



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



2022-0310
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 913 Lebanon Street, Monroe,
Ohio (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Dustin Booth (S)
Date of Activity: 03/01/2022
Activity Location: Monroe Police Department – Business – 601 South Main Street,
Monroe, OH 45050, Butler County
Author: SA Steven Seitzman

Narrative:

On March 1, 2022 at approximately 0952 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agents Rick Ward (SA Ward) and Steven Seitzman (SA Seitzman) conducted an interview with Monroe Police Department (Monroe PD) Officer Austin Whitt (Officer Whitt) at the Monroe Police Department. Officer Whitt's Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association Attorney, Joseph Hegedus, was also present. Officer Whitt was identified by Monroe PD Captain David Chasteen as one of the officers directly involved in the Officer-Involved Critical Incident on February 11, 2022. 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 unless noted by quotations.

Officer Whitt provided agents with a written statement immediately preceding his interview. The written statement was signed by Officer Whitt. It was collected and attached to this report. SA Ward read the Notice of Criminal Investigation form to Officer Whitt. Officer Whitt advised he understood the content of the form and signed it. The signed form will be added to the physical case file. Officer Whitt further advised agents he reviewed his body worn camera footage prior to the interview; however, his written statement was completed before reviewing the footage.

Officer Whitt advised he has been employed by Monroe PD for approximately three and a half years. and he did not work for any other law enforcement agencies prior to Monroe PD. He has prior military experience, as he served in the Army for four years. His badge number and radio call sign are #867. He was assigned to evening shift road patrol, which runs from 1445 until 2315 hours. His off days rotate.

Officer Whitt advised he has never been involved in any other shooting incidents. He stated he has no disciplinary record involving prior uses of force or dishonesty.

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Regarding his shift on February 11, 2022, Officer Whitt advised he was well rested and did not work any overtime or off duty assignments prior to his shift. He advised he did not take any prescriptions or over the counter medications that would have impaired his duties and did not consume alcohol within twenty-four hours of his shift. He was in a marked patrol vehicle and was wearing a Monroe PD issued uniform. His uniform includes an exterior ballistic vest with the word "Police" on it. He had a taser and an expandable ASP baton on him and was wearing a body-worn camera. He carried a Monroe PD issued 9 mm, Glock 17 with a round in the chamber and a magazine filled to capacity. He also carried two additional magazines filled to capacity. He advised all ammunition was Monroe PD issued duty ammunition. He advised he was current on his firearms qualifications.

Regarding his involvement in the Officer-Involved Critical Incident on February 11, 2022, Officer Whitt advised agents of the following:

Officer Whitt arrived for work at approximately 1430 hours. He was changing in the locker room and was approached by Sergeant Eddie Myers (Sgt. Myers). Sgt. Myers informed him that the day shift officers were dealing with a barricaded subject, Dustin Booth (Booth) at 120 Bluegrass Lane. He advised he did not have any prior contacts with Booth or calls for service at 120 Bluegrass Lane.

After Officer Whitt finished getting in uniform, he responded to Dobbin Court, which gave him a rear view of 120 Bluegrass Lane. He thought he knew Booth was armed with a gun at this point; however, he was not completely certain when and how he learned that information. He was later relieved by Butler County Sheriff's Office deputies, so he responded to 120 Bluegrass Lane and met with Monroe PD Sergeant Chad Caudill (Sgt. Caudill) and Monroe PD Officer Jill Ebbing to assist on the front perimeter. He learned that Sgt. Myers knew Booth personally and remembered Sgt. Myers providing commands to Booth. At one point, Booth exited the residence and yelled at Sgt. Myers. He remembered Booth saying something about "bringing everything we've [Monroe PD] got." He also recalled Booth saying something to the effect of, "Go get your big vehicle that you don't use for anything else," which Officer Whitt believed was a reference to Monroe PD's Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle. He said Booth yelled for officers to ram the MRAP through his front door. He felt that Booth was antagonizing and "egging on" officers.

Monroe PD officers learned Booth's phone was locked in his pick-up truck. Officers developed a plan to get the phone, so they could communicate with Booth. Sgt. Caudill was able to get into the pick-up truck through the sliding rear window. He retrieved the phone and placed it on the front porch.

