

# Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification & Investigation INVESTIGATIVE REPORT



## 01/04/2013 REPORT RECEIVED FROM CUYAHOGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

### **Summary**

On January 4, 2013 Special Agent (SA) Mark Kollar received reports from the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office detectives regarding the ongoing investigation into the officer involved shooting in East Cleveland, Ohio.

## **Details**

On January 4, 2013 Special Agent (SA) Mark Kollar received reports from the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office detectives regarding the ongoing investigation into the officer involved shooting in East Cleveland, Ohio. The reports received were as follows:

12/21/12 – Interview of Ofc. Todd Esson – Exhibit #118

12/27/12 - Telephone interview of RTA Chief John Joyce (re: RTA AVLs) - N/A

12/28/12 – Interview of Ofc. William Mitchell – Exhibit #124

01/02/13 – Interview of Lt. William Traine – N/A

01/02/13 – Interview of Ofc. Justen Davis – Exhibit #132

01/03/13 – Interview of RTAPD Ofc. Chuck Vaughn – N/A

File Number: SI-18-12-82-1493	File Title: Timothy R. Russell (S) Malissa A. Williams (S)
Case Agent: Mark Kollar	Authoring Agent: Mark E. Kollar the
Date of Report: 01/04/2013	Exhibit #: 118, 124, and 132
Investigative Activity: Report Received from CCSO	Supervisor Approval: Dennis Sweet

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# CUYAHOGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

CASE: SI-18-12-82-1493

SUBJECT: Synopsis of Interview of Cleveland Patrolman Todd Esson

REPORT DATE: 1/2/13

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\*\*\* This report contains personal information regarding a law enforcement officer and is protected per ORC. Prior to any release or dissemination the pertinent information should be redacted per ORC \*\*\*

The below interview was video recorded and entered into the case file. This is a brief synopsis, for further detailed information please refer to the video.

INTERVIEW: Todd Esson

DOB: 5/15/1984

HOME ADDRESS: North Olmsted OH

HOME/CELL PHONE: |

On December 21, 2012 while assigned to the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation Detective Sergeant Pinkney and I interviewed Cleveland Patrol Officer Todd Esson at BCI Richfield. The interview centered on any firsthand knowledge or involvement he had in regards to the use of deadly force that occurred on November 29, 2012 within jurisdiction of East Cleveland Ohio, at 14410 Terrace Road. Also included in the interview was any involvement or observations Officer Esson had during the pursuit that preceded the termination.

Officer Esson arrived without an attorney but did have CPPA union representation (CPPA President Follmer). Although he was not given his Miranda Rights he was clearly informed and understood that this was a criminal investigation and his involvement was not compulsory, furthermore he could end the interview at any time or choose not to answer any question he wishes. He reports that he is not prescribed any medication and denies any medical conditions. He did appear to be alert and appropriate with his interaction.

Officer Esson is a Cleveland Patrol Officer with 4 years experience as a law enforcement officer. He is currently a registered paramedic with the State of Ohio. His current assignment with Cleveland Police is that of Basic Patrol on 3rd shift (9:30pm to 7:30am). On the night of November 29, 2012 he reported to Sgt. Martinez. He informed that he was in his basic patrol uniform and

# CUYAHOGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

was assigned to CPD marked vehicle 212A which was a two man vehicle (Partner Officer Pat O'Malley). He reported no prior involvement in any police involved shootings or any prior discipline with the department.

# (Video Time Stamp 8:05)

When he was asked how he became involved in the incident he recollected hearing the initial incident on the radio from Officer Nan. He and his partner O'Malley responded from the area of 58th and Clark and jumped into the pursuit around W. 58th and Lorain. Stating they were somewhere in the middle of the pursuit. Near W. 14th and Quigley area Officer Esson broke off in an attempt to anticipate the vehicle changing directions. He then went South on W. 14th to the roundabout near Steelyard Commons. (9:42)He said, "when we got up there the car came right at us... then they went north on 14th, then we jumped in line and we were like the fourth car". He went on further saying that they could see the car but heard radio traffic from Officer Siefer that they were pointing something out the window.

