



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



2022-1472
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 2793 Waterpark Drive, Mason,
OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Thomas Henry Cromwell (S)
Date of Activity: 07/13/2022
Activity Location: Warren County Sheriff's Office – Business – 822 Memorial Drive ,
Lebanon, OH 45036, Warren County
Author: SA Steven Seitzman

Narrative:

On July 12, 2022, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) was requested to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) that took place at the Baymont hotel, located at 2793 Waterpark Drive in the city of Mason. During the OICI, an operator with the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team mortally wounded a suspect and recent River City Correctional Center escapee, Thomas Cromwell (Cromwell), during a hostage rescue situation.

On July 13, 2022, at 1534 hours, BCI Special Agents Richard Ward (SA Ward) and Steven Seitzman (SA Seitzman) interviewed Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team operator Deputy Joseph Gray (Deputy Gray) regarding his involvement in the OICI. The interview was conducted at the Warren County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Gray was represented by Fraternal Order of Police attorney Stephen Lazarus. The interview was recorded on a handheld digital recording device.

The details below summarize the pertinent portions of the recorded interview and are not a verbatim account. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview and may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full audio recording be reviewed to clarify the content of the interview.

Deputy Gray advised that he worked for the Warren County Sheriff's Office. He has been employed for approximately thirteen years. He was also a member of the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team. He has been assigned to the S.W.A.T. team since January 2016. He serves as an entry team leader on the S.W.A.T. team.

Regarding the OICI, Deputy Gray advised BCI agents of the following information:

On Monday, July 11, 2022, at 1611 hours, he received a S.W.A.T. call-out regarding an incident in the city of Mason. He was off duty at the time and responded from his residence. He

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.

arrived on the scene sometime around 1700 hours. Upon his arrival, he met with S.W.A.T. team commander Lebanon Police Sergeant Nate Trout (Sgt. Trout). He learned that Cromwell was inside of room 310 with a female hostage, Kelly Rose (Rose). He was paired with Warren County Sheriff's Office Deputy Stanley Matuszak (Deputy Matuszak), team medic Doug Rolph, and S.W.A.T. team leader Warren County Sheriff's Office Sergeant James Doddy (Sgt. Doddy). They assigned equipment and subsequently entered the building on the "two" side (north side).

Deputy Gray and Sergeant Doddy entered room 309, which was directly across from room 308. He utilized a shield for cover. He recalled hearing Cromwell yelling and cursing from the room. He was later placed in the "stack" with the emergency action team. He retrieved a breaching shotgun and joined the "stack." The "stack" he joined was outside of room 310 on the south side of the door.

Deputy Gray heard the S.W.A.T. team sniper, Mason Police Officer Eric Wallace (Officer Wallace), relay that the room door appeared barricaded. He also heard Officer Wallace relay that Cromwell had a knife in his hand.

At some point, the decision was made to turn off the air conditioning, cable, and Wi-Fi. Shortly after, he recalled hearing the female hostage from inside the room.

As time went on, the S.W.A.T. team commanders made the decision to have the Hamilton County S.W.A.T. team respond for relief. The Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team relocated to a Deerfield Township fire station to rest. The Warren County S.W.A.T. team breachers, Springboro Police Officer Antwaun Scott and Lebanon Police Officer Daniel Fry, remained in the hotel, as they were the only trained and qualified operators for explosive breaching. The rest of the team remained at the fire station for a couple hours.

At approximately 0200 hours on July 12, 2022, Sgt. Trout made the decision to recall the team. The decision was made, in part, due to a Facebook Live video that Cromwell posted. In the video, he held a knife to Rose's neck. He believed the Facebook Live video was recent. Cromwell was also heard saying, "They are going to have to kill me."

The Warren County S.W.A.T. team met and planned for an emergency entry. The Hamilton County S.W.A.T. team left snipers in place, which created additional manpower for the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. entry team.

Warren County negotiators placed a final call to Cromwell as a distraction. The team was notified via radio that contact had been made. Sgt. Doddy then initiated a countdown for the breach. The countdown began at eight. At five, the mechanical shotgun breach began on the door of room 310 by Hamilton Township Police Officer James Schelldorf. Sgt. Gray remembered that Cromwell screamed at this point; however, he was uncertain what, if anything, he was saying. At three, the explosive breaches were detonated. Deputy Matuszak then used the ram approximately five times to ultimately breach the door. At the end of the countdown, entry was made into the room. The members on the entry team were Franklin Police Officer Christopher Keene (Officer Keene), Springboro Police Officer Joshua Emmel, Clearcreek Township Police Officer Kevin Knobbe, and Deputy Gray. Before Deputy Gray was able to enter the room, the stack stopped. He heard Officer Keene say something to the effect of, "Drop it!" Approximately one second later, he then heard what sounded like a suppressed rifle round fired.

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.

Deputy Gray peaked around the corner to obtain a view inside the room. He saw Officer Keene with his rifle raised as if he was looking through his sights. He recalled seeing Officer Keene, Deputy Matuszak, and Officer Emmel inside the room. The officers instructed Rose to exit the room. He saw that Rose was near the pull-out bed inside the room. As Rose was moving toward the door, he saw Cromwell unresponsive on the floor. Rose exited the room and went down to her knees. Deputy Gray assisted Officer Schelldorf with escorting Rose out of the hotel. Rose looked up at Deputy Gray and said, "That was a good shot." He heard Officer Emmel say, "Bingo!" over the police radio, which meant that Rose had been successfully rescued. While he was escorting Rose out of the building, he heard something to the effect of, "Gunshot wound, suspect down" over the police radio.

After Rose was escorted out of the building, Deputy Gray re-entered the building and went back to the third floor. The team was instructed to leave the involved equipment in place. The team was then relocated to the Warren County Drug Task Force to await further instructions.

The interview was concluded at 1556 hours. The audio recording is attached below.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2022-07-13/ Warren County Sheriff's Office Deputy Joseph Gray Interview

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.