Officer Whitt said officers waited a long time, and after awhile, Monroe PD command staff made the decision to "pull back." Officers moved away from the residence on Bridle Creek Drive. He recalled West Chester negotiators and mobile crisis arrived. He took the mobile crisis representative to a neighbor's house where Booth's wife, Brandi Booth (Ms. Booth) was waiting. Ms. Booth told the mobile crisis representative Booth's mental health issues began a couple months ago. She said he could control his issues around their children; however, he recently began saying the children were "insignificant." She said Booth spoke about "flat earth" theories, claimed to be the "smartest person alive," and said something to the effect of "being God." He remembered her saying she took writings from Booth on a prior date, which caused him

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to “strike her.” SA Ward asked him if the mobile crisis representative and Ms. Booth discussed the topic of firearms, which he recalled Ms. Booth indicating Booth had shotguns, rifles, and pistols. He also remembered her saying Booth started smoking “THC” pens, and even tried to get one of his children to smoke one. Ms. Booth described Booth as a “standout” father.

While listening to the conversation between Ms. Booth and the mobile crisis representative, Officer Whitt learned more information as to what led Ms. Booth to contact Monroe PD. He advised Ms. Booth said Booth recently purchased a new GMC Denali pick-up truck. She also said Booth withdrew a large amount of money from their account and was passing it out to neighbors in the Bridle Creek neighborhood.

Officer Whitt advised the mobile crisis representative stated she felt she had enough information to sign an application for emergency admission to have Booth psychologically evaluated. She advised Monroe PD officers would need to get Booth out of his residence and transport him to the hospital. At some point, the decision was made not to remove Booth from the residence. Officers were instructed to “pull away from the house.” Officer Whitt left at that point and responded to Monroe PD. He learned through Sgt. Myers that detectives were remaining in the area of Booth’s residence.

While at Monroe PD, several officers were debriefed by Chief Buchanan. Chief Buchanan said detectives were going to stay near the residence. Chief Buchanan further stated if Booth left the residence, the plan was to have officers make a high-risk traffic stop on his vehicle. The purpose was to get Booth to the hospital.

Officer Whitt left the PD and sat stationary in the parking lot of the Bridle Creek neighborhood pool, which is located on Bridle Creek Drive near Gallaher Road. He waited there with Sgt. Myer, Officer Skylar Halsey (Officer Halsey”, and Officer Matt Buddo (Officer Buddo). Officer Skylar was later instructed to move to another location in case Booth took a different route. Officer Buddo also left after receiving an unrelated dispatch. Officer Whitt advised several officers were updated via a group text message. He learned through the text message that Booth’s friend (Justin Duh) was inside the residence with Booth. He also learned through the text message that Booth retrieved a gun from the residence prior to getting in his friend’s vehicle.

At approximately 2245 hours, officers were informed Booth was leaving with his friend. The friend was driving. Officer Halsey was the first officer to get behind the vehicle. As the vehicle passed the pool area, Officer Whitt and Sgt. Myer got behind Officer Halsey. Through radio traffic, Officer Whitt learned the plan was to conduct the high-risk traffic stop on Lebanon Street near New Garver Road.

Officers activated their overhead lights to conduct the traffic stop. The vehicle stopped near the stop sign on Lebanon Street near New Garver Road. Officer Whitt pulled into the westbound (opposite) lane, exited his vehicle, and drew his service pistol and pointed it in the direction of the stopped vehicle. He observed a commotion inside the vehicle and heard Officer Halsey indicate the subjects were fighting. He then recalled the driver’s door swinging open, and the driver (Justin Duh) immediately jumped out of the vehicle. He yelled at the driver to remove his keys from the vehicle. The driver was yelling at officers, but he could not hear what he was saying. He heard Officer Halsey say he thought the driver was yelling that he had been stabbed. The driver continued to yell, at which point he heard him say “He’s got a gun. He’s got a gun.”

