



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



2024-2255

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 818 Cherryberry Dr.,
Columbus, OH 43228 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: [REDACTED]
Date of Activity: 08/26/2024
Activity Location: Columbus Police Department – Business – 120 Marconi Blvd.,
Columbus, OH 43215
Author: SA Craig Call

Narrative:

On August 1, 2024, the Columbus Division of Police (CPD) requested the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) involving several CPD officers and Benjamin Wheeler (Wheeler). The incident occurred at 818 Cherryberry Drive. It was reported to BCI that Wheeler stabbed three CPD SWAT officers and was ultimately shot by a SWAT team member during the incident resulting in this death.

On August 26, 2024, BCI Special Agents James Poole (SA Poole), Aja Chung (SA Chung), Kyle Douglass (SA Douglass), and Craig Call (SA Call) spoke with the members of CPD SWAT directly involved or witness to the shooting incident. The interviews took place at a CPD facility and the officers were accompanied by legal counsel during throughout the process.

CPD [REDACTED] accompanied by Attorney Lathan Lipperman, was identified as one of the officers present during the shooting and was interviewed by SA Call and SA Douglass.

The interview was audio recorded and began at approximately 1121 hours. [REDACTED] is badge number [REDACTED] and has approximately [REDACTED] years of service with CPD. [REDACTED] is currently assigned to [REDACTED] and has been in that position for the past three and one half years.

[REDACTED] described responding to the above address with CPD SWAT in reference to a barricaded subject with an arrest warrant.

[REDACTED] described having no contact with Wheeler initially, so the decision was made to breach the front door with the ram on the BearCat (armored vehicle). [REDACTED] described the driver of the BearCat communicating they could see Wheeler inside the

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Approved By SA James A. Mulford on
09/23/2024

residence, prompting officers to approach the now open front door and assess the situation.

██████████ said the following officers (in this order) approached and made the initial assessment:

- ██████████
- ██████████
- ██████████
- ██████████

██████████ reported hearing ██████████ yell "gun" to which ██████████ responded by covering ██████████ with his rifle. ██████████ said he could see Wheeler positioned behind a piece of furniture, possibly a dresser, in the front room. ██████████ said Wheeler immediately started throwing items at the entry team, but it happened so fast he could not observe what the objects were. ██████████ indicated it was communicated to him by the other officers on the entry team that one of the objects thrown was a knife. ██████████ said he and the rest of the entry team retreated to the back of the BearCat and that is when he learned ██████████ had sustained a knife wound to the forearm.

██████████ indicated the negotiators continued to try and communicate with Wheeler, however these attempts were unsuccessful. ██████████ described chemical munitions (gas) being deployed into the house during this time period. ██████████ said officers on the rear of the residence communicated they observed Wheeler's location as being in the kitchen on the back side of the residence. ██████████ said two attempts to deploy a drone into the residence were made with the first being unsuccessful due to Wheeler knocking the drone down. ██████████ indicated the second attempt was successful. At this time, ██████████ said the decision was made to make a second attempt with the entry team. ██████████ estimated the above process to have taken a few hours.

In addition to himself, ██████████ said the following officers were used during the second entry:

- ██████████
- ██████████
- ██████████
- Officer Mayberry
- ██████████

██████████ explained he and other officers had gas masks on during the entry which greatly hindered their ability to hear or communicate with each other.

██████████ said when they initially made entry, all he could observe would be Wheeler, or a part of Wheeler's body, appear from behind the kitchen threshold to throw various items at the entry team. ██████████ described the environment in the front room as being in disarray with furniture turned over obstructing the entrance into the kitchen and a large number of CDs all over the floor. ██████████ indicated the obstructions were partially moved so ██████████ could move up to the threshold between the front room and

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kitchen.

██████████ said Wheeler grabbed ██████████ "bunker" (commonly referred to as a ballistic shield) and was able to observe the two struggling with one another. ██████████ said he was armed with a rifle at this time, however he did not take further action because he did not observe any weapons. ██████████ stated several times he believed ██████████ and Wheeler to be involved in a physical altercation over the bunker with no weapons present. ██████████ *later said that he has watched footage of the incident and now knows and has observed Wheeler to be armed with a 12-14 inch butcher knife during the above described altercation.*

██████████ indicated he observed, audible only, ██████████ shoot his firearm four to five times and Wheeler disappear back into the kitchen area. ██████████ described himself and other officers follow Wheeler's direction of travel through the kitchen area to steps leading to the basement. ██████████ said he had to step over ██████████ during this process as they were now on the ground. ██████████ described seeing a large amount of blood in the kitchen area. ██████████ said Officer Mayberry, ██████████, and he held at the top of the stairs until other officers came in with and tried to locate Wheeler in the basement using a "throwbot" (robot with a camera with a remote viewing screen) and "tacview" (a camera on the end of an extendable pole with a remote viewing screen). ██████████ said Wheeler was ultimately located unresponsive in the basement with the tacview system, prompting the entry team to proceed into the basement.

██████████ said he observed Wheeler slumped over on the ground and completely unresponsive. Wheeler was handcuffed by Officer Mayberry. ██████████ stated he believed Wheeler to be deceased at this time.

Once the incident concluded, ██████████ learned ██████████ were stabbed and injured during the second entry.

██████████ said he has watched the video footage available associated with this incident and indicated it did not substantially change anything from his point of view during the incident. ██████████ repeatedly referenced initially not knowing why ██████████ shot Wheeler until he later learned of the other officers' injuries as well as watching the footage. ██████████ reiterated he now knows Wheeler was armed with a butcher knife during the incident when he was shot by ██████████

██████████ indicated he did not know Wheeler or have any previous encounters with him.

The interview concluded at approximately 1144 hours.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2024-08-26 CPD ██████████

References:

No references.

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