Near the conclusion of the pursuit Officer Esson recalled the suspect jumping the curb as he was pointing at an aerial photo of the scene indicating they came from Lee onto the access road to the school parking lot and Esson continued on South on Lee. He recalled that they were attempting to backtrack to the area and ended up hearing the calls for shots fired over the radio. At the time of the call or for the duration of the shooting he said they were not on scene.

# (Time Stamp 13:24)

When revisiting the actions that occurred near the roundabout on W. 14th St Officer Esson noted they were at the top of the hill and blocked traffic from coming into the roundabout. The suspect vehicle "it was coming right at us" and the vehicle came within "5-10 feet" at a fairly quick rate of speed before it changed direction going North on 14th. He noted that he could see into the vehicle at that point and was only able to make out that the vehicle had two occupants. He said the driver looked right at him and noted the passenger was turned around and facing the cars chasing them (14:05). He then demonstrated at video time stamp 14:20 and said "I couldn't see anything else with the speed they were going". He further recalled that about 3 or 4 times during the pursuit he recalls Officer Siefer saying over the radio they were pointing a gun. The last time he recalled hearing that was on W. 14th St. Each time he heard it they "ducked" in behind another police car for cover.

When Officer Esson was asked about hearing anything that may have resembled a gun fire he did not hear anything but sirens (other than the gun fire he stated he heard earlier over the radio that occurred in the parking lot of the school)

### (Time Stamp 22:11)

He noted that 79th and Starr the suspect vehicle hit a different marked car. He couldn't remember exactly where it occurred but remembered it got called out.

# CUYAHOGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

Officer Esson was thanked for his time and the interview was concluded.

Respectfully,

CW h. Rost.

James Mackey, Detective Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office

## Summary Report

Incident: Cleveland Police Department (CPD) pursuit and officer involved shooting, November 29, 2012.

The following interview was conducted on December 27th, 2012, in conjunction with the captioned investigation. The interview was done by Detective Jacobs and was done telephonically. The interviewee's name is Chief John Joyce, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Police Department (RTAPD), cell phone JOYCE was made aware of the interviewer's name and the purpose of the interview. JOYCE thereafter provided the following facts:

According to the Cleveland Police Officers involved in the captioned case there may have been RTA Police cars on scene and or may have participated in the pursuit. The Cleveland Police Officers interviewed in the captioned matter stated they were fairly positive they observed RTA police cars on scene. JOYCE advised he would look into this matter to include checking Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) Reports. JOYCE indicated the RTA Police cars can be confused with Cleveland Clinic Police Cars and or Cleveland State Police cars. JOYCE stated the RTA Police Cars are equipped with video. JOYCE also advised he would check with the each Officer on duty the night of the captioned incident. JOYCE he will have this information in about a week.

Detective David Jacobs #211 Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office

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#### **SUMMARY REPORT**

# INCIDENT CLEVELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT PURSUIT/SHOOTING 11/29/2012

On December 28, 2012, while assigned to the Special Investigation in cooperation with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification (BCII) and the East Cleveland Police Department (ECPD). Sergeant Clifford Pinkney and Detective David Jacobs, Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) were assigned to interview East Cleveland Police Department (ECPD) Sergeant WILLIAM MITCHELL. The Interview took place at 4055 Highlander parkway, Richfield, Ohio 44286. MITCHELL thereafter provided the following information concerning the captioned incident:

Synopsis:	
ECPD OFFICER WILLIAM MITCHELL	
Home address: Parma, Ohio	
Date of Birth (DOB) 03/06/1970	
Cell Phone	
Never arrived at Heritage Middle School, East Cleveland, Ohio, therefore no cell use.	
Employed at ECPD for approximately eleven (11 years)	
Current Assignment-Patrol	
Shift-Third Platoon 1900 hours to 0700 hours	
Supervisor Lieutenant Ray Stedman	
Days off- 12 hours shifts and rotating days off	
Rested at the time of the incident-ves	

