



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



2023-0795

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 1433 State Route 7, Brookfield Township, Ohio 44403, Trumbull County

Investigative Activity: Witness Officer Interview
Involves: Brookfield Township Police Officer Joshua Ellwood-Bellas (W)
Activity Date: April 3, 2023
Activity Location: Brookfield Township Administration Building, 6844 Strimbu Drive, Brookfield Township, Ohio 44403
Authoring Agent: SA Nicholas Valente #139

Narrative:

On April 3, 2023, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Nick Valente (Valente) and SA Joe Goudy (Goudy) interviewed Brookfield Township Police Department (BTPD) Officer Joshua Ellwood-Bellas (Ellwood-Bellas). Officer Ellwood-Bellas was accompanied by his attorney, George Gerken of the Ohio Patrolman's Benevolent Association. The interview took place at the Brookfield Township Administration Building and was audio and video recorded. The audio recording has been attached to this report. The video recording has been stored in the BCI SIU case file as Reference Item G.

Prior to beginning the interview, Officer Ellwood-Bellas read, indicated he understood, and signed the BCI Criminal Investigation Notification Form. That form has been attached to this report.

Officer Ellwood-Bellas was identified as a BTPD officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the March 21, 2023, officer-involved shooting which occurred at 1433 State Route 7, Brookfield Township, Ohio. Officer Ellwood-Bellas 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 Ellwood-Bellas.

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.

Throughout the interview, Officer Ellwood-Bellas provided the following information:

Ellwood-Bellas has been a police officer with the BTPD since February 22, 2022, and became a full-time officer with the department on May 1, 2022. Ellwood-Bellas also works part-time as a

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police officer in Kinsman Township, Ohio. On the date of the officer-involved shooting incident, March 21, 2023, Ellwood-Bellas was assigned badge number 2227 and this was also used as his radio call sign.

At the time of the officer involved shooting, Ellwood-Bellas was wearing dark blue uniform pants, a duty belt, an internal style ballistic vest, a department issued uniform shirt, and a department issued coat. The coat had a badge affixed over the chest and police patches on the shoulders. Ellwood-Bellas was also wearing a black winter cap with large white letters reading "POLICE". Ellwood-Bellas considered himself to be well represented as police officer at the time of the officer involved shooting.

Ellwood-Bellas drove a Dodge Charger marked police vehicle on the night of the officer-involved shooting. The vehicle displayed visible police markings on the sides and was equipped with a light bar and siren. The vehicle was assigned cruiser and license plate number 5.

Ellwood-Bellas reported he was not under the influence of any drugs, alcohol, or medication at the time of the officer involved shooting. Likewise, Ellwood-Bellas reported he was not under the influence of any drugs, alcohol, or medication at the time of the interview.

Ellwood-Bellas was wearing a body-worn camera at the time of the incident which was recording during the officer-involved shooting incident. Ellwood-Bellas did not utilize any other recording devices at that time.

Ellwood-Bellas reported that earlier in the day preceding the officer involved shooting, he participated in a search for the subject (Fred Wild) with other officers. This search was unsuccessful and the subject was not located. The search was conducted during daylight hours and occurred some time before he and officers would later go to the location where the officer-involved shooting later occurred. During the initial search Ellwood-Bellas participated in, he was told the subject may be in possession of a muzzle loader as the subject was believed to have one with him when he fled from police. Since a muzzle loader was not recovered from the subject's truck when it was searched, Ellwood-Bellas believed it was possible the subject may still be in possession of that weapon.

The next morning leading up to the officer-involved shooting, Ellwood-Bellas reported he responded to a location on State Route 7 near the home where the incident would occur. When Ellwood-Bellas arrived at that location, he met BTPD Sergeant [REDACTED] who was already speaking with the homeowner of the property where the subject would soon be located. Ellwood-Bellas learned from the property owner during this meeting that "there was possibility of, the homeowner said there was a possibility of having bow and arrows in that cabin that he was in"

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[9:17 mark of video]. Additional police officers from Lordstown, Vienna Township, the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol also began to arrive at the location where the property owner briefed law enforcement on the subject's whereabouts. Officers learned the cabin where the subject was located had a single door. Further the cabin had windows on all four sides which the subject may be able to utilize to exit the cabin.

The assembled group of law enforcement devised a plan to approach and attempt to apprehend the subject. The plan was for two officers/troopers to position themselves on all sides of the cabin before making the subject aware of their presence. Ellwood-Bellas reported he was paired up with Ohio State Highway Patrol Sergeant [REDACTED] Ellwood-Bellas and Sergeant [REDACTED] were assigned to position themselves near a window on one of the backsides of the cabin, though Ellwood-Bellas could not recall specifically which side of the cabin he was assigned to watch during the beginning of the interview.

