



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



2023-0556
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 23897 US Rt 23, Circleville
43113 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Deputy Alfredo Magana (S)
Date of Activity: 03/08/2023
Activity Location: Magana, Deputy Alfredo – Business – 600 Island Rd., Circleville, OH 43113, Pickaway County
Author: SA James Poole

Narrative:

On Tuesday, March 8, 2023 at 1316 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agents James Poole (SA Poole) and Kyle Douglass (SA Douglass) interviewed Pickaway County Deputy Alfredo Magaña (Deputy Magaña). The interview took place at the Pickaway County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) at 600 Island Rd., Circleville, Ohio. Deputy Magaña was identified as being a police officer who responded to the Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) involving now deceased Pamela Croston (Croston). The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this officer.

This interview was audio recorded, and a copy of the recording was saved electronically within the case file. Please refer to the recording for specific quotes. The following is a summation of the interview.

Prior to beginning the interview, SA Poole provided Deputy Magaña with a BCI "Criminal Investigation Notification" form. SA Poole advised BCI was conducting a criminal investigation separate from any internal investigation that PCSO may be conducting. Deputy Magaña was told his interview was voluntary and he could stop answering questions at any time. Deputy Magaña verbally confirmed he understood the contents of the form and signed the document further acknowledging his understanding. A copy of the signed Criminal Investigation Notification (CIN) is attached to this report. Attorney Jon Sauter was also present and provided SA Poole with a written statement from Deputy Magaña regarding the OICI. SA Poole reviewed the statement upon receipt. Deputy Magaña signed his statement provided to BCI, and verified the statement was a true and accurate depiction of the OICI. Please refer to Deputy Magaña's statement for further details. A copy of the signed written statement was saved within the case file and is attached to this report.

Deputy Magaña stated, "At approximately 1:30 A.M. I was engaged in routine patrol activities.

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I was informed by our Dispatch that there was a report of a suicidal woman with a gun at the Roadway Inn, which is located on U.S. 23 in the City of Circleville area. While I was in route to the Roadway Inn, Dispatch further advised me that the woman, who I would later learn was named Pamela Coston, indicated she wished to commit "suicide-by-cop."

"The (Hotel) manager advised us that he did have a woman who had checked-in under a Hispanic male's name and he told us the room number. I passed this information along to Sgt. Hugus and together we walked toward the woman's motel room. As we approached the room, a woman, who would later be identified as Pamela Coston, drew the curtains of the room's window, placed a handgun against the window and tapped the glass with the gun. The law enforcement officers on the scene began to yell, "Gun! Gun!" and I, along with the other officers, began to take cover. I took cover behind my patrol vehicle, which was parked in front of Coston's motel room door."

"At this point, from cover, myself and other officers began to plead with Coston to put down the gun, which was visible through the window. However, she refused. She then closed the curtains to her motel room. After a few seconds, she opened the curtains to the room, stood in front of the window, and placed the gun to her head. Again, myself and other officers asked her to drop the gun. We asked her to talk with us instead of harming herself. She refused to drop the weapon. Instead, she opened the door and stepped into the doorway with the gun still pointed at her head."

"We continued to plead with Coston to put the gun down. She did take the gun from her head, however, she held it around her waist and pointed it toward a patrol vehicle."

"I became increasingly concerned that she would fire at Cpl. Campbell or others. I was also concerned that a person staying at the motel could exit a nearby motel room and unwittingly make themselves a target to Coston."

"Concerned that Coston would shoot at Cpl. Campbell or others nearby and seeking to attempt to defuse the situation, I asked Coston whether she had any kids. My intent was to get her to realize that she had people who cared about her and would not want her to commit suicide. I wanted her to think about how her actions might affect others that she loved, or those that loved her. She looked directly at me, and in an angry voice said, "Don't bring them up!" I said that if she had kids, not to harm herself. She became visibly angry and pointed her handgun directly at me with an outstretched arm."

