



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



2023-1835

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 114 North Ninth St, Byesville, OH (L)

To: Attorney Ronald Welch, Muskingum County Prosecutor  
From: Craig Call, Special Agent, Ohio BCI  
Date: November 20, 2023  
Involves: [REDACTED] icer [REDACTED] Deputy [REDACTED]  
BCI Case Number: 2023-1835

### **Investigative Request**

On Tuesday July 11, 2023, The Guernsey County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) requested the assistance of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation's (BCI) Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Crime Scene Unit (CSU) in conducting an independent investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding an officer-involved shooting incident. The incident reportedly occurred on July 11, 2023, in the area of 114 North 9th Street, Byesville, Ohio, which resulted in the death of Jeremiah Wise.

#### *Preface:*

This report serves as a synopsis of the investigation into the July 11, 2023, officer-involved shooting in Guernsey County, Ohio. This report only summarizes the information that the investigative team determined to be the most useful in achieving an overall understanding of what occurred in this incident. Every fact and detail is not presented in this summary report. Therefore, it is recommended that each individual report from which this document is derived be read in order to obtain a complete understanding of this investigation. Further, audio and/or video recordings exist for the majority of the interviews conducted, revealing further details of statements given regarding the incident.

*This investigation was conducted with the purpose of determining, to the extent possible, the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident. As unbiased collectors of fact, the investigative team has not and will not render any opinion of the legality of officers' actions. Instead, it is anticipated that this investigation will provide the basis of information for decisions to be rendered by the appropriate authorities.*

### **Investigative Team**

Lead BCI Special Agent:

- SA Craig Call

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**Assisting Investigative BCI Special Agents:**

- SAS Kevin Barbeau
- SA Ryan Scheiderer
- SA Brady Curry

**BCI Crime Scene Special Agents:**

- SA Cassandra Tackett
- SA Aja Chung
- SA Mathew Austin

**BCI Investigative Supervisor:**

- Special Agent Jim Mulford

**Summary of Process**

The following is a partial list of investigative activities or methods which were employed during the course of this investigation, by the investigative team, in an effort to thoroughly and accurately locate and document all pertinent facts and circumstances regarding this incident:

- Three written and recorded statements of the three officers who discharged their weapons
- One recorded statement and report of one officer who was directly involved in the incident
- Neighborhood canvass of the area surrounding the scene
- Recorded interview(s) subjects directly involved in the incident
- Interviews of two (2) civilian witnesses to the incident
- Obtained and reviewed open and closed-source biographical information on the involved subjects, to include criminal history reports, OHLEG, driving records, etc.
- Review of all available video footage of the incident
- Processing of the scene for potential evidence (photographing, searching, measuring, documenting, and collecting)
- Reviewed audio communications on the radio frequencies utilized during the incident
- Review of 911/phone communications related to the incident
- Review of dispatch/CAD records pertaining to the incident

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- Review of the department's reports, photographs, and investigative materials pertaining to the incident, excluding any Garrity statements or information derived from any compelled statement.
- Collected and reviewed the departmental personnel files of the officers involved in the shooting, to include training and disciplinary records (if any)
- Reviewed firearm qualification and training records for involved officers
- Verified the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) certification status of the officers who discharged their weapons
- Obtained the department's policies and procedures regarding use of force for prosecutorial review
- Reviewed medical records of the injured parties in the incident and the treatment administered
- Reviewed tips, social media posts, and pertinent statements made in the media regarding the incident

### **Incident Summary/Overview**

On July 11, 2023, several officers with the Byesville Police Department (BPD) and the GCSO responded to 114 North 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Byesville, in reference to a stand-off style situation originating from a requested welfare check of a suicidal male with access to firearms, identified as Jeremiah Wise (Wise). The GCSO SWAT team and hostage negotiators responded and staged at a nearby parking lot out of view of the residence, while uniformed officers with BPD and GCSO held perimeter positions surrounding the residence.

During negotiations with Wise via cell phone, Wise confirmed to negotiators he was armed with a handgun and continually consuming alcoholic beverages. Negotiators reported Wise to be making suicidal and homicidal comments towards law enforcement during these conversations.

After hours of negotiations, Wise initially came outside the residence unarmed. Wise remained on the front porch and shouted profanities towards law enforcement before going back inside. Law enforcement officers attempted to engage Wise in dialogue during this exchange, but were unsuccessful. A short time later, Wise came back out on the front porch armed with a handgun. Wise raised the handgun towards law enforcement, and was shot in response. Wise was transported from the scene to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. BPD [REDACTED], [REDACTED], BPD Officer [REDACTED] (Officer [REDACTED] and GCSO Deputy [REDACTED] (Deputy [REDACTED] fired their weapons during the incident.

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The incident was captured on both body worn camera and patrol cruiser dash cam.

### **Subsequent Investigation**

BCI was provided with body worn camera (bwc) and patrol cruiser dash cam (dash cam) footage of the above referenced incident. The below is a brief synopsis of the report contained in the case file of the timeline of events observed by SA Call in the surveillance footage.