The group of officers and troopers drove to the property where the subject was located. The group of officers and troopers walked up the driveway "which was a good distance" [6:05 mark of video]. As the group approached the cabin where the subject was located, they could hear music coming from inside the cabin. Ellwood-Bellas stated the group "never made it to that part. We never got close enough that we could actually surround the windows before he would noticed that we were there" [7:13 mark of video].

Ellwood-Bellas utilized an aerial image taken of the scene to show agents where he believed himself to be in relation to the cabin when the subject noticed the officers. Ellwood-Bellas pointed to a location on the image that was roughly halfway between the cabin and where the involved truck would ultimately come to rest.

Ellwood-Bellas recalled the subject, upon seeing the officers, jumped out the window of the cabin and into the truck. Some of the officers then began to attempt to break the passenger window of the truck. The subject "started the truck and then he started driving forward and I was more focused on trying to get out of the way of the truck" [8:18 mark of the video].

While detailing the activity of the involved parties further, Ellwood-Bellas stated BTPD Sergeant [REDACTED] was the first person he heard giving the subject commands. Ellwood-Bellas did not hear the subject respond to those commands. Ellwood-Bellas reported that at the time BTPD Sergeant [REDACTED] began giving the subject commands, Ellwood-Bellas had not yet reached his assigned position at the (north) side of the cabin. Ellwood-Bellas was still approaching the (east) side of the cabin from the driveway/woods alongside the driveway. Ellwood-Bellas, from his position in front of the truck, saw the subject enter the truck, saw the headlights of the truck turn on and heard the engine start. Based on the location Ellwood-Bellas pointed to on the overhead image of

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the scene, he was likely within a few car lengths distance of the truck and directly in front of its presumed path. Ellwood-Bellas heard and saw the vehicle begin to accelerate very quickly after it was started. When asked what action he took if any at that moment, Ellwood-Bellas stated "I wanted to get out of the way. That was, that was my main concern, was getting out of the way of the truck so that I could not get hit" [14:01 mark of video]. Ellwood-Bellas believed he was in the path or potential path of the truck at that moment. When asked if he though the subject saw him in the path or potential path of the truck, Ellwood-Bellas stated "I would say yes" [14:30 mark of video]. When asked to clarify if the truck began to accelerate towards him before or after he began to move out of the truck's likely path of travel, Ellwood-Bellas was unable to say with certainty which was accurate but did state "it would probably be really close" [14:54 mark of video]. When asked what he thought or felt at the moment the truck began moving forward, Ellwood-Bellas stated "I wanted to get out of the way of the truck so I didn't get hit. That was my, that was my biggest concern, so I didn't get hit" [15:15 mark of the video]. Ellwood-Bellas later reiterated that he felt if he didn't move out of the way of the truck when it began to move towards him he would have been hit.

When asked where he was at the time he began hearing gunshots, Ellwood-Bellas stated he had moved to the (north) side of the truck and pointed to a location on the overhead map just out of the way of the truck.

When asked if anyone near him fired a weapon Ellwood-Bellas stated "I believe so" [20:25 mark of video] but could not recall specifically who was near him that may have discharged a weapon.

When asked if he had reviewed his body-worn camera recording, Ellwood-Bellas reported he briefly saw a very small portion of his body-worn camera and that of an Ohio State Highway Patrol Trooper that someone brought up later in the morning after the shooting.

Ellwood-Bellas reported that at the time of the incident he was aware the subject was "wanted for the warrant out of Lake County, which dispatch confirmed they wanted him. Um, I'm not entirely sure but I think Liberty might have had charges as well and then Lordstown was going to file charges as well I believe" [8:45 mark of video].

Ellwood-Bellas stated he would not object to agents watching his body-worn camera in its entirety.

Ellwood-Bellas stated that he could not recall making any specific statements to any of the involved officers, nor could he recall any of them saying anything specific to him about the incident after it ended.

Ellwood-Bellas stated no one tried to influence his statement to agents.

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Reference Item:

1. Reference Item G - Video recorded interview with Officer Ellwood-Bellas.

Attachments:

1. 2023-04-03: Joshua Ellwood-Bellas Signed Criminal Investigation Notification Form
2. 2023-04-03: Audio - Joshua Ellwood-Bellas Interview



DAVE YOST

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).

Joshua Ellwood-Bellas
Printed Name of Interviewee

4-3-2023 / 1201
Date / Time

Joshua Ellwood-Bellas
Signature of Interviewee

SA Joseph Goudley⁸³
BCI Agent (Printed)

[Signature]
BCI Agent (Signature)