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Officer Whitt then noticed Booth exit the vehicle. Booth walked away from officers toward SR-63. Booth's hands were straight up in the air. Fearing that Booth would run, Officer Whitt moved his police cruiser and moved closer to Booth on New Garver Road. He then saw either Sgt. Myer or Officer Fred Mike Doughman (Officer Doughman), the Monroe PD canine officer, walk in front of the involved vehicle toward Booth. Officer Doughman then released his canine, which was initially unsuccessful. Officer Whitt stated a second attempt by the canine resulted in a bite to Booth's arm. He then recalled Officer Doughman ran toward Booth and went "hands on" with him. Officer Whitt ran toward Officer Doughman and Booth. He observed Booth go to the ground. He also believed Officer Doughman went to the ground too. He then remembered seeing Booth get up from the ground. Booth was initially faced away from him. As Booth turned around, he saw him pull a "long barrel revolver" from his waist area. He recalled the barrel seeming to get longer and longer as Booth pulled it from his waist area. During the interview, he demonstrated Booth's movements, indicating that Booth reached across the front of his body and grabbed the gun with his right hand. He then remembered seeing Booth pull the weapon up toward officers. He backed away from Booth and fired four or five shots from his Monroe PD issued Glock 17 pistol until Booth went to the ground. He observed Booth's revolver drop to the ground too. He stated Booth fell on a concrete island. He advised he fired his weapon because he was in fear for his safety and the safety of the other officers. He ceased firing as Booth fell to the ground and the pistol fell out of his hand, as he believed the immediate threat ended. He remembered Booth saying, "I love you guys" as he lay on the ground.

Officer Whitt advised Sgt. Myer developed a plan to secure Booth's gun and render aid to him. He remembered Sgt. Myer walking in front of him as he moved toward Booth. Once several officers moved up to Booth, he holstered his weapon and ran to his police cruiser to grab medical supplies. He used quick-clot gauze on a wound near Booth's ribs on his left side. He also applied a tourniquet to Booth's left arm. He advised Sgt. Myers requested a medic. He said Booth asked for water by saying "fuck these bullet holes. I just need water." Booth also instructed Sgt. Myers not to give him medicine.

Officer Whitt responded to Monroe PD and turned his weapon over to Monroe PD Lieutenant Rosenbalm. He was uncertain if he cleared his weapon prior to turning it over. He was also photographed there by BCI agents.

Officer Whitt advised he was not injured during the Officer-Involved Critical Incident.

SA Ward presented Officer Whitt with an overhead view of the Lebanon Street/New Garver Road intersection. He drew his recollection of where certain parts of the incident occurred. The map will be added to the physical case file.

The interview was concluded at 1039 hours. See the attached audio recording of the interview for more information. Screenshots of the aforementioned group text message were later sent via text message to SA Seitzman by Officer Whitt. They are also attached to this report.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2022-03-01 / Officer Austin Whitt interview

Attachment # 02: Ofc. Austin Whitt Notice of Criminal Investigations/ Written Statement

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Attachment # 03: MPDOfficerGroupText

References:

Original Diagrams (5)

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Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.

Exhibit 2



Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation



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).

AUSEN WHITT
Printed Name of Interviewee

01/01/22 1000
Date / Time


Signature of Interviewee

ROCK WARD
BCI Agent (Printed)


BCI Agent (Signature)

On 02/11/2022 at approximately 2245 a felony traffic stop was conducted on Lebanon Rd @ Garver Rd. The purpose of this stop was to take custody of a suspect named Dustin Booth who had fail to comply with other officers earlier in the day and had barricaded himself inside of his home when police tried to make contact with him. We knew that Mr. Booth was possibly armed during the traffic stop due to him having a gun on his hip earlier in the day when he was barricaded inside of his home. According to officer and Mr. Booths wife he was going through some sort of mental health crisis that had been on going for some time. One of Dustin's friends was driving his truck and Mr. Booth was in the front seat passenger seat. I was the second car behind the suspect vehicle when the lead officer conducted the stop. I then positioned my vehicle in the opposing lanes of travel next to the lead officer to perform a felony stop. I then exited my vehicle and drew my service pistol and pointed it at the vehicle. I then saw what appeared to be both occupants in some sort of struggle due to the vehicle moving around and I believe Officer Halsey stated that the two men were indeed fighting. The driver's door then swung open, and the driver immediately jumped out of the vehicle and was yelling. I could not make out what he was yelling at first but then Officer Halsey stated that he thought he said he had been stabbed. The driver was then stating that Mr. Booth did in fact have a firearm on his person.

