



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



2024-2614

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 1309 Yellowstone Road,
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44121

Investigative Activity: Neighborhood Canvass Conducted

Involves: Eileen Simmons (W), Eric Simmons (W), Calvin Lewis (W),
Jennifer Woda (W), Charles Houston (W)

Activity Date: 08/29/2024

Activity Location: Yellowstone Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44121

Authoring Agent: SA Nick Valente #139

Narrative:

On August 29, 2024, and August 30, 2024, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Nick Valente, SA Allison Fletcher, and Temporary Working Supervisor Matt Armstrong conducted a neighborhood canvass of the homes near 1309 Yellowstone Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. The purpose of the canvass was to locate witnesses and/or surveillance cameras that may have captured relevant information pertaining to the officer-involved shooting of Christian Thomas.

1305 Yellowstone Road:

Jennifer Woda (Woda), who lives directly next door and to the north of the subject residence, was interviewed by SA Valente. When asked to describe Christian Thomas (Thomas), as a person unrelated to this incident, Woda stated (2:04) "I mean, he's a teenager, that's about all I want to say. Ya know, he's a teenager."

Woda stated that she was home when the shooting occurred, but did not see the shooting take place. Woda stated she is good friends with her next-door neighbors (the Thomas family). Woda did hear yelling coming from outside the Thomas home, prior to the shooting, but did not pay any real attention to the yelling as it was a fairly typical occurrence for her neighbors.

Woda stated that leading up to the shooting she did hear a "bang" that sounded like a grill being pushed over. After hearing this sound, Woda heard voices outside but could not hear what was being said. Shortly after this, Woda heard two "pops" with a brief pause between them. After hearing these first two "pops", there was a short pause. After this pause, Woda heard more pops and believed these additional pops may have been the sound of seven additional gunshots. Woda described the latter group of pops as louder and occurring in quicker succession than the first two pops. Woda later noted the group of popping sounds as two distinct groups of pops, with the second, shorter burst of pops occurring shortly after the first.

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Woda recognized the group of popping sounds as gunfire. Woda yelled to her juvenile daughter who was downstairs to come upstairs. Her daughter did come upstairs moments later. Shortly after, Woda looked down her stairs and into her front yard, where she saw police officers outside. At that time, one of Woda's daughters observed Thomas lying in her driveway. Woda yelled to her daughters not to look out the windows at Thomas. Woda herself did not see Thomas lying in her driveway until significantly after the incident occurred.

When asked, Woda stated she could not make out anything said by the police or anything that may have been said by Thomas with except for the police yelling (6:14) "Ferrel, Ferrel, come out" prior to the sound of gunfire.

Woda stated that her younger daughter, who was on the first floor of the home at the time of the shooting, is 15.5 years old and is best friends with Thomas's sister who lives next door. Woda told SA Valente she did not want her daughter involved, and she would not make a statement to police. Woda explained her concerns with her daughter, making a statement by saying, (8:15) "She has a tendency to leap, take a lot of leaps, from what. I don't think she's gonna give, if she were to tell you things I don't know that it would be accurate. Cause she tends to like embellish." Woda went on to tell SA Valente she did not believe her daughter would be a reliable witness and had already said things about the shooting Woda knew to be incorrect.

The interview with Woda was conducted via telephone and the recording of this interview was attached to this report.

1315 Yellowstone Road:

Calvin Lewis (Lewis), who lives directly next door and to the south of the subject residence, was interviewed by SA Valente via telephone the morning after the officer-involved shooting. The interview with Lewis was audio recorded and the recording was attached to this report. Lewis stated he was home at the time of the shooting. Lewis stated he thought he heard a single gunshot around 2200 hours. Upon hearing this apparent gunshot, Lewis went downstairs and checked on his wife, who he found to be okay. Lewis then closed his garage door. Shortly thereafter, Lewis noticed police cars present outside his home. Lewis stated he was not looking outside the window when the subsequent shooting occurred. However, Lewis did hear gunfire, and believed multiple people were involved in what he described as a sounding like "a volley" of gunfire.

