



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



2022-2876

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 256 N. Swain, LaRue, Ohio (L)

Involves: ██████████ (S)
Date of Activity: 01/17/2023
Author: SA James Chandler, #128

Narrative:

On Tuesday, January 03, 2023, at 1234 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Jason Snyder (Snyder) and Special Agent (SA) James Chandler (Chandler) interviewed Officer (Ofc.) ██████████ (██████████) with the Marion Police Department, who was accompanied by his attorney (Atty.), Robert Sauter (Sauter), from the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (OPBA). The interview took place at the Marion County Sheriff's Department. The interview was audio recorded.

Ofc. ██████████ read, understood and signed the BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form.

Ofc. ██████████ was identified as being a police officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the December 20, 2022 officer-involved shooting, which occurred in the area of the railroad crossing of Section Street in LaRue, Ohio. Reportedly, Ofc. ██████████ did discharge a firearm during the course of the incident. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information about the incident known or observed by this officer.

The Marion Police Department has employed Ofc. ██████████ since 2018. He has been a police officer for a total of five years. During the incident, Ofc. ██████████ wore his standard police uniform with Marion Police Department patches affixed to it and on his outer vest had a patch that stated police on the front and back. He also wore an external ballistic vest and duty belt. He was transported in a MRAP armor vehicle. He considered himself to be well-represented as a police officer during the incident. He stated he was not under the influence of any substances that would impair his memory or judgment during the incident or during the interview with BCI. He does not wear corrective lenses.

Ofc. ██████████ enlisted in the United States Army as an Infantryman in 2006, was promoted to Staff Sergeant and was honorably discharged from the military in 2016.

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Ofc. ██████ advised that during his military career, he did discharge his duty weapon for lethal force. Ofc. ██████ also attended the Basic Police Officer Training Academy at the Marion Technical College, Marion, Ohio, and graduated in 2017. Ofc. ██████ was hired full-time with the Marion Police Department in 2018 as a patrol officer and became a Field Training Officer on the Crises Intervention Team in 2021. Ofc. ██████ stated that he was assigned to the Special Response Team (SRT) in 2020 and received his SWAT certification in 2021.

Ofc. ██████ advised that the Marion Special Response Team (MSRT) had a briefing prior to executing the narcotic search warrant at 256 N. Swaine Avenue in LaRue, Ohio. During the briefing, Ofc. ██████ advised he learned that the suspect made threats involving shooting cops, possessed firearms and had body armor. While in route to the location, Ofc. ██████ reported that MSRT snipers announced over the radio that they identified the suspect, Travis Hellinger (Hellinger), who was outside and north of the barn, between the barn and railroad tracks. Ofc. ██████ said that MSRT snipers advised Hellinger was fleeing.

Ofc. ██████ proceeded to dismount from the vehicle and positioned himself on the southwest corner of the residence to cover the garage door that was on the south side of the barn. While taking a position, Ofc. ██████ heard radio traffic indicating Hellinger was now resisting and had a firearm.

During the operation, Ofc. ██████ indicated that he carried his BCM Recce-11 5.56 pistol, which is his personal weapon and was approved by the agency to use as a weapon, which he has qualified with in the last 12 months. Ofc. ██████ explained that he carries three (3) magazines for the BCN Recce-11 5.56 pistol and carries 30 rounds in each magazine. Ofc. ██████ stated he had one magazine in the firearm and two (2) in his outer carrier. Ofc. ██████ advised he believed he fired two (2) rounds and this was the only firearm he discharged.

While continuing to listen to radio traffic, Ofc. ██████ explained that the snipers said the suspect continued to resist and had a firearm. Ofc. ██████ advised that he proceeded to the area of the railroad tracks where the snipers needed assistance. In addition, Ofc. ██████ reported that he traveled from Swaine Avenue, arrived at the railroad tracks and traveled east on the railroad tracks. Ofc. ██████ continued to travel east on the tracks and arrived at the railroad crossing of Section Street.

Once Ofc. ██████ arrived at the railroad crossing, he positioned himself west of Section Street and south of the railroad tracks. Ofc. ██████ was shown a Google map and the initial area where he located the suspect. After Ofc. ██████ arrived, he noticed the suspect had a flashlight and was shining it into the officers' eyes. Ofc. ██████ stated he heard other officers giving verbal commands. Ofc. ██████ observed that the suspect brandished a weapon and discharged the firearm. Ofc. ██████ advised that he returned fire and observed the suspect lying on the ground.

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Ofc. ██████ stated he approached the suspect and secured the suspect's right wrist while other officers were removing firearms from the suspect. After the suspect was secured, Ofc. ██████ met with Major (Maj.) Chad Adkins (Adkins), turned over his firearm and body camera, traveled to the Marion Police Department and met with BCI personnel.

The interview was audio recorded. The audio recording is attached to this report. In addition, the signed BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form is also attached to this report. Please see the attachments for further details.

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