



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



2023-2008
Officer Involved Critical Incident – Terminal Road By Dayton
Airport, OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Rodney D. Helman (S), Elaine M. Helman (S)
Date of Activity: 08/22/2023
Activity Location: Law Offices of Harshman, Wannemacher, Tipton and Lipperman –
Business – 4683 Winterset , Columbus, OH 43220, Franklin County
Author: SA Richard Ward, #55

Narrative:

On Thursday, August 22, 2023 at 1503 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) Special Agents Richard Ward and Perry Roeser met with Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Special Response Team (SRT) Trooper ██████████ at the Law Offices of Harshman, Wannemacher, Tipton and Lipperman, 4683 Winterset Drive Columbus, Ohio, for the purpose of an interview. Also present was ██████████'s attorney and union representative, Kate Harshman. ██████████ was read the *Criminal Investigation Notification* per the standard pre-interview form. ██████████ acknowledged and signed the form.

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, August 2 2023, London Police Sergeant Michael Orahod conducted a traffic stop on Rodney and Elaine Helman in the City of London for various traffic violations. During the interaction between Orahod and the Helmans, false information was provided reference their identity and they ultimately fled from the stop in the vehicle both occupied. The Helmans fled to a nearby Travel America where both fled on foot; during which Rodney Helman pointed a handgun at Orahod. Both Rodney and Elaine Helman entered a stationary semi-truck occupied by ██████████ who used a hammer to fend off the Helmans, but was shot in the hand by Rodney Helman. The Helmans gained control of the semi-truck and fled the area. After a prolonged pursuit and standoff, which culminated near the Dayton International Airport, both Rodney and Elaine Helman were shot and killed by Ohio State Highway Patrol Troopers.

Previously, Attorney Lathan Lipperman provided Agent Ward, via email, a six page typed statement prepared by ██████████ ██████████ read the statement into the record and signed the copy presented to him. Agent Ward asked ██████████ if he heard any trooper verbally indicate the subject had a gun and ██████████ stated Trooper Hector Burgos did, but could not recall exactly what was said. It was after Burgos hopped from the semi and indicated "gun" that he heard the single gunshot and fired. Agent asked ██████████ if he knew where the initial gunshot

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came from and he believed from inside the [semi] cab. Agent Ward reviewed with [REDACTED] the aviation, Warner truck, and body-worn camera video. Agent Ward asked if he knew where his rounds impacted and he observed the rounds impact the windshield. After the second volley of rounds, [REDACTED] observed the subject fall and called a "cease fire". Agent Ward asked if his actions were consistent with the OSHP Use of Force policy and [REDACTED] stated yes.

Agent Ward concluded the interview with Trooper [REDACTED] at 1530 hours.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2023-08-22 / Trp. [REDACTED] OSHP audio recorded interview

Attachment # 02: Trooper [REDACTED] statement

Attachment # 03: Trooper [REDACTED] CIN pre-interview form

References:

Original signed statements of Troopers [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.

Exhibit 2

TROOPER [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]

This statement is regarding my involvement in an incident that occurred on Wednesday, August 2, 2023, between the hours of 2:00am and 8:00am on Wednesday morning.

I was hired by the Ohio State Highway Patrol in September of 2011. My current assignment is Trooper, Special Response Team (SRT). My usual shift is 6:00am to 2:00pm with Saturdays and Sundays off. Due to my position, I am subject to callouts outside my normal shift. My immediate supervisor is Sergeant Erik Lofland. On the evening of Tuesday, August 1 into the morning of Wednesday, August 2, I was on a special detail assignment at the Ohio Expo Center and State Fair Grounds located at 717 E 17th Avenue, Columbus. I was working with Trooper Hector Burgos. I was in the standard Trooper uniform and assigned a state-owned cruiser designated as SP 1918. My shift was scheduled from 6:00pm on Tuesday evening to 6:00am on Wednesday morning.

At the time of the incident, I was wearing my standard issued uniform pants, a white undershirt, and my olive green SRT-issued outer carrier/vest, which is olive green in color and has TROOPER on the back in black lettering. I was also wearing the SRT-issued olive green combat helmet with visor. My visor was down during the incident. I was armed with a SRT-issued Aero Precision 223 556 with standard department-issued ammunition, which I fired during the incident. I also had my sidearm, a Sig Sauer 320 9mm, which I did not fire during the incident. I am current on my range qualifications with my rifle and pistol.