I then saw the passenger identified as Dustin Booth exit the vehicle and start to move in front of the vehicle. At this time Mr. Booth had his hands in the air and was walking NB towards SR 63. I then saw officers start to break their cover and start walking towards Mr. Booth. I then came from my patrol vehicle and started walking towards Mr. Booth. I then thought I might get in my vehicle just in case Mr. Booth decides to begin to run as other officers were already walking towards him. I then got back into my patrol vehicle and started moving forward but decided that it was not going to be needed and exited my patrol vehicle again. I moved back up to where Mr. Booth was with my service pistol drawn and aimed it at Mr. Booth. I began to give him commands to get on the ground and to stop walking as were all the other officers on scene. He failed to comply with all of our commands, and I then saw Officer Doughman's K-9 partner charging at Mr. Booth and it hit him in the back. The K-9 then ran back towards Officer Doughman and he sent him back towards Mr. Booth. The K-9 then hit his arm and the next thing I know Officer Doughman is going hands on with Mr. Booth. The two of them spin around and both end up on the ground. I still had my service pistol trained on Mr. Booth and thought that I might have to go hands on with him as well, so I began to move towards them. I then saw Mr. Booth break free from Officer Doughman and he started to stand up from the ground and began to reach towards his waistband. Mr. Booth then drew a silver revolver from his waistband I then yelled "Gun" to alert the other officers that I had observed a gun and he began to bring it up from his waist pointing it in the direction of me and the other officers and in the moment I was in fear for my life and the life of the other officers on scene so I discharged my service pistol multiple times until Mr. Booth fell to the ground and was no longer a threat.

We then moved up to Mr. Booth to secure the silver revolver that was now laying next to him, and I then holstered my service pistol and ran to my Patrol vehicle to retrieve my Medical Bag. I then ran back to where Mr. Booth was laying and began to treat his wounds. I began to pack the bullet holes that were located on his left chest with quick clot gauze and then applied a tourniquet to his left arm. Medics arrived on scene shortly after and he was placed on the stretcher and loaded into the squad.



AUSTEN WHITE

Exhibit 3



6 People >



Text Message
Fri, Feb 11, 9:49 PM

Chad Caudill

Justin is going to try to talk Dustin into leaving with him and with no guns. Then we can just stop them in Justin's truck.

cc

Sounds good

Eddie Meyers

ok

EM

what is his truck

Chad Caudill

PLE1351. GMC 3500, I believe. Black with yellow lights

Gregg should be forwarding it to you guys

cc

According to Justin the guns are not in a safe and are laying out

Buddo

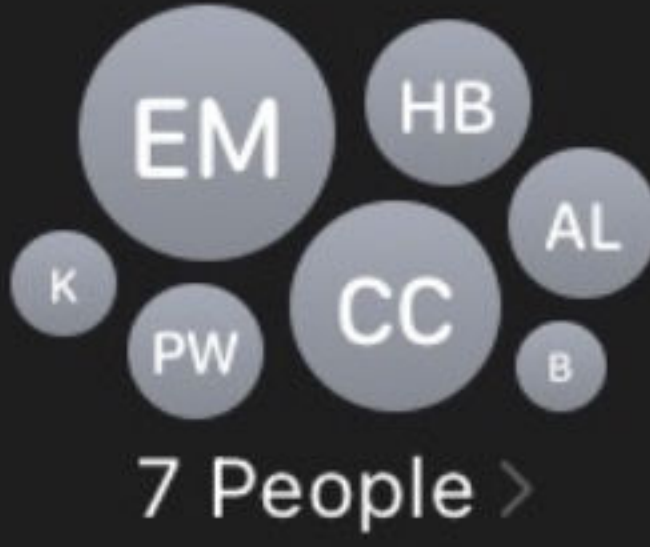
B

Ok



Text Message





Text Message
Fri, Feb 11, 10:21 PM

Chad Caudill

cc

Got a text from Justin they may be leaving soon.

cc

Justin text back and said they're closer to leaving

cc

Friend said he's concerned he may have went back in to get a gun

Halsey BN863

HB

I

Ok

Halsey BN863

HB

Ok

Chad Caudill

cc

Justin said he'll try to get Dustin to put the gun up if he has one

He also wants to be moving and out of the neighborhood before being stopped

Ok

Chad Caudill



Text Message





EM HB AL PW CC B
7 People >



cc leaving soon.

cc Justin text back and said they're closer to leaving

cc Friend said he's concerned he may have went back in to get a gun

Halsey BN863

HB I

Ok

Halsey BN863

HB Ok

Chad Caudill

Justin said he'll try to get Dustin to put the gun up if he has one

cc He also wants to be moving and out of the neighborhood before being stopped

Ok

Chad Caudill

cc Gun is in a bag

Eddie Meyers

EM k, he say where they were going



Text Message

