



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



2024-3954

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 3487 Belmont Avenue,
Youngstown, Ohio, 44505

Investigative Activity: Witness Interview
Involves: Hanna Tillery (W)
Activity Date: 12/16/2024
Activity Location: Liberty Township Police Department, 1315 Churchill
Hubbard Road B, Youngstown, OH 44505
Authoring Agent: SA Nicholas Valente

Narrative:

On Monday, December 16, 2024, at 1747 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Nick Valente (SA Valente) and SA Matt Armstrong (SA Armstrong) interviewed Hanna Tillery (Hanna), relative to the officer-involved critical incident which took place on Monday, December 16, 2024. The interview took place at Liberty Township Police Department, 1315 Hubbard Road B, Youngstown, Ohio. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by Hanna. Hanna is the girlfriend of the subject, Jason Cain (Jason), and was seated in the front passenger seat of the vehicle operated by Jason at the time of the officer-involved shooting.

The interview was audio and video recorded. Refer to the recordings for a full account of what Hanna shared with agents. The following is a summary of the more significant parts of the interview deemed by the author and was placed in a chronology to aid understanding what Hanna shared with agents. The time marks noted below refer to time placements in the video recording of the interview.

Hanna told agents in the days leading up to this incident that she and Jason had walked approximately 30 miles from Hartford to Brookfield and ultimately to the home of Bill Ball (Bill) in Vienna. Once there, Bill gave Hanna and Jason a ride to Sharpsville and dropped Jason off in an alley near the home of Jason's ex-girlfriend Sally (last name unknown to Hanna). Hanna walked to a nearby church and loitered there while Jason was at Sally's home. Eventually, Jason appeared with Sally's vehicle. Hanna believed Jason had permission from Sally to use the car. Jason had previously borrowed Sally's vehicle and would obtain the keys to start the car from her rather than having his own set of keys, as far as Hanna was aware.

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Hanna stated that earlier on the day of the officer-involved shooting she and Jason had taken apart junk metal pieces at a friend's house and had scraped the metal at U-Pull-It to make some money. After leaving U-Pull-It, the pair stopped at a gas station, purchased gas, cigarettes, and snacks. The pair then pulled into the parking lot of Harbor Freight.

Jason was going to buy Hanna some new clothes from the Citi Trends clothing store located in the same plaza before shopping at the Harbor Freight. Hanna believed Jason, who was driving, pulled into the first parking space in the second row from the south end of the parking lot.

After parking, Jason and Hanna remained seated in the car for approximately ten minutes while they discussed what outfit she would buy and talked about their plans to get a hotel room for the night. Hanna stated that she and Jason had spent the previous couple nights sleeping in the car. Hanna stated (6:44 mark), "And then outta nowhere a big truck pulled in, and nose to nose with us, and all the sudden the next thing I remember, they just said 'Put your hands up.' I was confused. I didn't know what was happening. I just kept asking 'What's going on?' And then they shot him in the head right in front of me. He didn't have no weapons. He didn't have nothing. I don't, I don't know. I think when the bullet hit him [unintelligible/crying] I think he, I don't know, it just flew into the building. I don't know. I don't know."

Hanna later explained that at the moment the black truck pulled up in front of their vehicle, Jason had just put the vehicle in reverse because he was going to move to a parking space closer to the entrance of Citi Trends so they would not have to walk as far to get to that store.

Hanna stated that she knew the vehicle Jason was driving, and that the pair had been living out of the vehicle the past few days was owned by Sally because Jason told her that. Hanna believed she and Jason had the car for approximately four days. Hanna told agents the police told her the car was reported stolen. Hanna now believes Sally reported the vehicle stolen after learning she was using/living in the car with Jason. Hanna stated she did not believe Jason was aware the car they were using was reported/entered as a stolen vehicle.

When asked how the car went from the parking space it was parked in to being crashed into the front of the store, Hanna stated, (15:18) "I think he slammed on the gas when they shot him. It's the only thing that makes sense to me. I don't know." SA Valente said it would appear Jason had to back up prior to driving forward into the store. Hanna responded, (15:28) "I think so. Yeah, because it was in reverse when they pulled



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in." Hanna explained the vehicle had a rotary dial gear shift and the dial was already moved into position to reverse the car when the police arrived. Hanna described their vehicle backing up as "flying back", and faster than one would purposefully and normally back out of a parking space. Hanna recalled feeling a rocking sensation between the car backing up and moving forward. Hanna did not say anything indicative of her being aware Jason struck a vehicle while backing up before accelerating into the storefront.