No issues with drugs and alcohol

Corrective lenses-No, Lasik surgery

No medications (current to include the night of the incident)

Uniform-Jeans, black t-shirt and ECPD outer carrier vest Police emblem

Duty Belt-No, Gun in holster "Glock 27", 40 caliber

Outer carrier bullet proof vest-yes, two "full" extra magazines, no less than lethal weapons

Vehicle number-not applicable (N/A), personal vehicle (off duty)

Call Sign-N/A

Partner-No

In car camera-N/A

Spotlight-N/A

Radio Channel-Channel 1

Vehicle MDT-N/A

In Service Training-Annual Requalification up to date, last in service training approximately two years ago

**SWAT Team member** 

Prior shooting involvement-June of 2006

No prior military experience

#### **DETAILS**

At approximately 10:50pm, on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012, MITCHELL was sitting in his personal vehicle parked at the "Hanini's Gas and Deli Station." "Hanini's Gas and Deli is located at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Delmont Street, East Cleveland, Ohio. MITCHELL was working a "part-time job" that night and was early, his shift was 2300 hours to 0300 hours. MITCHELL'S job was to provide security for Hanini's.

MITCHELL was listening to a football game on his car's radio when he noticed several ("approximately 50") Police Cars pass his location. MITCHELL advised the Police Cars were heading eastbound on Euclid Avenue at a high rate of speed, ("approximately 50 to 60 miles per hour, MPH"). At this time, Mitchell was monitoring ECPD's Channel 1 and he advised over the radio; "Standby for an Emergency traffic, Cleveland Police Department is involved in a vehicle pursuit which is heading eastbound on Euclid Avenue and there are multiple units involved (paraphrased)" MITCHELL was unable to provide a description of the suspect vehicle because he was not sure he ever saw it. MITCHELL did say that it may have been a Silver Dodge Charger. MITCHELL thought this because that was first unmarked car he saw. MITCHELL then added that it may have been a Police Car, he was unsure.

MITCHELL stated there was an initial procession of Police Cars (large in numbers, 50) and then there were sporadic Police Cars after the fact and that lasted for a couple of minutes. MITCHELL did notice what he believed to be a MetroPark Ranger Police cars, Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP) Cars and or Greater Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Police cars. MITCHELL continued to listen to Channel 1 and heard "they are cutting thru the Happy's Pizza parking lot." A short time later, he heard radio traffic state "shots fired, shots fired." MITCHELL then heard an ECPD Lieutenant ask for a location. MITCHELL never went to Heritage Middle School nor did he take pictures and or video of the pursuit.

Sergeant Clifford Pinkney, CCSO

Detective David A. Jacobs #211 (author), CCSO

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## Summary Report

Incident: Cleveland Police Department (CPD) pursuit and officer involved shooting, November 29, 2012.

The following interview was conducted on January 2nd, 2013, in conjunction with the captioned investigation. Lieutenant WILLIAM TRAINE, Department of Public Safety, Division of Police, Bureau of Special Investigations, 1300 Ontario Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113, (216)623-5651. TRAINE was made aware of the identity of the interviewers and the purpose of the interview. TRAINE thereafter provided the following information regarding his conversations with CPD Officer Jim Hummel.

TRAINE was interviewed at the Justice Center at approximately 10:00am by Sergeant Clifford Pinkney and Detective David Jacobs. TRAINE stated that he had received a voicemail on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from Officer Hummel. TRAINE was aware that he (Hummel) was involved in the captioned pursuit/shooting and was concerned Hummel may make some type of statement about the incident. TRAINE stated he did not initially retrieve the message, but did talk to Hummel to the following day, December 1, 2012. TRAINE reported his interactions with Hummel to Commander Jim Chura, CPD who in turn advised TRAINE to contact the Attorney General's Office Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification (BCII).

TRAINE has known Hummel for a long time, TRAINE had worked with Hummel's stepfather and that's how they first met. TRAINE went on to say it has been sometime that he has spoken to Hummel and it was out of the ordinary for him to call.

