



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



2022-0407
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 1783 Penfield Rd, Columbus
(L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Ofc. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (S)
Date of Activity: 03/31/2022
Activity Location: – 3360 Tremont Road Suite 230, Columbus, OH 43221, Franklin County
Author: SA James Poole

Narrative:

On March 31, 2022, at approximately 0659 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent James Poole (SA Poole) and Jim Mulford (SA Mulford) interviewed Columbus Division of Police (CPD) Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Officer [REDACTED]) in response to an Officer Involved Critical Incident (OICI). The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this individual. Also present for the interview was Officer [REDACTED] Attorney, Lathan Lipperman.

On Thursday, February 24, 2022, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation Special Investigations and Crime Scene Units were requested by Columbus Police Department to respond and investigate a potential critical incident at 1783 Penfield Road, Columbus, Ohio. Special Agent Supervisor Kevin Barbeau spoke to CPD Sgt. Terry McConnell, who explained CPD officers were engaged in a vehicle pursuit with a subject from a domestic complaint. While the involved party was fleeing, he was involved in a traffic crash where his vehicle went off the roadway and struck two (2) occupied homes. CPD officers located the driver, Jajuan Ball, (Ball) who was ejected and transported to Grant Medical Center. Ball died from unknown injuries.

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 Officer [REDACTED] with a BCI "Criminal Investigation Notification" form. SA Poole advised BCI was conducting a criminal investigation separate from any internal investigation that CPD may be conducting. Officer [REDACTED] was told his interview was voluntary and he could stop answering questions at any time. Officer [REDACTED] 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

This document is the property of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and is confidential in nature. Neither the document nor its contents are to be disseminated outside your agency except as provided by law – a statute, an administrative rule, or any rule of procedure.

(CIN) is attached to this report.

Attorney Lathan Lipperman provided SA Poole with a written statement from Officer [REDACTED] regarding the OICI. SA Poole reviewed the statement upon receipt. Officer [REDACTED] signed his statement provided to BCI, and he verified the statement was a true and accurate depiction of the OICI. Please refer to Officer [REDACTED] statement for further details. A copy of the signed written statement was saved within the case file and is attached to this report.

Officer [REDACTED] wrote in his statement, "I turned east onto Roswell Drive and saw a vehicle's taillights in the distance. I believed that could be the suspect since the vehicle was traveling the same direction and on the same street as reported by dispatch, so I accelerated toward the vehicle. I closed the gap seconds later, near the Roswell Drive and Courtright Drive intersection. The vehicle was a silver Ford car, matching the stolen vehicle's description. This confirmed my belief that the suspect was very likely driving the car. The suspect turned south onto Courtright Drive, and I continued following. I aired my location, as well as the suspect vehicle's description and tag information. The suspect drove a short distance then turned west onto East Deshler Avenue. I continued following and aired that I was going to initiate a traffic stop once a second cruiser arrived. Moments later, Officer [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] approached from behind just as I neared the E. Deshler Avenue and Barnett Road intersection. The suspect stopped at that intersection, then turned south onto Barnett Road. I aired that I would attempt a swoop maneuver at the next stop sign. (A swoop is a trained technique where a lead cruiser pulls in front of the suspect vehicle and a second cruiser pulls behind the suspect vehicle, effectively trapping the car). The suspect continued south on Barnett Road, and as we neared the Bexvie Avenue intersection, I accelerated next to the suspect's vehicle. Instead of stopping at that intersection's stop sign, however, the suspect rapidly accelerated before I could pull my cruiser in front of his vehicle. I immediately aborted the attempted swoop. And given my belief the suspect had committed at least one violent felony crime, I activated my cruiser's lights and sirens and initiated a pursuit. I also aired that the suspect was fleeing. I believe Officer [REDACTED] - [REDACTED], who was still travelling behind me, activated his lights and sirens at that time as well. I do not recall seeing any other vehicles driving on the streets at that time. The suspect accelerated down Barnett Road then cut west onto Penfield Road. He continued fleeing down that street and blew through the Zettler Road intersection. The suspect's speed and the slight elevation at that intersection caused his car to briefly become airborne. His car abruptly landed an instant later, causing sparks to fly from under the vehicle. I continued through that intersection, but I lost sight of the suspect a moment later. I drove about 100 yards west along Penfield Road then, believing the suspect may have cut up a side street, I turned north onto Niagara Road. I travelled up that road, but I did not see the suspect's vehicle. About that time, dispatch aired that the victim was not going to press charges against the suspect. Seconds later, I turned off my lights and sirens, moments before Sgt. Lucci aired that a pursuit was not authorized. I did a U-turn at the Langfield Drive and James Road intersection and drove east on Langfield Drive. I split up from Officer [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] and canvassed the area for signs of the suspect."