When asked if Jason said anything as he backed up, Hanna replied, (15:50) "He just said 'What the hell.'" Jason did not say anything else during the incident. Hanna said she did not think Jason understood what was happening at the time. Hanna stated that she believed she heard the officers tell Jason to show them his hands, but could not recall the police giving him any other commands. Hanna said Jason's hands were visible on the steering wheel when police gave him the command to show his hands. Hanna believed that Jason drove straight back, but did not turn the car as you would normally when reversing out of a parking space.

Hanna told agents when they arrived in the parking lot Jason pulled into the parking space in the normal fashion (did not back in).

Hanna stated the first indication police were stopping her and Jason was an unmarked black truck pulling up nose to nose with them. When asked to describe what happened next, Hanna stated the officers got out and pointed guns (at her and the subject). Hanna next stated, (11:32) "And I honestly don't even know. I'm pretty sure they said like, 'Liberty Police' or something like that. I don't know. I wasn't. I really can't remember."

Hanna stated she did not know, but believed more than one person was in the truck that pulled up nose to nose with the vehicle she was sitting in. She believed she saw doors on both sides of the truck open up and people getting out pointing guns in her direction. She recalled one person got out from the driver's seat of the truck that approached them head on. That person then pointed a gun at her. Hanna recalled the black truck that pulled up in front of her was not a marked police vehicle but did have some sort of police-style red and blue light inside the vehicle behind the windshield that was turned on when the vehicle turned to pull in towards them. Someone from the vehicle then stated "Liberty PD" or something similar to this aloud. When asked if the people who got out of the truck said anything else to her, Hanna said she could not remember.

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Investigative Report**



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When asked if the people who got out of the truck were wearing police uniforms, Hanna stated she did not remember.

When asked where she believed Jason's car was at the time she heard the first gunshot, Hanna stated they were still parked in the parking space. Hanna stated Jason had not yet backed out of the spot when she heard the first gunshot. Hanna stated she believed the subject had not yet moved their car when the first shot was fired. Hanna stated the car had begun to move when the second and subsequent shots were fired. Hanna thought Jason hit the accelerator because he was scared. Hanna stated she could hear the bullets flying past her head and believed police continued to fire as the car accelerated towards the storefront.

When asked about hearing gunshots, Hanna stated (17:48) "Yeah. There were so many. It sounded like three or more guns, and they at least unloaded half of a clip, I think. It was a lot." Hanna stated she did not know how many people were shooting. When later asked how many shots she heard, Hanna said (19:19) "At least five. At least."

When asked if she felt the car hitting anything when Jason backed the car up, Hanna stated she could not recall. When asked if she felt a jolt or something similar at that time, Hanna said (26:03) "Yeah, I think so, but I don't know." Hanna stated it was possible they hit something while backing up because her head and neck hurt really bad. When asked to estimate the speed, she believed the car was traveling when Jason backed up Hanna said, (44:28) "It was probably only around 15 miles per hour max, I think ...and then forwards, I would say it was more like 25. Like it just seemed like a brick dropped on the gas. I don't know. It was weird."

Hanna stated that during the incident a marked Liberty Police car did pull up and parked on the driver's side of the vehicle she was in. Hanna later recalled seeing the marked police vehicle pull up to the passenger side of the vehicle she was in rather than the driver's side. Hanna recalled seeing the marked police car pulling up to her location as Jason was accelerating forward towards the storefront.

Hanna stated she did not recall seeing any police officers or civilians on foot in the parking lot at the time Jason accelerated towards the store.

Hanna stated it was daylight out at the time of the incident. When asked if she could see what was going on outside at the time, Hanna replied, (14:20) "yeah."

Hanna explained that Jason previously lived in the garage of his girlfriend's home and was keeping his possessions in the garage with her permission.

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Hanna stated Jason had mental health issues, including being bi-polar and suffering from depression. Hanna recalled Jason making statements in the past indicative of potentially using the police as a means of committing suicide. Hannah did not believe Jason intended to cause a situation where the police would shoot him as a means of committing suicide in this event. Hanna believed Jason was sober at the time of the officer-involved shooting.

Hanna stated she believed she was pregnant and was injured during the event. Hanna explained she felt a stinging sensation in her arm. Hanna was asked at the time of the incident if she wanted to be evaluated and she said she did not know. At the conclusion of the interview, agents had an EMS squad respond to the police department and evaluate her injuries.

The audio recording of this interview was attached to this report. The video recording was saved part of Reference Item C. Please see the attachment and video recording for further details.

References:

C- Witness Interviews

Attachments:

1. 2024-12-16 Audio Interview of Hanna Tillery

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