I am right-hand dominant. I was in good health at the time of this incident. I was not taking any medications that would in any way affect my ability to carry out my responsibilities and duties as a State Trooper or a SRT member. I had not consumed any alcohol or drugs in the twenty-four (24) hour time period prior to this incident. I had plenty of sleep prior to my shift. I was not under

any unusual stress. I do not wear a hearing aid, nor do I have any problems with my hearing. I do not wear contacts or glasses, nor do I have any problems with my vision.

Early in the morning of Wednesday, August 2 at approximately 2:15am, I was contacted by Sergeant Lofland regarding a carjacking of a semi-tractor outside of London, OH. Trooper Burgos and I were asked to respond. I responded separately in my cruiser from the Fair Grounds, which took me approximately one (1) hour.

Prior to my arrival there had been pursuit of the semi and by the time I arrived, the semi-tractor was stopped on Dayton International Airport Road between I-70 W and State Route 40. Airport Road consists of two (2) lanes going north and two (2) lanes going south separated by a grass median strip. The semi was facing north in the north lanes of Airport Road in middle of the two (2) lanes. I reported to the command staff at the BEAR. After I arrived, Lieutenant Mangin moved SRT's (Lenco) BEAR to the west (driver's side) of the semi also facing north about 2-3 feet from the semi. At the time of the incident, the SRT equipment vehicle was to the west of the BEAR.

During the next few hours, I learned more information about the situation. I learned that there were three (3) occupants in the semi, one (1) hostage and two (2) suspects. We were texted pictures on cell phones of the suspects (a male white and a female white). At some point, I learned that the semi had been in a pursuit with London Police Department after it was stolen at gunpoint from a Travel American truck stop.

During this time, negotiators attempted to convince the suspects to release the hostage, whose name I learned was [REDACTED]. This included providing the suspects with requested items including cigarettes, soda, and eyedrops. It soon became clear that negotiations were going to be

unsuccessful. During this same time period, SRT discussed several plans to extract the hostage from the vehicle. We waited for the helicopter to arrive.

At approximately 7:30am, I got in position with several SRT members. Lieutenant Bryan Mangin gave the go, stating “assault, assault, assault.” I approached the driver’s side door (west) of the semi between the BEAR and semi with my rifle. I was behind Trooper Matt Robinson, who held a shield, and Trooper [REDACTED] who was equipped with a x-ball (similar to a rake and break). I heard flashbangs deployed at the front of the vehicle. Trooper [REDACTED] used the x-ball pole to break the driver’s side window. We were unable to see any of the suspects at this point, so I moved behind Trooper Robinson, who held the shield blocking my body from the driver’s side window and stationed myself near the driver’s side front (northwest corner) of the semi (northeast corner of the BEAR) so I could look through the front windshield. Trooper Robinson was standing to my right in front of the BEAR. Staff Lieutenant Seth Douthitt was to Trooper Robinson’s right. I was approximately 15 to 20 feet from the semi.

I could see a white male wearing a white shirt, who I assumed was the male suspect, close to the sleeper berth. I could not tell if he was in between the seats or further back in the berth. Trooper Robinson moved to shield us. I saw Trooper Burgos, who was standing on the step of the passenger side door, jump down. I asked Trooper [REDACTED] who was now on the passenger side of the vehicle, what he saw. I then heard a gunshot. I am not sure if the suspect or another member of the SRT team fired. I could still see the suspect, but I do not believe I saw the suspect’s weapon at this point. I fired five (5) to six (6) times in a volley at the windshield in a southeast direction, slightly pointed up as I was on the ground and the semi cab was higher than I was. I could see the suspect move up closer to the windshield of the semi with his gun tracking Trooper [REDACTED] on the passenger

side of the vehicle. I moved to the front of the semi (to the east) and fired an additional five (5) to seven (7) times, again in a volley through the windshield.

I called a cease fire when I saw the suspect drop as I rounded the northeast side of the semi. I could no longer see the suspect. I moved to the passenger side (southeast of semi) and backed away.