Officer [REDACTED] stated while he was canvassing the area, "Shortly after I reached and turned onto Bexvie Avenue, Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] aired that he found the suspect's vehicle at 1783 Penfield Road. He reported that the car was on fire and aired for medics and fire to respond."

Officer [REDACTED] explained in his statement, "I would estimate that I lost sight of the suspect about

30–60 seconds after the pursuit began. At no time did the suspect give any indication that he intended to surrender. Seconds after I lost sight of the suspect, I immediately deactivated my lights and sirens and terminated the pursuit.”

SA Poole asked if Officer [REDACTED] believed his actions were consistent with his training and policy guidelines. Officer [REDACTED] stated, “Yes.”

Officer [REDACTED] answered a few follow-up questions that were consistent with his written statement. The interview concluded at 0708 hours.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Statement and CIN

Attachment # 02: 03–31–2022 Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Interview

STATEMENT OF OFFICER [REDACTED], BADGE NO. [REDACTED]

This statement regards my involvement in an incident that occurred on Thursday, February 24, 2022, between approximately 1:50 a.m. and 2:10 a.m. I am voluntarily providing this statement as part of the investigation concerning this matter.

My date of hire with the Columbus Division of Police (CPD or the Division) is December 18, 2018. My regular assignment is 9C3, third shift (10:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m.). My regular days off are Monday and Tuesday; at the time of this incident, though, my regular days off had been temporarily modified to Sunday and Monday.

I was wearing the winter patrol uniform consisting of navy pants, a black turtleneck, and a navy jacket that displayed my badge. I was also wearing an internal ballistic vest over my turtleneck. I was carrying my Division-issued Smith & Wesson 2.0 9mm service weapon. I was not working with a partner, and I was driving Cruiser [REDACTED].

I am in good health. I do not suffer from any disabilities. I do not need any corrective lenses or hearing aids as I have good vision and hearing. I was not taking any medication that could affect the performance of my duties, nor had I consumed any alcohol in the 24 hours before this incident. The day before this event, I worked from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 a.m. On the day of this incident, my shift started at 2:00 p.m. However, I arrived at my shift well-rested.

Immediately before this incident, I had just left the Colonial Village Apartments after helping Officer Chris Choy respond to a reported robbery (that turned out to be a false report). While leaving the complex, Officers Choy and [REDACTED] were assigned to a run located at the intersection of Scottwood Road and Barnett Road. Specifically, dispatch aired that a visibly pregnant female with a bloodied face had been assaulted and had her silver Ford stolen. Dispatch also reported that the suspect had a weapon. Finally, the suspect was reportedly male,

though no other description was provided. I also marked myself on the run since I was nearby and leaving the complex at the same time as Officer Choy.

I drove west on East Livingston Avenue then south onto Barnett Road, followed by Officer Choy. While driving, dispatch aired that the stolen silver Ford was travelling east on Roswell Drive. As I neared the Scottwood Road intersection, Officer Choy aired that he was going to stop and talk to the victim. I turned east onto Roswell Drive and saw a vehicle's taillights in the distance. I believed that could be the suspect since the vehicle was traveling the same direction and on the same street as reported by dispatch, so I accelerated toward the vehicle. I closed the gap seconds later, near the Roswell Drive and Courtright Drive intersection. The vehicle was a silver Ford car, matching the stolen vehicle's description. This confirmed my belief that the suspect was very likely driving the car.

