road. I asked them if they wanted to move one of their vehicles from the driveway, as they had 2 parked in the driveway which angled down towards the house with a retaining wall on the east side, and the suspect's vehicle was in the far upper corner of the driveway, partially on top of the retaining wall. They, however, did not wish to move their vehicles. I moved my cruiser so that there would be a clear path for fire. As I walked back towards 1783 Penfield Road, I heard someone state they had found him. I asked if the suspect was in the garage as I quickly advanced towards the house.

Several officers were down in the driveway (the deepest part, closest to the garage door) and were trying to get the suspect out of the driveway and to the yard. Several other officers assisted and got the suspect up to the step of the front door of 1783 Penfield Road.

Firefighters had arrived on scene and began accessing the suspect. I heard someone state that he had a pulse. Medics placed him on a stretcher and took him to the hospital. I asked Officer [REDACTED] where the suspect was found and he pointed to the corner of the driveway.

Multiple other officers had arrived and secured the scene. I went to the 11/12 Precinct substation. I waited there until investigators with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation arrived and did a round count on my weapon. This ended my involvement in this incident.

At the time I got behind Cruisers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], I believed the suspect had assaulted a female and committed a carjacking. I was never able to get within a close proximity of Cruiser [REDACTED]. I would estimate that the closest I got to Cruiser [REDACTED] was 100-120 yards. I would also estimate that I was only behind Cruiser [REDACTED] for less than 2 minutes before the suspect wrecked. Since it was approximately 2:00 a.m., and we were in a residential area, there were no other vehicles traveling the roads. During this time, I do not recall seeing any other traffic, nor do I recall seeing any other civilians outside. I would estimate that I drove approximately 55-60 mph, and the suspect's vehicle was easily pulling away from me. The road conditions were clear, but given the residential area, there was not a lot of street lighting.

At the time of this incident, I did not see the suspect's car collide into either house on Penfield Road. I was too far back and behind two other cruisers.

After this incident, I had an opportunity to review the body worn camera (BWC) and cruiser video footage of this event. From my review of that footage, it appears that the suspect had wrecked into the homes on Penfield Road before I turned onto Niagara Road. However,

when I drove by the scene, I did not notice the wreck as I did not know that the cruisers ahead of me had lost the visual of the suspect's vehicle and I was too far back to have sights on the suspect.

I now know that the suspect's name is Jajuan Ball. I do not believe I have ever had any prior interaction, personally or professionally, with this individual.

This concludes my statement, and I am now prepared to answer any additional questions you may have at this time.


Officer  Badge # 

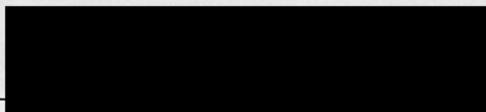


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Criminal Investigation Notification

1. This investigation is being conducted in order to determine whether any criminal laws have been violated on the part of those involved in this incident. Specifically, to collect facts and information to be provided to the prosecutor and/or grand jury in order for them to determine whether the conduct involved is authorized or prohibited by criminal statutes.
2. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may decline to answer or cease the interview at any time. You are entitled to have an attorney present if you wish.
3. The criminal investigation is separate from any internal, administrative investigation which your employer may or may not be independently conducting. You are not being compelled to give any statement or answer any questions. This is not a "Garrity" interview (where you could be required to answer).


Printed Name of Interviewee

4/21/22 6:36 PM
Date / Time


Signature of Interviewee

SA James Root
BCI Agent (Printed)

SA [Signature]
BCI Agent (Signature)

Nick Namerader