



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



2022-2876

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

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: ██████████ (S)
Date of Activity: 01/03/2023
Activity Location: ██████████ ██████████ – Business – 100 Executive Drive, Marion, OH 43302, Marion County
Author: SA Jason A. Snyder, #176

Narrative:

On 1/03/22, Special Agent (SA) Jason Snyder (Snyder) and Special Agent James Chandler (Chandler) with the Ohio Attorney General’s Office, Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), conducted a taped interview of Detective (Det.) ██████████ (██████████) with the Marion County Sheriff’s Office (Marion SO). The interview was conducted at the Marion SO located at 100 Executive Dr., Marion, Ohio 43302.

Both SA Snyder and Det. ██████████ agreed to meet on this date and location. Det. ██████████ voluntarily agreed to speak to SA Snyder. Det. ██████████’s attorney, Robert W. Sauter (Sauter), with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), was also in attendance.

Before taping began, SA Snyder introduced himself and briefly explained who he was and why he was there. SA Snyder advised Det. ██████████ that he was conducting a criminal investigation. SA Snyder advised Det. ██████████ that he was not conducting a “Garrity” investigation. Det. ██████████ was given a Criminal Investigation Notification (CIN) form. SA Snyder read the CIN to Det. ██████████. Det. ██████████ was asked if he understood the document and if he had any questions. Det. ██████████ stated that he understood the CIN and had no questions. Det. ██████████ signed the CIN acknowledging he understood what the form was notifying him of.

Det. ██████████ read a prepared statement to both agents (see statement of ██████████ for all details). In the statement, Det. ██████████ stated he has been employed by the Marion SO for four (4) years and has been a detective since 2020. During the incident, Det. ██████████ was wearing a tactical uniform with deputy “Sheriff” markings on the vest. As part of the uniform, he had a body worn camera, which was active during the incident. He considered himself to be well rested before the incident. He stated he was not under the influence of any substance that would impair his memory or judgment during the incident or during the interview with BCI.

Det. ██████████ attended River Valley High School and graduated in 2016. He also attended

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Marion Technical College. He received his Law Enforcement certificate in 2018.

Det. [REDACTED] carries a Glock 17 handgun as his primary duty weapon which was issued to him by the Marion SO. He last qualified with this weapon on 09/20/22. He carries three (3) magazines which can hold seventeen (17) rounds of ammunition. That day, he had three (3) magazines loaded with sixteen (16) rounds each, totaling forty-eight (48) rounds. He does not carry a backup weapon.

He is a K-9 handler for the Marion SO. The K-9 [REDACTED] had "Sheriff" clearly displayed on its tactical vest as well.

On 12/20/22, Det. [REDACTED] attended the morning briefing for the officers who were going to execute the search warrant that morning. He arrived at the hanger for the briefing. Lieutenant (Lt.) Mike Wheeler (Wheeler) advised that they were going to execute a search warrant at 256 N. Swain Avenue, La Rue. The search warrant was a narcotics search warrant from MARMET Drug Task Force. The name of the suspect was Travis Hellinger (Hellinger).

Lt. Wheeler advised that MARMET had narcotic buys on Hellinger up to that date. He advised Det. [REDACTED] that Hellinger had a criminal history, including aggravated vehicular assault and drug charges. He also advised Det. [REDACTED] that Hellinger had made comments to confidential informants that he was not going back to prison and that he would either run or get in a shootout with law enforcement. He was also known to carry a firearm. Hellinger had affiliation with a motorcycle gang called "Road Grime," with whom Det. [REDACTED] has had previous encounters. Hellinger also had prior experience in the United States Army.

When Det. [REDACTED] was in route to 256 N Swain Ave, La Rue, OH 43332, the sniper team, who had deployed earlier in the morning, reported that Hellinger was already outside of the pole barn. He was looking for the drones which were in the area at that time.

It was reported that Hellinger was walking west on the tracks. During this time, the sniper team advised that Hellinger may have been wearing body armor and had a gun holster on his side. Det. [REDACTED] and several other officers cleared the trailer at the location. After clearing the trailer, Det. [REDACTED] was requested to bring his K-9 officer onto the tracks.

Det. [REDACTED] recovered his K-9 and worked his way onto the tracks north of the pole barn. Det. [REDACTED] saw Hellinger was flashing the officers with a bright light. Several members of the Marion SRT told Hellinger that he was in custody, to stop walking and put his hands up. Hellinger refused to comply with officers' demands. Additional commands were given to Hellinger to put down his weapons.

While Hellinger was walking west on the railroad tracks, officers continued to walk in the same direction and continued to give him demands to stop. Hellinger did not comply. Det. [REDACTED] advised Hellinger that his K-9 would be released if he did not stop and give up.

Det. [REDACTED] did release his K-9 in the hopes of apprehending Hellinger. Det. [REDACTED] stated, "While K-9 [REDACTED] was in route to Mr. Hellinger, I observed him shoot at K-9 [REDACTED] three (3) times. Mr. Hellinger was shooting in the direction of SRT members. K-9 [REDACTED] was in between Mr. Hellinger and the SRT Team members and appeared to have hit the ground roughly six (6)

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to eight (8) feet in front of Mr. Hellinger, giving me the impression that he had been struck by gunfire.” Det. ██████ did not engage Hellinger with his weapon. It should be noted that when Det. ██████ reviewed his body camera, Hellinger only fired two (2) shots, not three (3). Det. ██████ corrected his statement at the end concerning the shots fired by Hellinger.

Det. ██████ then drew his own weapon, but did not shoot. This was due to several other officers engaging Hellinger with their weapons and Hellinger falling to the ground. After the shooting, Det. ██████ was able to take positive control of his K-9 and assessed him for injuries. There were no injuries on K-9 ██████. There was no damage to his body armor.

Det. ██████ showed agents a Google map of the area of the incident. He described locations of people and items seen at the scene during the incident. This document was collected from Det. ██████ and added to the casefile.

This report only summarizes the information deemed by the author to be of the most relevance to the investigation and does not purport to contain all questions and answers from the interview. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader’s overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview and may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions.

This report was written by SA Jason Snyder.

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