The suspect turned south onto Courtright Drive, and I continued following. I aired my location, as well as the suspect-vehicle's description and tag information. The suspect drove a short distance then turned west onto East Deshler Avenue. I continued following and aired that I was going to initiate a traffic stop once a second cruiser arrived. Moments later, Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] approached from behind just as I neared the E. Deshler Avenue and Barnett Road intersection. The suspect stopped at that intersection, then turned south onto Barnett Road. I aired that I would attempt a swoop maneuver at the next stop sign. (A swoop is a trained technique where a lead cruiser pulls in front of the suspect vehicle and a second cruiser pulls behind the suspect vehicle, effectively trapping the car).

The suspect continued south on Barnett Road, and as we neared the Bexvie Avenue intersection, I accelerated next to the suspect's vehicle. Instead of stopping at that intersection's stop sign, however, the suspect rapidly accelerated before I could pull my cruiser in front of his

vehicle. I immediately aborted the attempted swoop. And given my belief the suspect had committed at least one violent felony crime, I activated my cruiser's lights and sirens and initiated a pursuit. I also aired that the suspect was fleeing. I believe Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED], who was still travelling behind me, activated his lights and sirens at that time as well. I do not recall seeing any other vehicles driving on the streets at that time.

The suspect accelerated down Barnett Road then cut west onto Penfield Road. He continued fleeing down that street and blew through the Zettler Road intersection. The suspect's speed and the slight elevation at that intersection caused his car to briefly become airborne. His car abruptly landed an instant later, causing sparks to fly from under the vehicle. I continued through that intersection, but I lost sight of the suspect a moment later. I drove about 100 yards west along Penfield Road then, believing the suspect may have cut up a side street, I turned north onto Niagara Road. I travelled up that road, but I did not see the suspect's vehicle. About that time, dispatch aired that the victim was not going to press charges against the suspect. Seconds later, I turned off my lights and sirens, moments before Sgt. Lucci aired that a pursuit was not authorized.

I did a U-turn at the Langfield Drive and James Road intersection and drove east on Langfield Drive. I split up from Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] and canvassed the area for signs of the suspect. Shortly after I reached and turned onto Bexvie Avenue, Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] aired that he found the suspect's vehicle at 1783 Penfield Road. He reported that the car was on fire and aired for medics and fire to respond. I turned south onto Zettler Road then west onto Penfield Road. I drove a short distance and saw the suspect's vehicle had collided into the 1783 residence and was engulfed in flames.

I parked my cruiser near the scene and exited. The stolen vehicle was crashed into the southern portion of the 1783 residence, specifically near the driveway, just south of two vehicles parked in front of the home. There also appeared to be damage to the northern part of the adjacent residence. I approached Officers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Those officers were helping clear the 1783 home of anyone inside. I asked whether anyone was inside the suspect-vehicle, and I was told no.

Since I believed the suspect bailed from the vehicle, I started searching the area around the adjacent houses: I quickly checked the front and back yards of the 1789 and 1795 homes (which were immediately south of the 1783 house), but I did not see anyone. While approaching the backyard of the 1795 home, I noticed a detached fire hydrant in the driveway which I believed had been struck by the suspect and launched after impact.

I returned to the 1783 home and searched the backyard. As I did so, I could hear medics approaching in the distance. I did not see anyone, but around that time I heard an officer either radio or yell, "We have him! He's here!" or words to that effect. I ran to the front of the house and saw an officer standing in the yard looking down towards the driveway. I approached and saw a male black who appeared unconscious lying in the driveway, on the passenger side of the silver sedan, just in front of the garage. I and a few other officers quickly jumped down into the driveway, grabbed the suspect, and lifted and carried him away from the burning car towards the front yard. Several other officers then grabbed the suspect and lifted him into the yard over the retaining wall on the northern side of the driveway.

