



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 1533 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 Orahood conducted a traffic stop on Rodney and Elaine Helman in the City of London for various traffic violations. During the interaction between Orahood and the Helmans, false information was provided reference their identity and 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 Orahood. 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 Trooper ██████████ which ██████████ signed and read into the record. Agent Ward reviewed aviation, body-worn camera, and Warner Trucking video. Agent Ward asked ██████████ if he heard an initial gunshot and he stated no. Reference the video, which depicted Trooper Hector Burgos flinch, ██████████ believed that is when Burgos observed the handgun. ██████████ stated he heard Burgos indicate gun. The aviation video depicted what appeared to be a flash from the

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passenger window of the semi, but █████ stated that was not him firing. Agent Ward asked █████ if he the suspect had discharged his weapon and he stated he did not know. █████ stated his application of force was consistent with the Ohio State Highway Patrol Use of Force policy.

Agent Ward concluded the interview with Trooper █████ at 1557 hours.

**Attachments:**

Attachment # 01: 2023-08-22 / Trp. █████ OSHP audio recorded interview

Attachment # 02: Trooper █████ CIN pre-interview form

Attachment # 03: Trooper █████ statement

**References:**

Original signed statements of Troopers █████ █████ and █████

# **Exhibit 1**

**Included as a separate file.**

## **Exhibit 2**



# 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).

[Redacted Name]

Printed Name of Interviewee

08/22/2023 1535  
Date / Time

[Redacted Signature]

Perry Roeser  
BCI Agent (Printed)

SA Perry Roeser  
BCI Agent (Signature)

## **Exhibit 3**

**STATEMENT OF TROOPER [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**

This statement is regarding my involvement in an incident that occurred on Wednesday, August 2, 2023, between the hours of 4:30am and 8:00am.

I was hired by the Ohio State Highway Patrol in September of 2011. My current assignment is Trooper, Special Response Team (SRT), Blue Squad. My normal hours are 6:00am-2:00pm Monday through Friday. Due to my position, I am subject to callouts outside my normal hours. In the early morning of August 2, 2023, I was off-duty and preparing to leave my house to report to work in Columbus with the Southern Ohio Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team (SOFAST). My home is located approximately 90 miles northeast of Columbus.

At the time of the incident, I was wearing my SRT-issued olive green tactical uniform, my SRT-issued exterior carrier/vest which has TROOPER written in black across the back, and a tactical combat helmet with visor. My visor was down during the incident. I was armed with a SRT-issued Sig Sauer 320 9mm with standard-issued ammunition, which I fired during this incident. The pistol had a TLR-2-HL light made by Streamlight and a Sig Sauer Romeo Red Dot Sight. I am current on my range qualifications with my pistol, optic, and my light. I did not have any backup weapons. At some point prior to the assault, I was armed with an eXact Impact Tactical Launcher, which I did not use during the incident.

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 SRT member. I had not consumed alcohol or drugs 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.

As I was getting ready to leave my house on the morning of August 2, I was contacted by Sergeant Eric Lofland, who asked me to report to a vehicle barricade situation off I-70W near exit 30 in Dayton. On my way to the scene, I spoke to dispatch and was made aware that a semi-trailer had been carjacked with the driver inside by two (2) suspects with a gun. I knew there had been a pursuit and stop sticks had been successfully deployed. The suspects were keeping the hostage in the semi.

When I arrived between 6:00 and 6:30am, I saw a white semi-tractor was stopped on Dayton International Airport Road, which is a four (4) lane road with two (2) lanes each going north and south and a grass median in the middle. The semi was facing north in the north lanes and sat in between the lanes of the 2-lane road. The front tires were flat, which I assume were from the use of the stop sticks. The SRT's BEAR (Lenco) was parked on the driver's side of the semi (to the west) about 2-3 feet from the semi. The white SRT support/equipment vehicle then sat to the left (west) of the BEAR. Traffic was stopped in all directions. I was already wearing my kit when I arrived, and I waited to the rear (south) of the BEAR for instructions. From the rear of the BEAR, I could see the back driver's side wheels of the semi-tractor. While we were waiting, another Trooper showed me what the suspects looked like on his phone- a white male and a white female.

While we waited, it was my understanding that negotiators from another law enforcement jurisdiction were talking with the suspects. After negotiations were determined to be unsuccessful, the SRT Team discussed an assault on the semi. At approximately 7:30am, I and other SRT members got into place. Lieutenant Bryan Mangin gave the go for the assault, stating "assault, assault, assault." I approached the driver's side door of the semi with the x-ball (similar to a rake and break) behind Trooper Matt Robinson, who held a shield. Trooper [REDACTED] was behind me with his rifle. The space between the driver's side of the semi and the BEAR parked right next

to it was narrow, approximately 2-3 feet. I heard the flash bangs deploy at the front of the semi. While Trooper Robinson shielded me, I broke the driver's side window. I was standing to Trooper Robinson's right. After the window broke, I backed out of the area to the northwest (front driver's side) pulling the curtain that had been covering the window with me with my right foot. Trooper Robinson and Trooper [REDACTED] were backing out with me. I was unable to see any of the suspects at this point, so I moved to the other side of the vehicle (east) staying close to the semi's engine block to provide me with cover.

