



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



2023-0408

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 1680 Stringtown Rd., Grove
City 43123 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Witness

Involves: Officer Ben Watt (W)

Date of Activity: 02/12/2023

Author: SA James H Gore, #168

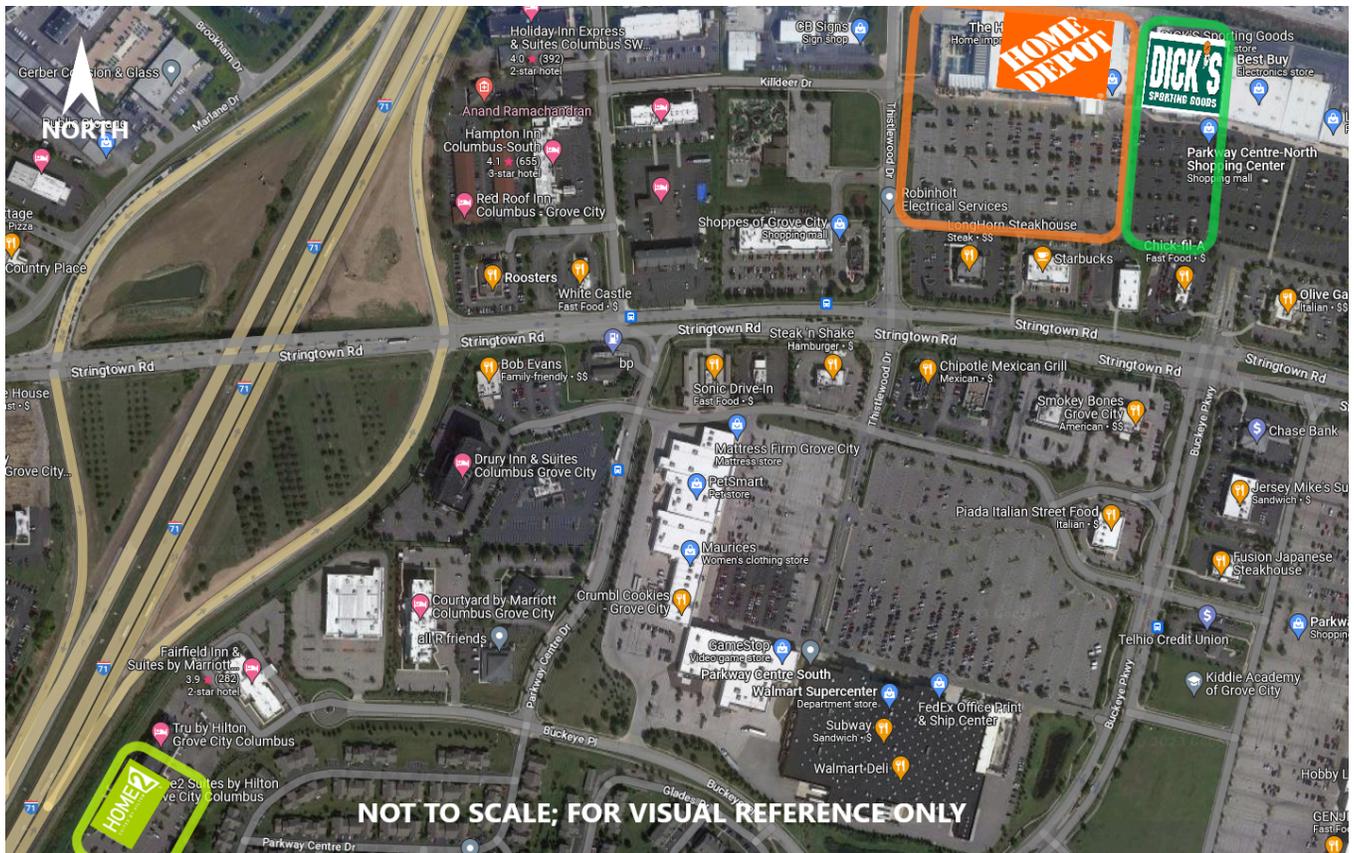
Narrative:

On February 12, 2023 at approximately 0127 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) James Gore interviewed Grove City Police Officer Ben Watt (badge #160). Ofc. Jones was identified as one of several officers from Grove City who responded to an Officer-Involved Critical Incident involving members of the Columbus Police Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team. The incident occurred in the parking lot of the Home Depot, 1680 Stringtown Rd., Grove City, on the previous evening shortly after 2000 hours. The purpose of the interview was to obtain an account Ofc. Watt's observations and actions regarding the incident. The interview took place in front of the Home Depot.

Ofc. Watt advised he has been employed at Grove City since October of 2021. Ofc. Watt is assigned to Patrol, and his normal shift 1400 hours to 2200 hours, with Tuesdays and Wednesdays off.

Ofc. Watt explained that he was next door to Home Depot at Dick's Sporting Goods on a shoplifting complaint when the Officer in Charge, Ofc. Judd, requested that he assist with locating a subject with a felony warrant for rape. Ofc. Watt said the subject was supposed to be at the hotels (Home2 Suites), but then there was word that he would be at the Home Depot. Ofc. Watt said he would stand by at Dick's and act as if he was conducting business as normal.

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Ofc. Watt said he was parked in front of Dick's entrance and he did not see anyone matching the subject's description over at Home Depot. He added, once it was learned that Columbus SWAT was also in the area, he backed away a little bit. Ofc. Watt said he repositioned his vehicle two stores down to Michael's, and then he and Ofc. Jones were approached by a SWAT officer. The SWAT officer reportedly told them they were going to handle the subject with the warrant.

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Ofc. Watt reported approximately 30 seconds to a minute later, he heard gunshots. Ofc. Watt said he and Ofc. Jones responded and approached the scene from the east. As he arrived, Ofc. Watt recalled, the subject (vehicle passenger) was already on the ground. Ofc. Watt said the subject was placed onto a cot and then into the back of an ambulance.

Ofc. Watt mentioned that a female witness who arrived on scene was placed in the back of his cruiser at the request of Columbus police so that she could stay warm. Ofc. Watt said he did not interview the woman or any other party regarding the incident.

SA Gore later reviewed Ofc. Watt's vehicle and body-worn camera footage, and he found that the footage was consistent with his recollection.

An audio copy of Ofc. Watt's interview was attached to this report for reference. Video files from the vehicle and body-worn camera are available for review, but they were not attached to this report due to the large size of the files.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2023-0212-01-32-59 Grove City PD Ofc. Ben Watt Interview – SA Gore