By that time, medics had arrived. They quickly began treating the suspect, and I believe a medic stated he had a pulse. Around that time, I asked whether the suspect had been checked for weapons, and an officer replied that he had. Medics transported him from the scene minutes

later. Once the suspect was transported, I was instructed to help secure the scene with tape; however, before I could do so, a sergeant told me to wait in a cruiser until Officer Support arrived. Officer Jeff Lazar with Officer Support arrived sometime later and transported me to the 11/12 Precinct Substation. I waited there until investigators with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation arrived and collected evidence. This ended my involvement in this matter.

Before I tried to pull over the suspect, dispatch aired that a male had assaulted a visibly pregnant female, bloodying her face. Dispatch also reported that the suspect stole a silver Ford sedan and had a weapon. After responding to the victim's location, I noticed a vehicle in the distance driving from the scene. That car was driving on the same road and in the same direction as reported by dispatch. I caught up to that vehicle seconds later and recognized that it matched the victim's description: a silver Ford sedan. Given the exact match and the vehicle's proximity to the victim, I believed the suspect was likely driving the car.

I attempted to detain the suspect using the swoop technique, but he rapidly accelerated through a stop sign and fled before I could complete the maneuver. This was further evidence that the driver was the suspect from the assault and robbery. As the suspect had reportedly committed at least one, and possibly several, violent felony crimes, I activated my lights and sirens and started a pursuit. I intended to detain the suspect to investigate his reported crimes, and I also feared that he was a danger to others if not apprehended.

I would estimate that I lost sight of the suspect about 30-60 seconds after the pursuit began. At no time did the suspect give any indication that he intended to surrender. Seconds after I lost sight of the suspect, I immediately deactivated my lights and sirens and terminated the pursuit. I do not recall any other vehicles driving on the street during the pursuit. Nor do I recall seeing any civilians during that time.

After I lost sight of the suspect at the Penfield Road and Zettler Road intersection, I believed he had possibly escaped using a side street; however, after finding the fire hydrant in the driveway of the 1795 residence, I believed he likely lost control of his vehicle at the bend in the road just after he became airborne through the Zettler Road intersection. Since I was focused on searching for taillights or any signs of the vehicle on the street, I did not see the suspect's vehicle collide into the 1783 residence. While initially driving by that house, I do not recall seeing any signs of a collision such as smoke, fire, or damaged houses.

After this incident, I learned the suspect's name is Jajuan Ball. I do not know the suspect, nor did I recognize him as anyone I know. I do not believe I have ever had any prior encounters with him. I do not recall the suspect saying anything during this incident.

Following this incident, I had the opportunity to review the body worn camera (BWC) and cruiser footage of this event. From my review of that footage, Sgt. Lucci aired "pursuit not authorized" seconds before I terminated the pursuit of my own accord. Moments later, Sgt. Lucci aired, for the second time, "pursuit not authorized." I do not recall hearing Sgt. Lucci's first radio transmission about terminating the pursuit. The footage confirmed that the suspect wrecked moments after I lost sight of him after he crossed the Zettler Road intersection. It also appears that after I did the U-turn at Langfield Drive and James Road, I then turned south onto Penfield Road. I continued down that street past Niagara Road then turned around in a driveway and went back up Penfield Road. Based on the location of the wreck, I believe I would have driven by the crash scene; however, since I was still focused on searching for signs of the suspect vehicle on the street, I did not see the crash scene at that time. I can also confirm that an officer, who I believe was Officer Martin, yelled, "He's right there! He's underneath the car!" just as I was finished checking the backyard of the 1783 residence.

This concludes my statement.



Officer

Badge #



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).

[Redacted]

Printed Name of Interviewee

3/31/22

Date / Time

[Redacted]

Signature of Interviewee

SA James Poole

BCI Agent (Printed)

SA [Signature]

BCI Agent (Signature)

[Signature]