The shooting and events immediately surrounding the shooting are best captured on Deputy [REDACTED]'s (Deputy [REDACTED] BWC and dash cam of GCSO cruiser number [REDACTED] operated by Deputy [REDACTED]. These videos are the only provided that display Wise's actions immediately prior to and during the shooting. BPD [REDACTED] initially had a BWC on his person at the start of the incident, however he changed his body armor to a heavier rated set up which was not equipped with a BWC leaving him without a BWC on his person during the shooting. Officer [REDACTED] was equipped with a BWC, but it was not activated at the time of the shooting. Several members of the GCSO SWAT were indirectly involved with the incident after the shooting and SA Call was informed they were not equipped with BWC.

In reference to the shooting and the events immediately surrounding, the provided footage shows Wise initially came out onto the front porch unarmed. Wise appeared to be shirtless, wearing shorts, and had what appeared to be a cell phone in his hand. Wise screamed profanities at law enforcement during this exchange, while Deputy [REDACTED] and GCSO Sgt. Keith Rogers (Sgt. Rogers) attempted to engage Wise in conversation. Wise went back inside without further incident.

After a brief period of time, Wise comes back out onto the front porch armed with a handgun. Wise raised the firearm into his eyeline in what appeared to be the direction [REDACTED] was positioned. Multiple officers yell out indicating Wise has a gun and multiple gunshots can be heard shortly after. Deputy [REDACTED] can be observed firing his handgun in the direction of Wise during this, however the other officers' gunshots are only heard. Wise fell to the ground near the front threshold of the residence after the gunfire.

A large number of additional officers quickly responded on foot to the front of the residence and the GCSO SWAT team responded in an armored vehicle. The officers made entry into the residence and began rendering aid to Wise before he was ultimately transported to Southeastern Medical Center in Cambridge, Ohio. Wise succumbed to his injuries.

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BCI was provided with [REDACTED] Officer [REDACTED] and Deputy [REDACTED]'s personnel files and found their Ohio Peace Officer Certification and firearms qualifications to be current.

**Autopsy, Death Certificate, and Medical Records Reports**

The autopsy, death certificate, and medical records report for Wise were obtained and reviewed in reference to the July 11, 2023, incident.

[REDACTED]

Wise's death certificate lists the cause of death as multiple gunshot wounds to the torso with the manner of death listed as a homicide.

[REDACTED]

**Physical Evidence and Laboratory Reports**

[REDACTED] Officer [REDACTED] and Deputy [REDACTED]'s firearms and the fired casings recovered from the scene were submitted to the BCI Laboratory for analysis. The actual reports should be consulted as the following synopsis does not include many of the details from the full reports.

The BCI Laboratory performed an analysis of the officers' firearms, as well as the firearm-related evidence collected from the scene (casing). By comparing the evidentiary cartridge casings to known standards from the weapons involved, identification was able to be made as to the casings being fired from the firearms involved. Of the casings recovered, the following identifications were made: The fired casings recovered were matches for the officers' firearms submitted for comparison.

The firearm recovered from Jeremiah Wise was also submitted to the BCI Lab found to be in operable condition.

**Investigative Interviews**

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The following information comprises extremely abbreviated versions of the statements made by the witness and/or participants of this incident deemed by the author to be of most relevance to the overall understanding of the incident. More detailed accounts can be found by reading the separate reports written by the interviewers and by reviewing the recordings of each interview, including those not synopsized below.

**BPD** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] provided a written statement and answered follow up questions in reference to his actions and observations during the incident. The signed written statement is approximately seven (7) pages in total length with two lines continuing onto an eighth page.

In reference to the events just prior to shooting and the shooting itself, [REDACTED] wrote, *"Once Mr. Wise went back into his home, I observed Officer [REDACTED] on North 9th now positioned near his patrol vehicle. Sergeant Rogers came back to cover at the Ford Explorer. A short time passed before Sergeant Rogers went to move his patrol vehicle. I also entered the driver's seat of my Ford Explorer to move my vehicle so Sergeant Rogers could just take my post. It was at this time that I observed the front door of Mr. Wise's home open and Mr. Wise exit the home. He was screaming and hollering again. This time it was clear he had a firearm in his hand. I then exited my Ford Explorer, with my patrol rifle pointed at Mr. Wise. I knew Sergeant Rogers was directly behind me.*

*I observed Mr. Wise with a black full-sized handgun in his hand. I yelled, "Gun!" several times and began to repeat, "Drop the Gun!" It was at this time that Mr. Wise advanced his firearm from his own chest area towards my direction and that of Sgt. Rogers. Mr. Wise was yelling at this time. I believed my life was in direct and immediate danger, as well as the life of Sergeant. Rogers. I believed our lives were in deadly harm from Mr. Wise's advancing his firearm at our positions. I also was in immediate fear for the lives of other law enforcement officers in the area as well as for any civilians in nearby residences.*

*I then discharged my patrol rifle to the center mass of Mr. Wise while Mr. Wise had his firearm pointed at me. After I shot my round, Mr. Wise, still in the possession of his firearm, fell back into the entryway of his home with his front door open. I recall after shooting my first round that I continued to yell to him, "Drop the gun!" I believed I fired 2 to 3 rounds."*

**Officer** [REDACTED]

Officer [REDACTED]'s signed written witness statement is approximately five pages in length with four lines and the signature appearing on a sixth page.