I announced my arrival to the passenger side of the semi. Lieutenant Mangin was holding a shield against the panel behind the passenger door. Trooper Hector Burgos was to his right (north) on the step of the cab looking through the window with his weapon drawn, giving verbal commands. Sergeant Lofland was directly behind Trooper Burgos (to the east). I put down the x-ball and attempted to unlock the semi through the broken window. When I was unsuccessful, I stood back from the passenger side door to the northeast with my service weapon drawn providing cover. Trooper Burgos got down off step and backed away slightly with his weapon pointed into the cab stating that the suspect had a gun. He ordered the suspect to show their hands. I could not see the weapon at this point, or either of the suspects or the hostage. Lieutenant Mangin suggested that we back away if we did not have anything.

I then saw the barrel of a gun just over the top of the passenger seat pointed in my direction (northeast). I could not tell what color the gun was, but the barrel appeared to me to be silver. I fired a few times as I first backed up to the northeast. I then saw the suspect reach over with his gun closer to the windshield like he might be moving between the seats. It appeared that he was trying to take aim at me again. I went forward and then back to the south. I continuously fired at the truck in the area I believed that the suspect would be standing in the sleeping compartment

close to the passenger seat. I ceased firing when I ran out of ammunition and was on the southeast corner of the semi. I reported that I had seen a weapon. I reloaded my pistol. Lieutenant Mangin was closest to the semi with his shield, then I stood to his right (east). Trooper [REDACTED] was to my right (east) with his rifle. Lieutenant Mangin ordered a gas can and threw the OC gas canister through the passenger window. Trooper [REDACTED] and others ordered the hostage out of the vehicle. A large white male with a bright orange shirt and shorts exited the passenger side door with his hands up. The hostage, [REDACTED] complied with our orders moving south/southeast, eventually going behind us. We then all backed up to the south, going around the back of the semi (west) and taking cover behind the BEAR.

We waited there while directions were being given to the suspects (ordering that they show their hands so that aid could be provided). I went to my pack and pulled out my gas mask. I wanted to have it with me in case I had to enter the semi cab in which the OC canister had been thrown. I also was gloved up by Lieutenant Dallas Root in case I had to come in contact with the bodily fluids from the suspects. After several minutes, several of us including Trooper Burgos, Trooper [REDACTED] and Trooper Robinson again approached the passenger side door. I could see the male suspect between the seats. He would periodically show his hands. I encouraged him to come towards us. I could see the feet of the female suspect on the driver's side seat. Eventually, we could see both of the male suspect's hands, but I could not see the female's hands.

I went to the BEAR to get a ladder so that I could look through the sleeper window of the cab behind the passenger door (to the south). Sergeant Lofland held a shield in front of me. The female suspect was laying on her back, feet on the driver's seat, head towards the passenger side of the semi. I was finally able to see the female suspect's hands and reported it to the others. I kept talking to the female suspect as Troopers entered the passenger side door and retrieved the male

suspect. After they removed the female suspect, they laid her on the ground to the east of the semi. She was bleeding heavily. Trooper [REDACTED] and I started treating the female. We had to remove her shirt and bra. It appeared to me that she had been shot above her left breast near her sternum-about 1 or 2 inches to the left. I also saw a wound near her left armpit/shoulder blade, but I could not tell if it was an entry or exit wound. The chest seal we applied fell off due to the amount of blood. I asked her to keep talking to me until medics arrived. When medics arrived, I helped them get her on the gurney. She was still conscious and talking at that time, though rather incoherent. I took one of the medic bags to the squad for them and returned to the scene. That was the end of my involvement with the incident.

I fired a total of twenty-two (22). At the time I fired, I knew the suspects were armed, had carjacked a hostage, had been pursued by other law enforcement agencies, and had ignored repeated commands to release the hostage and exit the vehicle. When I saw a gun pointed in my direction from the passenger side of the sleeper car, I was in fear for my life. I began to fire. I do not know if the suspect fired at me. I continued firing when I saw the suspect come closer and seem to move to keep the weapon pointed at me. Once I could no longer see the window, I fired where I believed the suspect's center of mass would be in the sleeper cab of the semi due to his position when he pointed his weapon at me.

I fired all my rounds from a standing position. Most of my rounds were fired with two hands, however there were several shots at the very beginning that were fired while I held the weapon with only my right hand. I fired at the suspect's center of mass or where I believe his center of mass should be due to his body being hidden by the semi. When I began firing, I fired in a southwest direction. All of my shots were fired slightly elevated as the semi was set several feet above the ground. As I circled to the south, my shots went from a southwest direction to west to

northwest- again all slightly up due to the elevation of the cab. My backdrop was the back and upper part of semi-tractor cab as I was shooting upward. I fired using my red dot optics. For at least some of the shots, my light was on as I was initially using it to see into the cab. I estimate it was less than 30 seconds from the time I began firing to the time I ran out of ammunition.

At the time I fired, I did not and still do not believe I had any reasonable alternative other than to fire to protect myself and my fellow SRT members as we were in imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm. I was in fear for my life. The suspect was pointing his weapon at me and could have easily fired. He may have fired at me. He also could have pointed his weapon in the direction of many of the other team members that surrounded the semi at any time.

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 person or professional.

This statement consists of six (6) pages.

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Trooper [REDACTED]