



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: APD Ofc. Cody Caruso body camera review
Activity Date: 6/9/2022
Activity Location: Area of 46th Street, Ashtabula, Ohio
Authoring Agent: SA Jon Lieber #50

Narrative:

On Wednesday, April 27, 2022, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Jon Lieber (Lieber) received video footage from the Ashtabula Police Department (APD). SA Lieber was informed that the video contained footage from the body camera worn by Officer (Ofc.) Cody Caruso (Caruso).

SA Lieber reviewed the video recordings and noted the following:

There are three body camera videos. The first video is 1 hour, 12 minutes and 45 seconds in duration. The date stamp at the beginning of the video is 04/13/2022, at 00:24:18 hours. No audio can be heard until 00:24:48. Note that multiple times during the recording, the voices of the officers become unintelligible. The officers are standing near vehicles that have their engines running.



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The video begins showing Caruso exit his patrol vehicle. It appears as though Caruso may be located on W. 46th Street, west of Valley View Boulevard. See screenshot below:



At 00:26:00, an officer asks if anyone has made contact with the guy (meaning David Ward Jr.). Caruso tells the officer, "Apparently he's got a shotgun. I don't know, I don't know what the, what the plan is." At 00:30:22, an officer says, "He's just waving the gun. He's just got the gun and he's shaking it back and forth." At 00:32:07, the officers see someone walking onto the bridge. The officers yell for the person to get back off of the bridge.

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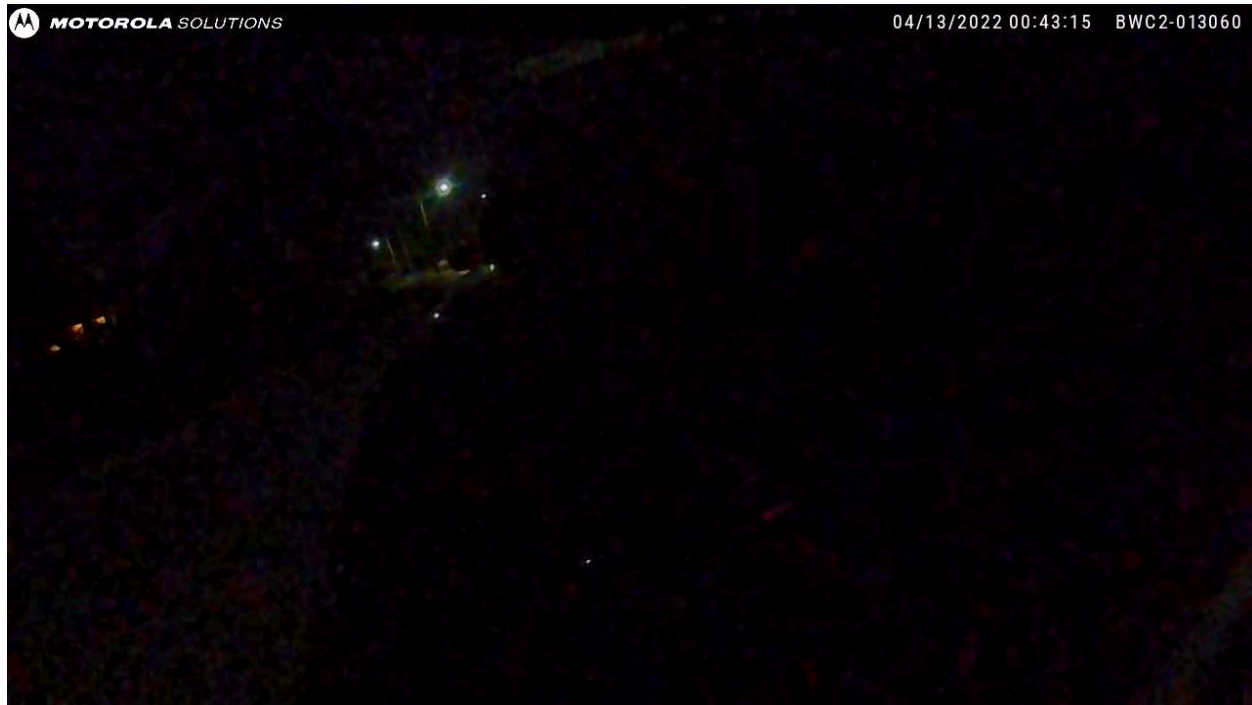
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At 00:43:12, an officer says, "You see him flipping the gun right?" Caruso replies, "Yeah, he's doing something with it now. It looks like it's between his feet." See screenshot below. Note that due to the darkness, distance and location of Caruso's police vehicle, Ward is not visible.