"I believed that by pointing the gun at me she was aiming in order to shoot at me. In order to protect myself I fired at Coston with my rifle. Had I not fired, I believed she would have shot me. I fired several rounds at Coston."

"I, along with other officers, rushed toward her position in order to give life-saving medical attention. I secured her handgun, which was next to her position on the ground, in order for others to safely render aid. Other officers began to provide medical aid while an ambulance was called. The medical aid continued until an ambulance arrived."

SA Poole asked him if he had any specialized training or experience. Deputy Magaña stated yes he had S.W.A.T training through the Franklin County Sheriff's Office.

SA Poole asked him when Croston first opened the hotel curtains was she pointing the gun at the Officers. Deputy Magaña said, “yes,” she was pointing it straight ahead at the officers that were near their vehicles.

SA Poole asked if he could describe Croston’s demeanor. Deputy Magaña stated she looked helpless, outraged, and agitated, but did not know why.

SA Poole asked if he ever saw Pamela fire her weapon. Deputy Magaña said, “no.”

SA Douglass asked him if there were any verbal commands given to Croston. Deputy Magaña stated yes, officers including himself tried to negotiate with her to deescalate the situation for around two–three minutes.

SA Douglass asked if Croston had the handgun in her hand the whole time. Deputy Magaña said, “yes.”

SA Poole asked at the time of the incident did he see any other options other than deadly force. Deputy Magaña said, “No” and explained he was in fear for his life due to believing Croston was going to shoot him.

SA Poole asked if he believes his actions and the actions of the officers around him were within their policies and procedures. Deputy Magaña said, “yes.”

The interview concluded at 1404.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: Alfredo Magana 2023–3–8

Attachment # 02: Alfredo Magana Statement and CIN

**STATEMENT OF
PICKAWAY COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF ALFREDO MAGAÑA
REGARDING INCIDENT OF FEBRUARY 25, 2023**

I began full-time employment with the Pickaway County Sheriff's Office in October, 2021 as a Deputy Sheriff. Prior to joining the Pickaway County Sheriff's Office I worked as a Police Officer for the City of Ashville Police Department. I started at the Ashville PD in February, 2019 and I left in order to obtain my current employment with the Sheriff's Office. I completed my basic peace officer training in 2019 at the Delaware Area Career Center in Delaware, Ohio. I have no prior military experience.

My current supervisor at the Sheriff's Office is Sgt. Joseph Hugus. My regularly assigned work hours are from 9:00 P.M. until 7:00 A.M. I work Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

In addition to my regularly assigned patrol duties, I also serve the Sheriff's Office as a member of the SRT (SWAT) Team. I have completed CIT training and serve on the CIT Team.

I do not wear prescription glasses, contacts, or hearing aids. I do not take prescription medication. I was not under the influence of alcohol or any drug, prescription or otherwise, on the date of the incident.

I have received no discipline, nor have I been the subject of any internal investigation at the Sheriff's Office related to any use of force. I had never used lethal force prior to the incident of February 25, 2023. I am familiar with the Sheriff's Office use of force policies, as they are accessible to me electronically and I am trained on various Sheriff's Office policies on a monthly basis, which includes training on use of force.

I carry a Glock 19 as my primary duty weapon. The pistol is issued to me by the Sheriff's Office. I last qualified for the weapon within the prior year. I carry two (2) magazines on an outer

carrier (vest), with one (1) additional magazine loaded in the pistol. There are fifteen (15) rounds of ammunition in each magazine. I did not use this weapon during the incident.

I had access to an AR-15 rifle in my patrol vehicle at the time of the incident. The rifle is equipped with a twenty (20) round magazine. I used this weapon during the incident.

At the time of the incident, I was carrying the following items in my outer carrier: Taser and two (2) magazines for my duty weapon. I was carrying the following items on my duty belt: Glock 19, Asp, o/c spray, glove pouch, flashlight.