I stood at the passenger rear of the semi with Trooper Robinson and Trooper [REDACTED]. At some point, an OC canister was thrown in the passenger side window by Lieutenant Mangin. I ordered the hostage out of the semi several times. The hostage, [REDACTED] a white male, with an orange shirt, eventually came out the passenger side door, leaving it open. He went to my right and then behind me (southeast). We all then backed away from the semi and I went behind the BEAR. I tactically reloaded. Lieutenant Mangin ordered me up to the front of the semi.

I got in the driver's side of the BEAR, moving to the passenger side window which was level with the semi's side window. I could see movement in between the front seats of the vehicle. I was having a difficult time seeing in due to the BEAR's location. The BEAR was moved forward a few feet, so I could better see in. I could see the male suspect on the floor between the seats. He was moving, sitting up between the seats. It was obvious that he had been hit. He was ordered to put both of his hands up. I saw his hands and he was no longer armed, which I relayed over radio. I could not see the female suspect. I opened the passenger side door of the BEAR so that Staff Sergeant Douthitt could deploy a gas can through the broken driver's side window. I could then see both the male and the female suspects move.

I exited the BEAR at the rear. I stationed myself at the passenger side of the semi just south of the door behind the shield. There were repeated calls for the suspects to show their hands which went on for several minutes. I eventually approached the passenger side of the semi with my rifle

with several other Troopers with shields. Several more minutes went by as Trooper [REDACTED] and others tried to coax the male suspect from the vehicle. I eventually exchanged my rifle for a shield. Troopers went into the vehicle to get the male suspect once it was confirmed that neither suspect was armed. The male suspect was taken from the semi (to the southeast) and rolled over on his stomach on the road, then handcuffed.

I checked for bullet wounds and asked for my medic bag. I applied wound sealers and medics arrived. At the time, the male suspect was still conscious, though incoherent. He was covered in blood. After the medic arrived, I moved to the female suspect, who was being taken care of by Trooper [REDACTED]. I cut off her top and bra, so we could better see her wounds. There appeared to be a gunshot to her upper chest. We turned her to look for an exit wound. We applied several wound sealers, but she was bleeding steadily, and they would not stick to her. She was conscious, though becoming more incoherent as we worked. The medics arrived with a gurney. I picked up my medic bag and had no further involvement in the incident.

I now know I fired a total of twelve (12) times. When I fired, I was aware that the suspects had carjacked the semi with a weapon, engaged in a pursuit with local law enforcement, were keeping a hostage, and had refused to comply with the orders of negotiators. I saw Trooper Burgos jump down from the passenger side of the vehicle. I could see the male suspect in cab of the semi. I heard a gunshot. I fired six (6) times from the driver's side front of the semi, firing southeast and slightly upward from my position on the ground. I fired at the suspect's center of mass using my optic. I fired with both hands. I fired from a standing position. My backdrop was the back and top of the semi cab. I was approximately 10-15 feet from the front of the semi at the time I fired.

The second time I fired, I could see both the male suspect and his weapon, which was pointed at and tracking Trooper [REDACTED]. I moved to the front of the semi (to the east) and fired another

volley of six (6) shots through the windshield. This times the shots were fired south and again slightly up. I fired at the suspect's center of mass using my optic. I used two hands and was standing. My backdrop was the back and top of the semi cab. I was approximately 10-15 feet from the front of the semi at the time I fired. I stopped firing when I saw the suspect fall. I estimate that it was approximately 30 seconds from the time I first fired until I saw the suspect fall and ceased firing.

At the time I fired, I did not believe and still do not believe I had any other reasonable alternative other than to fire to protect the life of my fellow officers and myself. We were in imminent danger of death or severe bodily injury. The first time I fired, I saw the suspect in the window of the semi and heard a gunshot. The second time I fired, I saw the suspect pointing his weapon at Trooper [REDACTED]. The suspect could have easily shot him or another member of my team at any time. I was in fear for the lives of my teammates as well as myself.

I have now reviewed the video of the incident. The video does not materially change my recollection of events.

I now know that the name of the suspects are Rodney and Elaine Helman. I do not remember having any prior interactions with suspects either personal or professional.

This statement consists of six (6) pages.

Trooper [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]

Exhibit 3



MIKE DEWINE

★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★



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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).


 Printed Name of Interviewee

8-22-23 11:05
 Date / Time


 Signature of Interviewee

Perry Roeser
 BCI Agent (Printed)

SA Perry Roeser
 BCI Agent (Signature)