



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



2021-0584

Officer Involved Critical Incident – Interstate 270 Northbound on
Big Walnut Creek Bridge, Columbus (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Subject
Involves: Deputy Michael Severance (S)
Date of Activity: 03/24/2021
Activity Location: Harshman, Cathrine – Business – 3360 Tremont Rd., 2nd Floor,
Columbus, OH 43221, Franklin County
Author: SA James A. Mulford, #39

Narrative:

On March 24, 2021, at approximately 0950 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agents Jim Mulford (SA Mulford) and Rick Ward (SA Ward) interviewed Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) Deputy Michael Severance (Deputy Severance), regarding a fatal shooting incident between Andrew Teague (Teague) and members of the Columbus Division of Police (CPD) and Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO). Also present for the interview was Deputy Severance's union attorney, Cathrine Harshman.

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:

On March 05, 2021, an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) occurred on Interstate 270 Northbound on Big Walnut Creek Bridge, Columbus, Ohio. Andrew Teague was wanted on a Felonious Assault warrant and fled from multiple jurisdictions in a vehicle pursuit. The pursuit culminated with Teague driving the wrong way into oncoming traffic on I-270 causing several crashes. Law enforcement officers from CPD and Franklin County Sheriff's Office encountered Teague and ultimately discharged their firearms striking him. Teague died as a result of those gunshot wounds.

Prior to beginning the interview, SA Mulford provided Deputy Severance with a BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form. SA Mulford advised BCI was conducting a criminal investigation separate from any internal investigation that FCSO may be conducting. Deputy Severance was told his interview was voluntary and that he could stop answering questions at any time. Deputy Severance 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 Cathrine Harshman provided SA Mulford with a written statement from Deputy Severance regarding the OICI. Agent Mulford reviewed the statement upon receipt. Furthermore, SA Mulford provided a printed scene sketch of the OICI scene to reference throughout the interview. Deputy Severance signed his statement provided to BCI, and he verified the statement was a true and accurate depiction of the OICI incident. Please refer to Deputy Severance's statement for further details. A copy of the signed written statement was saved within the case file and is attached to this report.

SA Mulford asked Deputy Severance a few follow-up questions and had him confirm where he fired his weapon from based on the printed scene sketch. Deputy Severance's answers appeared to be consistent with his written statement.

Deputy Severance wrote in his statement, " He (Teague) stopped and raised his right arm and hand, which held an auto pistol pointed in a southwest direction. I yelled that the suspect had a gun. The suspect fired at least once, maybe twice, in a southwest direction. I took cover at the northeast corner of a white Ford F150 pickup, which had stopped in the right/easternmost lane. I was still north of the suspect. At the time, I was unsure if the suspect had fired at civilians or police officers, but I heard return fire. Upon the return fire, the suspect changed directions, appearing to crouch down slightly, and turned towards my location with his weapon. His weapon was pointed forward in my direction. As he headed towards me, I stepped out from behind the cover of the vehicle and fired three times in quick succession.

Furthermore, Deputy Severance detailed "When I fired, I did not believe that I had any other reasonable alternative other than to fire to protect the citizens surrounding the scene and my fellow officers, whose lives were in imminent danger of being killed or severely wounded as the suspect had already fired and could continue firing in any direction at any time. I also felt that my life was in imminent danger of being killed or severely wounded, as the suspect was turning toward me with his arm and gun raised at the time I fired."

Deputy Severance had no further information.

Attachments:

- Attachment # 01:2021-03-24 FCSO Deputy Michael Severance Interview
- Attachment # 02:Deputy Severance - CIN Form
- Attachment # 03:Deputy Severance - Statement
- Attachment # 04:EdgeFx Scene Diagram1



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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).

Michael S. Sevance
Printed Name of Interviewee

3-24-2021 9:50 AM
Date / Time

Michael S. Sevance
Signature of Interviewee

Jim Mulford #39
BCI Agent (Printed)

[Signature]
BCI Agent (Signature)

STATEMENT OF FCSO DEPUTY MICHAEL SEVERANCE BADGE #1

This statement is regarding my involvement in an incident that occurred Friday, March 5, 2020 between approximately 3:00pm and 4:30pm. I am making this statement as part of an investigation concerning this matter.

