



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



2022-1726

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 15266 Gilchrist Rd., Mt.
Vernon (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Witness
Involves: Officer Travis Stantz (W)
Date of Activity: 08/20/2022
Activity Location: Knox County Sheriffs Office – Business – 11540 Upper Gilchrist Road, Mt Vernon, OH 43050, Knox County
Author: SA James H Gore, #168

Narrative:

On the afternoon of August 20, 2022, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) James Gore (Gore) interviewed Mansfield Police Officer (Ofc.) Travis Stantz (Stantz) at the Knox County Sheriff's Office. Ofc. Stantz was identified as one of several witnesses to an officer-involved critical incident, which took place earlier on the same date, at the Wilhelm family property in Knox County.

Ofc. Stantz reported that he has been employed at Mansfield PD for eight years. He stated he is currently assigned to patrol, and he is also a member of Richland County's Allied Special Operations Response Team (ASORT).

Ofc. Stantz said he was notified of the situation in Knox County via team alerts and phone calls from his dispatcher around 0115 hours. Ofc. Stantz recalled that the alert mentioned that there was a barricaded gunman. Ofc. Stantz said he was later informed that a subject shot at a bail bondsman, and the subject and his brother reportedly also later shot at a helicopter. Ofc. Stantz was unaware of the subjects' names. Ofc. Stantz said he responded to his police department first and then traveled to Knox County. He said he arrived at the sheriff's office around 0330 or 0400 hours.

Ofc. Stantz said the ASORT members deployed from the sheriff's office in the team's Bearcat armored vehicle. He recalled stopping somewhere to pick up a cellphone and transporting the phone to another location. He believed the phone may have belonged to the girlfriend of one of the subjects involved in the standoff. Ofc. Stantz said the Bearcat was later positioned approximately 500 yards from the entrance to a driveway for the family compound. (*Note: The driveway was later determined to be at 15159 Monroe Mills Rd.*)

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Overhead Reference Map of 15159 Monroe Mills Rd.

Ofc. Stantz recalled that when the ASORT was directed to begin its mission, the Bearcat breached a cattle gate at the end of the driveway. Ofc. Stantz said he was a passenger in the rear of the Bearcat. Ofc. Stantz said it was his understanding that both subjects were armed. Ofc. Stantz also mentioned that his team's mission was to immobilize a Chevy Trailblazer behind the house, to prevent the subjects from fleeing the area in it.

Ofc. Stantz reported that as soon as the Bearcat reached the backyard of the house and bumped the Trailblazer, he observed a subject pointing an "AR" type rifle at the vehicle from the rear of the house. That male, according to Ofc. Stantz, was wearing a blue shirt. The other subject wore a grey shirt, Ofc. Stantz recalled.

Ofc. Stantz said the driver of the Bearcat, Lieutenant (Lt.) **Gearhart**, got on the loud speaker and gave commands to the armed subject to put the weapon down. Ofc. Stantz said Lt. **Gearhart** told the subject that they didn't want to harm him and they wanted to resolve the matter peacefully. Ofc. Stantz said the subject did not comply.

Ofc. Stantz said the other subject approached the Trailblazer and entered it on its passenger side. Ofc. Stantz said the Bearcat rammed the Trailblazer to disable it, and then the subject exited and ran back into the house. Ofc. Stantz also mentioned that, as the Bearcat was pushing the Trailblazer, the armed subject began firing at the Bearcat from the doorway at the back of the house.

Ofc. Stantz said he remembered at least three rounds striking the back of the Bearcat and he recalled hearing a tire pop. He also recalled at least three rounds striking the top turret door of the Bearcat, when crew members tried to open it, as it was pushing the Trailblazer. Ofc. Stantz said he heard one of the team members mention that shrapnel from impacts to the

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turret door struck him in the face, but he was not injured.

Ofc. Stantz continued, after the Bearcat took fire, the crew maneuvered it around to have a better protective angle against the subjects because they had word that the subjects potentially had a .50 caliber rifle.

Ofc. Stantz said, after the firing ceased, he observed both subjects emerge from the north-facing side of the house on an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV). According to Ofc. Stantz, the subjects spun out and lost control, but then continued traveling away from the residence.

Ofc. Stantz mentioned that another tactical team was present in the immediate vicinity. That team, Ofc. Stantz explained, was from Delaware, but they were in a Bearcat belonging to Marysville.

Ofc. Stantz explained that as the ASORT unit was taking fire at the rear of the house, the Delaware team was at the front of the house, angled toward the garage.



Overhead Reference

Ofc. Stantz recalled seeing some team members from Delaware positioned outside of their Bearcat. He said, at some point after, the ASORT Bearcat took fire and the Delaware team backed off the property, down the driveway.

Ofc. Stantz said he heard over the radio that the subjects were fired upon by another tactical team, and their ATV had rolled over. Ofc. Stantz did not visually observe this action.

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Ofc. Stantz later recalled that Lt. **Gearhart** shot at the tires on the Trailblazer with a rifle. Ofc. Stantz said he believed this took place prior to the subjects fleeing on the ATV.

An audio copy of Ofc. Stantz's interview was attached to this report for reference.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2022-0820-14-07-31 Mansfield PD Ofc. Travis Stantz Interview – SA Gore

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