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In reference to the events occurring just prior to the shooting and during the shooting, Officer [REDACTED] wrote the following:

*"I went over to the Crown Vic attempting to fall back to the rear. I heard "He's coming out!" I took cover behind the rear trunk area of the Crown Vic. I posted the rifle on the trunk and began to assess the situation. I observed Mr. Wise with shorts and no shirt on. Mr. Wise was standing on the front porch of 114 N 9th St. He did not have any weapons in his hand nor on his person. At that point I did not take the rifle off of safe. I observed Mr. Wise to be very agitated, he was screaming and was flipping [REDACTED] off. Mr. Wise was moving his arms up and down repeatedly. I could hear Deputies and Officers near the porch verbally trying to deescalate the situation by attempting to get Mr. Wise away from the house and towards them. I then observed Mr. Wise going back inside the home. I was still posted up on my cruiser resting the rifle.*

*An elderly lady behind me popped out of her screen door and asked "Do you shoot to wound or Kill?" Almost immediately after she asked that question, Mr. Wise returned out of the front door with a full size black handgun in his hand. I fixed my rifle's sights on Mr. Wise again. I took the rifle off of safe. I heard statements from other law enforcement officers staged in front of me saying "Gun!" and "Drop the Gun!" I observed Mr. Wise having the handgun up high then down low. I followed the handgun's movement. I observed Mr. Wise bring the handgun up and towards [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I heard one gun shot.*

*I was in direct and immediate fear for [REDACTED]'s life at this time. I also was in immediate fear for the lives of myself and other law enforcement officers in the area as well as for any civilians in nearby residences. I was aiming for the center mass of the front right side of Mr. Wise. I squeezed the trigger three times, firing three rounds once I heard that first gun shot go off. I then observed Mr. Wise spin around and fall to the inside of the home."*

**GCSO Deputy [REDACTED]**

Deputy [REDACTED]'s signed written witness statement is approximately six (6) pages in length.

In reference to the events occurring just prior to the shooting and during the shooting, Deputy [REDACTED] wrote the following:

*"It was at this time that Mr. Wise stepped out on the front porch and I observed that he did not have a shirt on but was wearing shorts. Mr. Wise was agitated and began yelling at law enforcement. I walked to the rear of my cruiser and attempted to speak with Mr. Wise by telling him to walk towards the road. I could hear that Sergeant Rogers was also attempting to communicate with Mr. Wise. Mr. Wise would not listen to*

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*Sergeant Rogers or me and only became more agitated. Mr. Wise was holding a cell phone in one hand and used his other hand to hit the railing on the front step of the residence. Mr. Wise was cursing at us and telling us to come into his house because he was going to fight. Mr. Wise then returned to his residence and slammed the front door behind him. I moved back to the front of my cruiser.*

*A short time later I observed that the front door of the residence began to open. I unholstered my pistol while standing by my cruiser. Mr. Wise walked outside and was holding something in his hand but I was not able to immediately identify it. Mr. Wise turned his attention toward Sergeant Rogers and [REDACTED] and began yelling at them but kept his hand at his waist. Mr. Wise then moved his hand and readjusted his grip on the object he was holding. I was then able to identify the object as a handgun while he raised it up to begin aiming towards Sergeant Rogers and [REDACTED]. I responded to his aiming of his handgun by firing multiple rounds at Mr. Wise. I observed that he began to retreat into his residence. I began approaching the front of the residence and observed that Mr. Wise had stumbled and then fell to the ground while facing away from us."*

### **Summary**

All persons known to have relevant information regarding this investigation have been interviewed (or attempted), and all known pertinent records and evidence have been obtained and reviewed. BCI will continue to offer investigative assistance into any newly identified witnesses or information relative to this criminal investigation. BCI's investigation into this officer-involved critical incident is concluded unless such new information/witnesses is/are identified through grand jury or other means.

Agents remain available for consultation and/or to perform any additional investigation, analysis, processing and/or other assistance/involvement you might deem to be necessary.

### **Contact Information**

The preceding information comprises only a portion of facts and circumstances collected during the investigation of the officer-involved shooting incident. For further review of specific information or documentation collected during the investigation, please refer to the individual reports and documents from which this summary was derived. Any questions regarding the content or context of the information contained in this document can be directed to the attention of Special Agent Craig Call. SA Call can be reached via email at [timothy.call@OhioAGO.gov](mailto:timothy.call@OhioAGO.gov) or by telephone, at 614-270-1066.

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