My date of hire as a deputy with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) is December 3, 1973. My regular assignment is Patrol, Dog Handler. I have been a Dog Handler since 1985. My regular duty hours are 2pm-11pm Tuesday through Friday. On Friday March 5th, I was assigned to Patrol in Cruiser RK-1 with my canine partner, Hazen. At the time of the incident, I was dressed in the uniform of the day. My duty weapon is a Sig Sauer P226 9mm. My backup weapon is Smith and Wesson 9mm. I am qualified with both of my weapons.

I was in good health at the time of this incident. I was not taking any medication that would in any way affect my ability to carry out my responsibilities and duties as a deputy. I had consumed no alcohol or drugs in the twenty-four (24) hour time period prior to this incident. Prior to my regularly assigned shift (2pm-11pm) on March 5th, I had worked four (4) hours of overtime directing traffic. I was not under any unusual stress. I do not wear glasses or contact lenses. I do not wear a hearing aid.

On Friday, March 5th at approximately 3:11pm, I was in Jefferson Township when I heard on the Columbus Police Department (CPD) Zone 1 channel on my scanner that officers were requesting marked units to aid in stopping a vehicle, the driver of which was a wanted for felonious assault. I advised County radio, so that Zone 2 cars could be informed.

The suspect was reportedly eastbound on I-270 and I headed in that direction in case the officers needed assistance from myself and/or my canine partner if the driver bailed out of the vehicle. By this time, the CPD helicopter was overhead and marked units had been authorized to

purse the suspect. I rerouted, going westbound on I-670W attempting to intercept the chase at the I-670/I-71 interchange. At some point, I was informed that this suspect had previously fled from Blendon Township and FCSO units the week prior.

It was aired that the suspect exited southbound from I-71 to Spring Street downtown, eventually making his way back to I-71 north. I caught up with the chase as the suspect was exiting at 11th or 17th street near Cleveland Avenue. I was following several CPD cruisers when CPD's pursuit was terminated at approximately 3:27pm. The CPD helicopter remained overhead, giving directions.

Though no longer in pursuit, several cruisers, including myself, continued to follow the suspect. He fled south back downtown to I-71S, and then entered I-670E going eastbound. He continued east on I-70E, exiting at R-256 (Reynoldsburg exit), then turned back to I-70W, this time in the westbound lane. At this point, FCSO Chief Gilbert was a few vehicles behind the suspect in an unmarked vehicle, and I was approximately three (3) cars behind Chief Gilbert. There was a unit set up at Brice Road and I-70 with spike strips, but the suspect cut across several lanes and went north on I-270N. When Chief Gilbert was unable to change directions to follow the suspect, I became the primary unit following the vehicle.

As we approached the exit for East Broad Street on I-270N, the suspect pulled over in the right lane on the berm. I activated my beacons and pulled to the berm directly behind the suspect. After taking off my seatbelt, I unholstered my duty weapon. Before I could get out of the cruiser, the suspect fled making a U-turn on I-270N, now heading southbound into northbound traffic. Inadvertently, I placed my duty weapon on my duty bag on my passenger seat to attempt to effectuate a pit maneuver for which I would need two hands. I was unable to attempt the pit due to the position of the vehicles. I pursued the suspect with lights and sirens in an attempt to warn

vehicles traveling northbound as I was heading opposite of oncoming traffic, heading south on the berm. The suspect continued to drive in the moving lane, forcing oncoming traffic to avoid him. The suspect reached a speed of approximately 95 miles per hour, and several vehicles were forced to swerve to avoid hitting him.

At 4:18pm, I was advised to disengage from the pursuit. I slowed down, deactivated my beacons, and looked for a place to safely exit I-270N. The suspect continued traveling south in the northbound lanes. I found a crossover to I-270S close to Noe Bixby and just south of the I-70 interchange. At approximately the same time, a crash was aired. I turned back around and continued southbound on I-270N through the grass median. As I approached the scene in my cruiser, I observed the suspect's vehicle crashed in the center lane. The suspect was walking from his car toward the eastern berm between the vehicles in the right lane of traffic. I lost sight of him after he stepped behind a van just in front of and to the left (southeast) of my cruiser. I was aware that CPD and Mifflin Township cruisers/officers also on scene.