On December 1, 2012 TRAINE received a cell phone call from Hummel. Hummel stated "I need to talk to, I was involved in the East Cleveland thing, I was the lead car." Hummel asked TRAINE if he could talk confidentially and TRAINE responded "there is no such thing." Hummel told TRAINE "I thought it was a flat, but it wasn't, the car backfired three times just before Superior Avenue." Hummel told TRAINE he brought this to the Police Union Attorney's attention and was looking for advice. TRAINE told Hummel "tell the truth, nothing but the truth, and don't leave anything out."

Sergeant Clifford Pinkney

Detective David Jacobs #211

# Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office

# Interview of Cleveland Police Officer Justen Davis

Sir

On Wednesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013, while assigned to Special Investigation in cooperation with Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation and East Cleveland Police. Cuyahoga County Sheriff's office Sgt. Donald Cleland and Detective James Mackey were assigned to interview Cleveland Police Officer Justen Davis in the presence of Union Representative Jeff Follmer, The interview took place at 4055 Highlander Parkway Richfield Ohio 44286.

### Synopsis

At the onset of the interview Officer Davis was advised that this interview is part of a criminal investigation and the interview continued in the presence of his Union Representative. Background questions were asked by Detective Mackey

Subject interviewed Background information

Cleveland Police Officer Justen Davis

Home address Cleveland, Ohio 44113

D.O.B. 06/12/1978 Cell Phone Department Cell Phone none

No cell phones used on the November 29<sup>th</sup> for video, still photos or recording.

Employed by Cleveland Police for 3 Years (Including 2 lay-offs)

Current assignment Downtown Service Unit (DSU) Platoon D/M Class

Shift 2000-0400 hrs. Unit supervisor Sgt. Peters

Assigned unit; CPD 9607 with dash cam that was working on 11/29/12, MDT

Uniform officer; Class B uniform/outer vest carrier Taser, ASP baton, flashlight

Equipment (Firearm) Glock 21 with 2 Magazines, 2x Handcuffs, (no personal weapons)

Officer Davis reports he does not wear Corrective lenses or contacts, and that he is not now nor on the night of 11/29/12 under the influence of Medication, Alcohol, or Drugs.

No prior officer involved shooting incidents, Use of force training April 2012 with in-service training. Specialized training; USMC 12 years, Motor transport, Tanks, Security team leader. Rank attained Staff Sergeant. Deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq

#### Details

Detective Mackey asked how Officer Davis first became involved in the incident of November 29, 2012.

Officer Davis stated he and his partner (Officer John Sanderson) were assisting another DSU unit with a pan handler. It was at the corner of West 6<sup>th</sup> and St. Clair Avenue (just outside of XO's) Officer Sanderson called me back to the car and advised me to drive towards the Detroit-Superior bridge. As we arrived I could see the crest of the first cars lights going over the bridge, as we got across the bridge we were caught up, we were the third car in line. We pursued them down Detroit, I don't know what street it was but as soon as we took the left we were being called off by our supervisor. Officer Sanderson replied by radio that we were third car in line are you sure? Our supervisor broadcast to terminate the pursuit.

I pulled over and the cars started flying past us.

Officer Davis stated OK we are out of the fight but we can parallel, so we were paralleling and they started coming back our way, we were on Lorain. That's when we heard over the air (I don't know who said it) "It looks like he's reloading" and I think "he's pointing it out the window". It was obvious to us; John said "did they just say he was reloading? To me that means he would have to fire his gun and empty it in order to reload. So we continued to parallel, we actually over-shot them, I don't remember what road we were on, but we crossed Lorain, we crossed west 25<sup>th</sup>, we were going toward steelyards and overshot them. We turned around and I remember seeing all the cars. "It looked like the damned Blues Brothers"

Sgt. Cleland asked if Officer Davis could recall which intersection they were at Officer Davis stated the he could not be sure, he thought it was West 14<sup>th</sup> Street. And continued we were in Tremont, I am pretty sure it was west 14<sup>th</sup> Street. We followed the tail end of the convoy, jumped on the expressway; we weren't supposed to be in the pursuit so we exited at Superior, yeah, the Superior Street exit. We pulled off and listened to the rest of the pursuit from there.

