



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



2023-1535

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 311 25th Street SW, Canton, Ohio

Investigative Activity: Witness Officer Interview
Activity Date: June 14, 2023
Activity Location: BCI Richfield
Authoring Agent: SA Matthew Armstrong #146

Narrative:

On June 14, 2023, at approximately 1500 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Matt Armstrong (Armstrong) and SA Nick Valente (Valente) interviewed Canton Police Department (CPD) Officer Scott Wohlheter (Wohlheter). Officer Wohlheter was accompanied by Sean Flaherty (Flaherty), the president of the Canton Police Patrolman's Association. The interview took place in a conference room at the BCI Richfield Office. The interview was audio and video recorded and the audio recording has been attached to this report. The video recording was titled *2023-06-14: Officer Wohlheter Interview* and has been stored on evidence.com and on a DVD in the BCI SIU case file as Reference Item F.

Officer Wohlheter was identified as a CPD officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the June 7, 2023, officer-involved shooting which occurred at in the area of 311 25th Street SW, Canton, Ohio. Officer Wohlheter did not discharge a firearm during the course of the incident. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by Officer Wohlheter.

Prior to the interview Officer Wohlheter and Union President Flaherty reviewed the BCI Criminal Investigation Notification Form. Officer Wohlheter indicated he understood the form and signed it.

This report only summarizes the information deemed by the author to be of the most relevance to the investigation and does not purport to contain all of the questions and answers from the interview. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview. It may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full recording be reviewed to clarify any content or contextual questions regarding the information obtained during the interview. Time references included in this report correspond with the video recording.

Throughout the interview, Officer Wohlheter provided the following information:

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.



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



2023-1535

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 311 25th Street SW, Canton, Ohio

Officer Wohlhater has been a police officer for approximately 4.5 years. All of his service has been with the Canton Police Department. On June 7, 2023, he was wearing navy blue police uniform pants and shirt. The shirt had police patches on both shoulders and a metal badge affixed to the left chest. He also wore concealed body armor under his uniform shirt. Officer Wohlhater believed he was well represented as a police officer during the incident.

During the incident, Officer Wohlhater drove marked police cruiser #45. He was part of a two-man unit with Officer Jacob Dryden who was the passenger. Officer Wohlhater had two radio call signs. When using the police radio from inside his cruiser his radio call sign was Unit 45. When using his portable radio, his call sign was 212, his unit number. Officer Wohlhater had no prior knowledge of the subject involved in the shooting and did not recall any prior encounters with the subject. He learned the identity of the subject at the police department after the shooting incident.

CPD cruiser #45 was equipped with a dash camera and Officer Wohlhater was equipped with a body camera. He did not have any other recording devices on his person. Officer Wohlhater activated the cruiser camera and his body camera while in the cruiser moments before arriving at 311 25th Street SW, Canton, Ohio.

Officer Wohlhater stated that he had reviewed his body worn camera footage approximately 3 or 4 times prior to the interview.

On June 7, 2023, Officer Wohlhater was working the afternoon shift which was scheduled from 1530 hours through 2330 hours. Near the end of the shift, he and his partner were dispatched to 311 25th Street NW for neighbors fighting. As he pulled up to the residence, he exited the cruiser and heard Officer Dryden yell "Why are you running" (7:37). A female was present and yelling "Don't chase him. Don't chase him" (7:48). He asked her why the male was running and she said "He's just a coke head" (7:55).

Officer Wohlhater then followed Officer Dryden as he ran after the male subject. They ran along the right side of the residence through the backyard. He heard Officer Dryden say they were jumping the fence and headed toward the highway. The backyard was overgrown and he utilized his hand-held flashlight as he made his way to the fence. He described it as a 6-foot chain link fence with brush grown up on it. He jumped the fence and continued in the direction of Officer Dryden.

When he reached the concrete barrier on the highway, he heard a light pop sound and thought it was a taser deployment. As he crossed the concrete barrier he heard another pop sound. The popping sounds then continued and at that time he knew it wasn't a taser because their tasers only have two cartridges.

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.



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



2023-1535

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 311 25th Street SW, Canton, Ohio

He continued toward Officer Dryden and could see he was on the ground in the grassy area near a bush. He could see Officer Dryden's torso but could not see if he was in a seated or kneeling position. He also saw the male subject approximately 20 or 30 feet from Officer Dryden. He was lying face down on the ground with a gun in his hand. He then drew his weapon and began providing cover.

At the same time, Officer Dryden said he was hit. Officer Wohlheter told Officer Dryden to check himself. Officer Dryden then said there was no blood and he thought it was a graze wound. After Officer Dryden reloaded, he provided cover while Officer Wohlheter approached the subject.

Officer Wohlheter saw the gun was clinched in the subject's hand and there was no movement from the subject. He then shook the subject's hand causing the gun to fall from it and placed him in handcuffs. After checking him for weapons, he began assessing the subject's injuries. Another officer brought a medical kit and Officer Wohlheter placed a chest seal on one of the subject's wounds. He was then removed from the scene.

Officer Wohlheter explained when he heard the popping sounds and realized it was gunfire, he feared for his safety. He said "Really it was a oh fuck moment you know. This, this is happening um, and Officer Dryden, he's my partner uh, so we rode together, all year. We got hired together um, so I want to make sure he's ok um, and do what I, I can do to a, however I can help the situation I wanted to help" (22:33).

Officer Wohlheter described the subject as a White male wearing a red sweatshirt. He described the female he encountered when he first arrived as a White female. He did not see anyone else around the house. He did not remember the female running through the backyard with him but recalled her on the highway ramp yelling moments after he secured the subject in handcuffs.

Officer Wohlheter did not hear the subject say anything before, during or after the shooting. He did not see the subject with the gun up or pointed at anyone during the incident.

Attachments:

2023-06-14 Signed Criminal Investigation Notification - Scott Wohlheter

2023-06-14 Witness Officer Interview - Scott Wohlheter

Reference Items:

Item F – DVD containing video recorded officer interviews

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.



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).

Scott Wahlheter

Printed Name of Interviewee

6/14/23 1056

Date / Time

[Signature] #12

Signature of Interviewee

SA Matthew Armstrong

BCI Agent (Printed)

[Signature] #146

BCI Agent (Signature)