Lewis told SA Valente he reviewed his home security camera video from the time of the shooting. When he reviewed this video, Lewis heard police telling someone to come

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outside (of the subject residence). Lewis did not hear this himself at the time of the incident.

Lewis stated after the shooting subsided, he looked out his windows from the upstairs of his home. Lewis believed he saw the subject's father come outside the home at one point, but never saw the subject.

Lewis reported his wife was walking upstairs at the time of the shooting and did not see anything relevant to this investigation.

Lewis stated he did not associate with the subject or his family and had no relevant additional background on the subject or incident.

1312 Yellowstone Road:

Agents were unable to make contact with the resident(s) of this home.

1308 Yellowstone Road:

SA Valente spoke with Charles Hewston (Hewston) who resides at 1308 Yellowstone Road. When asked, Hewston stated his doorbell security camera was not functional at the time of the shooting. Hewston showed SA Valente his doorbell camera recordings and none were located during the time of the shooting. Hewston reported he and his wife were in bed and asleep when they were awoken to what they believed, at the time, were fireworks. Both Hewston and his wife went back to sleep without ever leaving their bedroom. Hewston only became aware the sounds he heard were possibly gunshots when Cleveland Heights Police came to his home after the event and asked about his doorbell camera. The interview of Hewston was recorded on SA Valente's body camera and saved as Reference Item C.

1314 Yellowstone Road:

On August 30, 2024, at approximately 0656 hours, SA Allison Fletcher (Fletcher) spoke with Eileen Simmons (Eileen), who resided at 1314 Yellowstone Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Eileen said she was home at the time of the incident on August 29, 2024. Sometime between the hours of 2200 and 2230 hours, Eileen was getting ready for bed and went to check if her front door was locked. At that time, she noticed multiple police cruisers parked in the street near her residence. She then went to the front bay window of her home so she could see the street better. Additional police cruisers began arriving and Eileen described the officers as being "in a hurry."

Eileen saw one officer return to their cruiser and retrieve a "larger gun" from the trunk of the vehicle. Eileen then heard a "pop." She opened her front door so she could hear

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better, and then heard additional gunfire in rapid succession. She noticed lights on a blue house across the street but was unable to determine where the incident occurred.

Eileen estimated the time-lapse of the incident as "just a few minutes."

Eileen could hear yelling throughout the incident; however, she was unable to make out what anyone was saying. After the gunfire ended, she did hear someone say, (4:10) "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry".

Eileen did not observe any of the involved officers fire their gun, and she did not observe the involved subject.

On September 1, 2024, at approximately 1423 hours, SA Fletcher spoke with Eric Simmons (Eric) who resided at 1314 Yellowstone Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Eric reached out to SA Fletcher, requesting to speak with her, regarding what he "heard and saw" during the officer-involved shooting that occurred on August 29, 2024.

Eric said he was home that evening with his wife, Eileen Simmons (Eileen). Eileen was downstairs checking the front door and asked Eric to come downstairs. Eric saw multiple police cruisers parked in the street in front of his residence. He also saw multiple officers walking towards 1309 Yellowstone Road.

Additional police cruisers arrived in the area. Eric observed multiple officers returning to their cruisers and retrieving their patrol rifles. Eileen opened the front door so they could hear better.

Eric heard a "small pop," he was unsure if this was gunfire. He then heard "tons" of gunfire. He described the gunfire as continuous, but with multiple types of guns being involved. He estimated the gunfire lasted approximately one minute.

Eric estimated the entire incident lasted approximately 5 minutes. He could not hear any statements or commands made by anyone on scene. He also was unable to observe any actions by the officers or the involved subject; he could only recall hearing gunfire. Eric was very concerned over the matter and wanted to share his thoughts.

The audio recorded interviews of Eric and Eileen Simmons were also attached to this report.

References:

C - Video Recorded Interview of Charles Hewston

Attachments:

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1. Jennifer Woda Interview Audio
2. Calvin Lewis Interview Audio
3. Eileen Simmons Interview Audio
4. Eric Simmons Interview Audio

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