Detective Mackey asked; when you were the third in line, did you see the occupants of the vehicle Officer Davis replied No

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis heard any noises

Officer Davis replied No, due to the fact that there were light's, Sirens, our windows were up and the radio was on fire.

Detective Mackey asked does your dash cam only activate when your lights are on

Officer Davis replied Yes. You do have the option to operate it manually but as soon as you flip those switches it fires up automatically.

Detective Mackey asked if the dash cam was recording as far as Officer Davis knew the whole time that they had their lights on.

Officer Davis replied that is correct

Detective Mackey asked if it was Sergeant Peters who terminated the pursuit

Officer Davis stated that it was Sergeant Peters he was the only supervisor on the air from DSU

Detective Mackey asked if anyone else from DSU got into the pursuit

Officer Davis stated that he heard another car was involved but did not know that they were a part of it then.

Detective Mackey asked who that was

Officer Davis stated that it was Beckner and Laska I didn't know they were a part of it till the end.

Detective Mackey asked when you were blocking traffic by the commons how many cars were in the pursuit.

Officer Davis stated like I said it looked like the Blues Brothers, it got to the point where there were more cop cars than any other cars on the road. It was like nothing I've ever seen before.

Sgt. Cleland asked if Officer Davis could give an estimate as to how many cars passed Officer Davis stated easily between 10 to 15 cars.

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis knew what radio channel they were on that night Officer Davis stated that Officer Sanderson handled the radio and he thought that he had switched back and forth from 2 to 3, "I'm not sure how he was doing it but at times he was monitoring both".

Detective Mackey asked at Steelyard when you were blocking traffic did you see the subject car pass you or where did you arrive at the intersection after it had passed.

Officer Davis said that it passed them, it flew right by us.

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis could see inside the car as it passed

Officer Davis stated No

Detective Mackey asked if the subject car attempted to swerve towards or away from them Officer Davis stated No It just went straight by us

Detective Mackey asked if any other radio traffic stood out in his memory

Officer Davis stated the shouts over the radio made them believe that they need to catch up to this, in case anything goes down, the transmissions of reloading and a gun being pointed out of the window.

Sergeant Cleland asked where they were when they heard the second transmission

Officer Davis stated it was when they were going down West 40-something 48<sup>th</sup> I think that they heard the transmission of the gun, the reloading, the gun out the window. That's when we made the left on Lorain we sped up and like I said I overshot.

Detective Mackey asked if when they were the 3<sup>rd</sup> car. Did he see anything coming from the vehicle or being thrown from the vehicle?

Officer Davis stated No, It was dark. The lights on top of the cars, the other cars on the road it was almost blinding. It was hard to focus.

Detective Mackey asked if when you started the pursuit did you know why you were in it or when did you learn why

Officer Davis stated Just before we got to the bridge he learned that there were shots fired.

Detective Mackey asked how close did you get to the suspect vehicle

Officer Davis stated the closest they were was about 100 yards. We caught up to them pretty quickly.

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis could see any actions from within the vehicle or know how many were in the vehicle

Officer Davis stated I couldn't even see what color the car was. The first time I could see the color of the car was when it flew by us

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis was at the scene where the pursuit ended

Officer Davis stated No, I never left zone 3-1

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis received any pho

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis received any photographs or anything else from other officers at the scene

Officer Davis stated No He heard that other officers said they had not seen anything like it before.

Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis learned any details of the scene

Officer Davis stated that he didn't have time, he was too busy guarding what was thought to be a suspected projectile fired in the air.

Detective Mackey asked what location was that, the start of the chase

Officer Davis stated that it was at the Justice Center, I was sitting at a cone on St. Clair

Sgt. Cleland asked at what point in time did you receive that assignment

Officer Davis stated everyone was saying let's find this casing, one car shut off this side and one car shut off that side. We just kept walking up and down with our flashlights.

