



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 0642 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) Special Agent Jim Mulford (SA Mulford) and James Poole (SA Poole) 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 Mulford provided Officer [REDACTED] with a BCI "Criminal Investigation Notification" form. SA Mulford 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

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(CIN) is attached to this report.

Attorney Lathan Lipperman provided SA Mulford with a written statement from Officer [REDACTED] regarding the OICI. SA Mulford 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, “Based off the location that Officer [REDACTED] (Cruiser [REDACTED]) was airing, I believed it was the suspect coming towards us. The suspect vehicle turned south onto Barnett Road and Cruiser [REDACTED] and then Cruiser [REDACTED] turned south onto Barnett Road behind the suspect. Officer [REDACTED] turned south onto Barnett Road, but we were still a good distance (200–225 yards) behind Cruiser [REDACTED]. I believe Officer [REDACTED] aired that he was going to attempt to swoop the suspect vehicle at the next intersection. We had closed some distance, but we were still probably 150–175 yards behind Cruiser [REDACTED]. However, it appeared that Officer [REDACTED] (Cruiser [REDACTED]) positioned his cruiser alongside of the suspect car, but he was not able to execute the swoop. I believe that Officer [REDACTED] and Cruiser [REDACTED] accelerated then activated their lights and sirens. We then activated the lights on our cruiser. The suspect accelerated. He quickly turned west on Penfield Road and Cruisers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] followed behind him. At some point after the suspect turned onto Penfield Road, I could no longer see the suspect’s vehicle or his taillights. We followed behind Cruiser [REDACTED] and crossed Zettler Road. Cruisers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] turned north onto Niagara Road and we followed. As we drove down Niagara Road, Sgt. Lucci aired that the pursuit was no longer authorized as it was a domestic violence incident, and the victim did not want to pursue charges. We drove up to the dead end on Niagara Road and turned around and began driving south on Niagara Road. As we drove south on Niagara Road, I saw a male running in the road (the opposite direction of us which at first seemed strange given that it was very early in the morning and cold outside). However, as we continued down Niagara Road, I saw flames at the end of the road near Penfield Road. Officer [REDACTED] quickly accelerated towards the flames and parked the cruiser just north of 1783 Penfield Road. I exited the cruiser and I saw Officer [REDACTED] approach the suspect’s vehicle. He said the suspect was not in the vehicle and I presumed he had fled on foot.”

Officer [REDACTED] also stated, “At the time of this incident, I did not see the suspect’s car collide into either house on Penfield Road. I was too far back and behind two other cruisers.”

Officer [REDACTED] was able to review his body worn camera and cruiser footage and stated, “From my review of that footage, it appears that the suspect had wrecked into the homes on Penfield Road before we turned onto Niagara Road. However, when we drove by the scene, I did not notice the wreck as I did not know that the cruisers ahead of me had lost the visual of the suspect’s vehicle, and I was too far back to have a visual on the suspect.”

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

SA Mulford asked if Officer [REDACTED] believed the officers around him during the incident took actions that were consistent with 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 0649 hours.

Attachments:

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

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

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

This statement is regarding my involvement in an incident that occurred on Thursday, February 24, 2022, between approximately 1:55 a.m. and 2:15 a.m. I am providing this statement voluntarily, as part of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) investigation into this matter.

My date of hire with the Columbus Division of Police (CPD or the Division) is June of 2013. My regular assignment is Z2E1-122. My regular duty hours are 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. My regular days off are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; however, my days off are temporarily Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.

On the day of this incident, I was wearing the winter uniform consisting of navy pants, a dark shirt, and a navy jacket with my badge on the outside of the jacket. I was also wearing an internal ballistic vest. I was carrying my Division-issued service weapon: a Smith & Wesson 2.0 9mm, loaded with Division-issued ammunition. I was not carrying a backup firearm, but I was equipped with a taser. I was in Cruiser [REDACTED] and Officer [REDACTED] was my partner.

I do not wear glasses or contacts and my uncorrected vision is good. I do not wear a hearing aid and my hearing is good. I do not suffer from any disabilities which would impair my ability to perform my duties as a police officer. I do not have any uses of force which have been found outside of policy. I did not consume alcohol or any medications, over the counter or prescription, that could impair the performance of my duties in the 24 hours before this incident. I did not work any special duty or overtime in the 24-hours prior to the start of my shift. I arrived at the start of my shift well-rested.

At a little before 2:00 a.m., Officer Trip and I were driving on James Road. We had just been dispatched on a call for service for property destruction when we heard Cruiser [REDACTED] air that he had a visual on a vehicle from what was believed to be a carjacking and the victim had been

assaulted. We decided to go provide backup to Cruiser [REDACTED], as the information sounded as if this was going to be a felony stop. I knew the area well, as I had previously worked 9 Precinct, and I knew we were only about two miles from the area. I gave Officer [REDACTED] directions (he was driving) on where to go to get to the area that Cruiser [REDACTED] had spotted the vehicle.