On the date of the incident, I was well-rested. I had not worked any overtime or special duty prior to the start of my shift on Friday, February 24, 2023. I was dressed in the standard Buckeye State Sheriff's Association prescribed uniform. I was wearing a body-worn-camera in accordance with the Sheriff's Office body-cam policy. I was driving patrol vehicle # 6517. The vehicle does not contain an in-car video system.

At approximately 1:30 A.M. I was engaged in routine patrol activities. I was informed by our Dispatch that there was a report of a suicidal woman with a gun at the Roadway Inn, which is located on U.S. 23 in the City of Circleville area. While I was in route to the Roadway Inn, Dispatch further advised me that the woman, who I would later learn was named Pamela Coston, indicated she wished to commit "suicide-by-cop."

When I arrived at the Roadway Inn, the weather was cold, the night sky was clear, and the area around the hotel rooms was well lit. I made contact with Sgt. Joseph Hugus from the Pickaway County Sheriff's Office. He asked me to go to the Roadway Inn's office to see if a woman had checked into the motel under a Hispanic male's name. I walked to the motel's office with a City of Circleville Police Department Officer and made contact with the manager on duty. The

manager advised us that he did have a woman who had checked-in under a Hispanic male's name and he told us the room number. I passed this information along to Sgt. Hugus and together we walked toward the woman's motel room. As we approached the room, a woman, who would later be identified as Pamela Coston, drew the curtains of the room's window, placed a handgun against the window and tapped the glass with the gun. The law enforcement officers on the scene began to yell, "Gun! Gun!" and I, along with the other officers, began to take cover. I took cover behind my patrol vehicle, which was parked in front of Coston's motel room door.

At this point, from cover, myself and other officers began to plead with Coston to put down the gun, which was visible through the window. However, she refused. She then closed the curtains to her motel room. After a few seconds, she opened the curtains to the room, stood in front of the window, and placed the gun to her head. Again, myself and other officers asked her to drop the gun. We asked her to talk with us instead of harming herself. She refused to drop the weapon. Instead, she opened the door and stepped into the doorway with the gun still pointed at her head.

We continued to plead with Coston to put the gun down. She did take the gun from her head, however, she held it around her waist and pointed it toward a patrol vehicle. Corporal Jon Campbell and a Ohio State Highway Patrol Officer were taking cover behind the vehicle. I became increasingly concerned that she would fire at Cpl. Campbell or others. I was also concerned that a person staying at the motel could exit a nearby motel room and unwittingly make themselves a target to Coston.

Concerned that Coston would shoot at Cpl. Campbell or others nearby and seeking to attempt to defuse the situation, I asked Coston whether she had any kids. My intent was to get

her to realize that she had people who cared about her and would not want her to commit suicide. I wanted her to think about how her actions might affect others that she loved, or those that loved her. She looked directly at me, and in an angry voice said, "Don't bring them up!" I said that if she had kids, not to harm herself. She became visibly angry and pointed her handgun directly at me with an outstretched arm.

I believed that by pointing the gun at me she was aiming in order to shoot at me. In order to protect myself I fired at Coston with my rifle. Had I not fired, I believed she would have shot me. I fired several rounds at Coston. The backdrop of my gunfire was her motel room door. She fell over outside the motel room door. I, along with other officers, rushed toward her position in order to give life-saving medical attention. I secured her handgun, which was next to her position on the ground, in order for others to safely render aid. Other officers began to provide medical aid while an ambulance was called. The medical aid continued until an ambulance arrived.

I cannot recall having any interaction, law enforcement of otherwise, with Coston prior to this incident. It was only after the incident that I would learn her full name. At the time of the incident I only knew her name was Pamela. I believe that my use of force was necessary to protect my life.



Deputy Sheriff Alfredo Magaña



Date



**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).

Alfredo Magana-Martinez
Printed Name of Interviewee

3/8/23
Date / Time

A. Magana
Signature of Interviewee

James Pook SA
BCI Agent (Printed)

[Signature] SA
BCI Agent (Signature)