Detective Mackey asked did you find anything

Officer Davis stated Yes, it was Laska he found what looked like a "wad cutter" it was a cylinder about the size of a projectile, it resembled the shape but a crime scene guy came down and said this is just a piece of road trash.

Detective Mackey asked if that was a Cleveland Crime scene guy Officer Davis stated Yes.

Detective Mackey asked if he knew who the crime scene guy was Officer Davis stated I just remember he had a cane and wore glasses Detective Mackey asked if he retrieved the item

Officer Davis stated that the crime scene guy picked it up and said it was road trash and threw it back on the ground. I had this weird feeling that I should pick this up. So I picked it up and put it in 9607 but at the end of the night I couldn't find it.

Detective Mackey asked if you could please describe it one more time

Officer Davis stated I guess maybe it was about the size of a .38 projectile, it was flat on the top and on the bottom it had a dent in it. I think the only reason it was ruled out as a projectile is that it had no rifling on it. It was a small piece of metal it looked like a projectile

Sgt. Cleland asked do you know what color it was

Officer Davis stated it was silver

Detective Mackey asked if he put that in 9607

Officer Davis stated Yes I put it in the center console where the cup holders are. I put it in there but when I came back out it was gone. I tore everything out of there, looked with my flashlight but I couldn't find it.

Detective Mackey asked did you put it in anything

Officer Davis stated No I just put it in there.

Detective Mackey asked if at the beginning, when you were on West 6<sup>th</sup>, did you hear anything any loud noises.

Officer Davis stated No I mean you get accustomed to that the steel plates all over the roads you hear that, the cars hit and sometimes it does actually resemble shots. You get desensitized to it after a while.

Sgt Cleland asked what part of West 6<sup>th</sup> were you at.

Officer Davis stated on the corner of West 6<sup>th</sup> and St. Clair facing (pause) I was right out side of XO Detective Mackey asked if Officer Davis's actions were consistent with his training and other officers' actions consistent with their training.

Officer Davis stated yes to both questions.

Detective Mackey asked if anyone asked him to lie or otherwise influence his statement Officer Davis stated no.

Detective Mackey asked if there was anything we did not ask that Officer Davis would like to add Officer Davis stated No

The interview was then terminated.

Respectfully Submitted

Sergeant Donald Cleland

OK

## Summary Report

Incident: Cleveland Police Department (CPD) pursuit and officer involved shooting, November 29, 2012.

The following interview was conducted on January 3rd, 2013 in conjunction with the captioned investigation. The interview was done by Sergeant Clifford Pinkney and Detective David A. Jacobs. The interviewee's name is Officer Chuck VAUGHN, (badge # 30), Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Police Department (RTAPD), cellular phone VAUGHN was advised of the identity of the interviewers and the purpose of the interview. VAUGHN thereafter provided the following facts:

According to the Cleveland Police Officers involved in the captioned investigation there may have been RTAPD Police cars on scene and or may have participated in the pursuit. The Cleveland Police Officers interviewed in the captioned matter stated they were fairly positive they observed RTAPD police cars on scene.

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012, at approximately 11:00pm, Officer VAUGHN responded to Windermere RTA station for a disorderly conduct call. VAUGHN was told by another RTAPD Officer Mark Belica that there was a pursuit and that he had heard shots being fired shortly thereafter. VAUGHN and his partner, Officer Chris Anderson were in RTAPD Police unit 963 when they decided to respond to the area of Heritage Middle School. VAUGHN stated they parked on Terrace Avenue and walked up the hill. Upon their arrival, VAUGHN stated he observed several Officers standing around and that the immediate area was already "taped" off. VAUGHN stated he had a brief conversation with a long-time friend, Detective John Graves, CPD who was on scene. According to VAUGHN, the conversation was not about the incident but more or less just acknowledging each other. VAUGHN went on to say that he and Anderson were only on scene for approximately fifteen minutes. VAUGHN stated he did not take any photos with his cellular phone and or a camera.

Sergeant Clifford Pinkney

Detective David A. Jacobs #211