From James Road, I believe we went north to Langfield Drive and turned right (east) onto Langfield Drive. We drove from Langfield Drive to Bexvie Avenue, north on Zettler Road, and then east on Deshler Avenue. As we were driving East on Deshler Avenue, I saw headlights coming towards us. Based off the location that Officer [REDACTED] (Cruiser [REDACTED]) was airing, I believed it was the suspect coming towards us. The suspect vehicle turned south onto Barnett Road and Cruiser [REDACTED] and then Cruiser [REDACTED] turned south onto Barnett Road behind the suspect.

Officer [REDACTED] turned south onto Barnett Road, but we were still a good distance (200-225 yards) behind Cruiser [REDACTED]. I believe Officer [REDACTED] aired that he was going to attempt to swoop the suspect vehicle at the next intersection. We had closed some distance, but we were still probably 150-175 yards behind Cruiser [REDACTED]. However, it appeared that Officer [REDACTED] (Cruiser [REDACTED]) positioned his cruiser alongside of the suspect car, but he was not able to execute the swoop. I believe that Officer [REDACTED] and Cruiser [REDACTED] accelerated then activated their lights and sirens. We then activated the lights on our cruiser.

The suspect accelerated. He quickly turned west on Penfield Road and Cruisers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] followed behind him. At some point after the suspect turned onto Penfield Road, I could no longer see the suspect's vehicle or his taillights. We followed behind Cruiser [REDACTED] and crossed Zettler Road. Cruisers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] turned north onto Niagara Road and we followed. As we drove down Niagara Road, Sgt. Lucci aired that the pursuit was no longer authorized as it was a

domestic violence incident, and the victim did not want to pursue charges. We drove up to the dead end on Niagara Road and turned around and began driving south on Niagara Road.

As we drove south on Niagara Road, I saw a male running in the road (the opposite direction of us which at first seemed strange given that it was very early in the morning and cold outside). However, as we continued down Niagara Road, I saw flames at the end of the road near Penfield Road. Officer [REDACTED] quickly accelerated towards the flames and parked the cruiser just north of 1783 Penfield Road. I exited the cruiser and I saw Officer [REDACTED] approach the suspect's vehicle. He said the suspect was not in the vehicle and I presumed he had fled on foot. The front west corner of 1789 Penfield Road was heavily damaged with bricks missing and a damaged garage door, as the suspect's vehicle appeared to have hit it and ricocheted into 1783 Penfield Road and was on fire. At that point, we aired for fire and focused on evacuating the residences of 1789 and 1783. Other officers arrived on scene (I do not recall who) and yelled that the suspect was right there. The suspect was in the far corner of the driveway (the driveway angled down towards the house and had a retaining wall on the side separating 1783 and 1789 and the suspect's vehicle was somewhat on top of the retaining wall). There were also two vehicles in the driveway, which obstructed the view of the suspect in the driveway.

I assisted in getting the suspect up from the driveway and to the sidewalk/front porch area. At this point, fire fighters and medics had arrived on scene. They took over and began rendering aid to the suspect. At some point, I heard a medic relay that the suspect had a pulse. Medics placed him on a stretcher and took him to the hospital. An FTO (field training officer) and his recruit took care of riding with the suspect to the hospital and one followed in the cruiser.

Multiple other officers had arrived and finished securing the scene. I went to the 11/12 Precinct substation. I waited there until investigators with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal

Investigation arrived and did a round count on my weapon. This ended my involvement in this incident.

At the time we got behind Cruisers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], I believed the suspect had assaulted a female and committed a carjacking. Officer [REDACTED] was not able to get within a close proximity of Cruiser [REDACTED]. I would estimate that the closest I got to Cruiser [REDACTED] was 150 yards. I would also estimate that we were behind Cruiser [REDACTED] for approximately a minute before the suspect wrecked. Since it was approximately 2:00 a.m., and we were in a residential area, there were no other vehicles traveling the roads. During this time, I do not recall seeing any other traffic nor do I recall seeing any other civilians outside. I would estimate that I drove approximately 50-60 mph and the suspect's vehicle was easily pulling away from us. The road conditions were clear but given the residential area, there was not a lot of street lighting.

At the time of this incident, I did not see the suspect's car collide into either house on Penfield Road. I was too far back and behind two other cruisers.

I have now had an opportunity to review the body worn camera (BWC) and cruiser video footage of this incident. From my review of that footage, it appears that the suspect had wrecked into the homes on Penfield Road before we turned onto Niagara Road. However, when we drove by the scene, I did not notice the wreck as I did not know that the cruisers ahead of me had lost the visual of the suspect's vehicle, and I was too far back to have a visual on the suspect.

I now know that the suspect's name is Jajuan Ball. I do not believe I have ever had any prior interaction personally or professionally with this individual.

This concludes my statement, and I am now prepared to answer any additional questions you may have at this time.

[REDACTED]
Officer [REDACTED], Badge [REDACTED] 3-31-22



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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] _____
Printed Name of Interviewee

3/31/22

Date / Time

[Redacted] _____
Signature of Interviewee

Jim Mufford

BCI Agent (Printed)

[Signature]

BCI Agent (Signature)