I exited my vehicle and ran towards the eastern berm where I had seen the suspect. The road was littered with debris from the multiple car accidents. As I attempted to draw my duty weapon, it was not in my holster on my right hip. I drew my backup weapon from the holster at my left side and continued running up the berm. The suspect was jogging southbound on the eastern berm, away from me. He stopped and raised his right arm and hand, which held an auto pistol pointed in a southwest direction. I yelled that the suspect had a gun. The suspect fired at least once, maybe twice, in a southwest direction. I took cover at the northeast corner of a white Ford F150 pickup, which had stopped in the right/easternmost lane. I was still north of the suspect. At the time, I was unsure if the suspect had fired at civilians or police officers, but I heard return fire. Upon the return fire, the suspect changed directions, appearing to crouch down slightly, and

turned towards my location with his weapon. His weapon was pointed forward in my direction. As he headed towards me, I stepped out from behind the cover of the vehicle and fired three times in quick succession.

The suspect slumped forward, falling face down on the pavement. His weapon was approximately two feet in front/north in front of where he had fallen. I approached with my weapon pointed at the suspect and kicked the gun away from him. I observed a large pool of blood coming from the suspect's head and face area. He had fallen with his hands underneath his body. Other officers were approaching and yelling commands. The suspect was not moving. I pulled the suspect's right arm from underneath him, as a CPD officer pulled his left arm to secure him with handcuffs. I rolled the suspect over and patted him down for more weapons- no more were found. I observed that the suspect had apparent bullet holes in his right shoulder and his forehead. He was bleeding profusely from the head wound, his nose, and his mouth. I advised communications that he appeared to be a Code 16 (DOA) and asked when medics would arrive. I also notified communications that several of the civilians, who had been hit by the suspect may also need medical attention.

I was directed by Chief Gilbert to begin CPR, which I did after removing the suspect's right hand from the handcuffs. I continued CPR until I was relieved by another officer. I then left the scene with my officer support person, Deputy Jeremy Copas.

I had fired at the suspect from a standing position, stepping out from cover of a truck and firing from the eastern side of the truck. I originally was taking cover behind the truck, but stepped to the east out from cover when I fired. When I fired, the suspect had previously fired his weapon at either civilians or police officers. The suspect had then turned toward me with his weapon, his arm raised and pointed in my direction. When I fired, it was in a southerly direction. I was

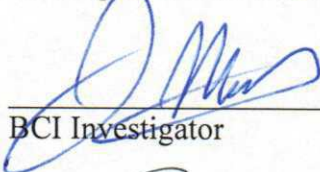
approximately 60-80 feet from the suspect when I fired. My back drop was the eastern berm, there were no vehicles or civilians in my back drop. I did not have a light on my weapon. It was still day light and I had no issue seeing the suspect. I stopped firing once the suspect began to fall forward. Once I ensured that the suspect was no longer dangerous, I began CPR and made sure the medics had been called.

When I fired, I did not believe that I had any other reasonable alternative other than to fire to protect the citizens surrounding the scene and my fellow officers, whose lives were in imminent danger of being killed or severely wounded as the suspect had already fired and could continue firing in any direction at any time. I also felt that my life was in imminent danger of being killed or severely wounded, as the suspect was turning toward me with his arm and gun raised at the time I fired.

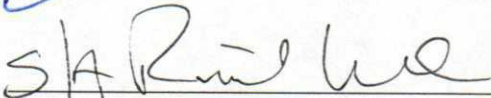
I now know that the suspect's name is Andrew Teague. Though I knew at the time of the shoot that Blendon Township and FCSO had previously tried to apprehend the suspect, I did not recognize the suspect. I do not remember having any interaction with the suspect either personal or professional prior to this incident.

This statement consists of five (5) pages.

Investigation conducted by:

 #39

BCI Investigator




BCI Investigator

Statement made by:

 #1

Deputy Michael Severance, Badge #1



Counsel to Deputy Severance

2021-0584
Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation
SA Aja Chung

NB I-270 on Big Walnut Creek Bridge
Columbus, Ohio
March 5, 2021



To near scale