At 00:47:55, dispatch radios that one OSP (Ohio State Patrol) unit is responding to the scene. At 00:53:05, Caruso says to another officer that it's hard to see because Ward is in a dark area.

At 00:55:00, Caruso says, "Oh, oh, I thought, he cocked it a co, like twice, something tells me that thing ain't, is empty. I don't think it's going to be loaded." At 00:56:49, Lieutenant (Lt.) [REDACTED] radios to dispatch to see if they can locate information on any family members of Ward. At 01:05:45, Ofc. Sheri Allen (Allen) radios that Ward hung up the phone. At 01:06:50, [REDACTED] radios that Ward is yelling something toward them but he can't tell what he is saying. At 01:08:01, dispatch radios that they have tried calling Ward multiple times but he is not answering. Allen replies for dispatch to keep trying.

At 01:08:46, dispatch radios to Allen stating that they have Ward back on the phone and that they are going to patch him through to her. At 01:13:55, an officer says, "There he goes." Radio traffic is then heard advising that Ward is walking westbound on the bridge. At 01:22:31, dispatch radios [REDACTED] and informs him that they have Ward's father on the phone. At 01:22:49, [REDACTED] radios that Ward is walking toward them. At 01:23:10, [REDACTED] radios that

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Ward set the gun down and stopped. At 01:23:33, [REDACTED] radios that Ward picked the gun back up and is walking toward them.

At 01:25:20, Caruso says, "There he goes." At 01:25:22, a gunshot can be heard. Caruso says, "Did he just shoot himself?" Another officer says, "Yeah." Caruso says, "I think he just shot himself." At 01:25:31, [REDACTED] radios that shots have been fired, the subject is down and that he believes that the subject still has his gun. At 01:25:47, an officer asks, "Did he shoot him or did they shoot him?" Caruso responds, "I think he shot himself."

See screenshot below taken at the time the gunshot is heard:



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At 01:26:30, Caruso walks to his police vehicle and drives to the east side entrance of the bridge. Caruso then gets in the backseat of a police SUV vehicle, while Allen is driving and Lt. William Parkomaki (Parkomaki) is in the front passenger seat. At 01:28:00, the vehicle stops and Caruso exits the vehicle. Parkomaki and Caruso approach Ward, who is lying on the sidewalk. See screenshot below showing Ward and the shotgun lying next to him. Note that the arrow was added by SA Lieber and points to Ward's shotgun.



Parkomaki moves the shotgun onto the street. Ward is then handcuffed and rolled over. Parkomaki begins to provide medical aid. At 01:30:09, Parkomaki tells EMS personnel that Ward has a gunshot wound to the chest. EMS personnel then take over medical care of Ward. Ward is placed into the ambulance and his handcuffs are removed. Allen and Caruso talk briefly. For information on this conversation, refer to the report titled, "2022-04-13 Ofc. Sheri Allen Body Camera Review."

The video ends at 01:37:03.

The second video is 43 seconds in duration. The date stamp at the beginning of the video is 04/13/2022, at 01:37:57 hours. No audio can be heard until 01:38:28.

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The video begins showing the ambulance driving away. Caruso walks over to the area where the shotgun is lying on the street. Allen is standing nearby.

The video ends at 01:38:40.

The third video is 3 minutes and 52 seconds in duration. The date stamp at the beginning of the video is 04/13/2022, at 01:56:52 hours. No audio can be heard until 01:57:23.

The video begins showing the side of a vehicle door. The voice of David Ward Sr. (Ward Sr.) can be heard asking how he can get his gun back (the shotgun used by David Ward Jr.). At 01:57:33, Allen walks up to the passenger side of the vehicle. Ward Sr. says to Allen, "He says he has skin cancer but I have never seen no proof of it." For details on the conversation between Ward Sr. and Allen, refer to the report titled, "2022-04-13 Ofc. Sheri Allen Body Camera Review." Ward Sr. then states that they area going to go to the hospital. The vehicle begins to drive away.

The video ends at 02:00:45.

The DVD containing the video footage was submitted to the physical BCI case file as item A.