



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: Trooper Matt Robinson (W)
Date of Activity: 08/21/2023
Activity Location: Ohio State Highway Patrol Special Response Team – Business –
1583 Alum Creek Drive, Columbus, OH 43224, Franklin County
Author: SA Perry K. Roeser, #114

Narrative:

On August 2, 2023, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) was requested by the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP) to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI), which occurred on the morning of August 2, 2023. The incident between law enforcement and the involved subjects, Rodney and Elaine Helman, started in Madison County, Ohio. It ended on Airport Access Road in Montgomery County, Ohio, with the OSP's Special Response Team (SRT) shooting the involved individuals while rescuing a hostage.

On August 22, 2023, Special Agents Richard Ward and Perry Roeser interviewed OSP Trooper Matthew Robinson (Robinson) at 1583 Alum Creek Drive, Columbus, Ohio. Robinson was assigned to the Ohio State Highway Patrol Special Response Team (SRT) that ended the hostage situation on Airport Access Road, Vandalia, Ohio. Robinson played an active role but did not discharge his firearm.

The details below summarized the pertinent portions of the recorded interview with Robinson and were not taken verbatim unless noted by quotations.

The interview with Robinson began at 0800 hours and was audio recorded. Robinson stated he had been a trooper for the past 16 years and had been assigned to the SRT team for the last four years. Robinson stated his role on the SRT team was as an operator. Robinson was asked how he got involved with the event under investigation. Robinson explained he received a phone call from Lieutenant Bryan Mangin (Mangin), who told him about a pursuit that involved a stolen semi-truck with a hostage. Robinson said he lived south of Dayton, Ohio, and responded toward I-70. Robinson stated that Mangin was already on the scene when he arrived at Airport Access Road. Robinson said more details emerged about what had happened in Madison County once he arrived. At this point, Robinson heard that a firearm was in play.

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Robinson stated when a fourth SRT team member arrived, the Bear was pulled up beside the semi-truck and parked. Robinson stated Mangin began to communicate/make announcements with the truck's occupants over the Bear's PA system. Robinson said while Mangin made announcements over the PA system, he saw a "thumbs up" emerge underneath the curtains of the truck's cab. Robinson stated all the curtains inside the truck were pulled shut. Before or after Robinson saw the thumbs up, the truck's occupant(s) displayed a note saying, "Cigs and Mountain Dew." Robinson said he noticed visible dried blood on the hand of the person who showed the message. At some point, Mangin asked for a cell phone number from inside the truck cab for better communication. Another note was posted on the truck window with a cell phone number. Robinson said early in the negotiations, he saw the curtains pulled back by a firearm.

Robinson said he was in and out of the Bear once the Montgomery County negotiators arrived. Robinson said at one point, he and two other SRT team members were asked to deliver menthol cigarettes to the passenger's side steps for the hostage takers and then retreat. Robinson said he learned the hostage takers were not pleased with the menthol cigarettes. As before, Robinson and SRT team members delivered a pack of Marlboro cigarettes and several Mountain Dews to the truck's passenger sidestep.

Robinson said the truck engine would rev up occasionally during negotiations, which raised concerns. The team cut the airlines, which ran on the inside portion of the frame rails, to make the truck disabled. After the lines were cut, the rear of the semi began to sink due to the lack of air pressure.

Robinson said when the rest of the SRT team arrived, a plan to assault the truck developed to save the hostage, [REDACTED]

After the assault plan was developed and passed onto the SRT team members, Robinson said he was assigned to the truck's driver's side and was to provide shield cover for Troopers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Robinson said once the OSP helicopter arrived back at the scene, the assault was to take place. Robinson said the plan was to breach the truck windows and remove the curtains. Robinson stated a second team was on the truck's passenger side, and the two teams would act simultaneously. Robinson was asked if the SRT team had ever practiced an assault on a semi-truck. He said yes.

Robinson said once Mangin gave the assault order, OSP Staff Lieutenant Seth Douthitt tossed flashbangs at the front of the truck for a diversion. Robinson said after [REDACTED] successfully broke out the driver-side window and removed the curtain, the team (Douthitt, [REDACTED] and Robinson) took cover in front of the Bear. Robinson noted that he could not see inside the vehicle due to the sun's glare on the front windshield. Robinson said [REDACTED] moved to the vehicle's passenger side and met with the other team.

Robinson then explained that he heard yelling, "he's got a gun," and shouting from the truck's passenger side. Robinson said he saw [REDACTED] who was off his shoulder, start firing his weapon at the truck's front windshield, moving toward the second team on the truck's passenger side. Robinson said he and Douthitt moved toward the truck's passenger side to assist the other team. Robinson said they consolidated with the other team near the rear drive tires. Soon after a flashbang was tossed into the truck's cab, the hostage, [REDACTED] exited the

vehicle's passenger side door with his hands in the air. After the hostage was out of the vehicle, the team took a tactical pause and regrouped.

Robinson said someone in the Bear could partially see both bloody subjects in the truck. Robinson noted that commands were ordered repeatedly to the subjects to show their hands so they could render aid. ██████████ broke out a window to the rear portion of the truck and confirmed no gun was in the subject's hands. Robinson said he and Douthitt entered the truck cab and first removed the male and then the female. Robinson said when Douthitt handled the male, he reached for something and mumbled. Robinson felt like the male attempted to go for the gun and that they did not know its location. Douthitt took control of the male's arms, and they removed him from the truck. Robinson said ██████████ began to render aid to the male near the back rear truck tires.

Robinson said he attempted to communicate with the female when she was extracted from the truck. Once the female was out of the truck, medics were on the scene and began life-saving measures on both individuals.

Robinson said the SRT team left the location and debriefed at the Dayton, Ohio, OSP post. Robinson was asked several follow-up questions, which included whether he discharged his service weapon. Robinson said no.

The interview between BCI agents and Robinson concluded at 0837 hours and was audio recorded. See attachment number #1 for a copy of the audio recording.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2023-08-21 / Trp. Matthew Robinson OSHP

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.