



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



2023-2232

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 5991 S Sunbury Rd, Westerville OH
43081

Investigative Activity: Processing of Shooting Scene (*Scene 1*)
Activity Date: August 24, 2023
Activity Location: Kroger Parking Lot, 5991 South Sunbury Road, Westerville, OH 43081
Authoring Agent: Special Agent Mathew Austin

On August 24, 2023, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) was notified by the Blendon Township Police Department (BTPD) of an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) at 5991 South Sunbury Road in Westerville, OH. It was initially reported shots were fired by BTPD at this location and an involved party was transported to the hospital.

Special Agent (SA) Mathew Austin arrived to the main scene at approximately 2050 hours. SA Austin was notified that BTPD had responded to a vehicle lockout in the Kroger parking lot when Kroger employees notified them of an alleged theft by an unidentified female, who was later identified as Ta'kiya Young (Young). During the encounter, Young reportedly attempted to flee the scene and struck a BTPD officer with her vehicle, and a BTPD officer discharged their firearm in response. Young was transported to Mount Carmel St. Ann's medical center with alleged gunshot wounds, where she was later pronounced deceased. SA Tackett responded to St. Ann's; see report "Processing of Clothing From Hospital" (*Scene 2*).

SA Austin photographed the scene as it was upon his arrival. A large portion of the Kroger parking lot at the Sunbury Plaza was secured with multiple layers of crime scene tape, marked cruisers, and uniformed law enforcement personnel from various agencies. The secured area began at the main entrance to Kroger and extended south, past the pharmacy (RX) entrance and the RX walk up window. A BTPD cruiser (cruiser 10) was parked near the front Kroger entrance and a green cone that marked a fired cartridge casing was behind it. A black Lexus sedan with no license plate and apparent crash damage was underneath the portico between the RX walk up and click-list employee entrance. The front driver door was open, suspected bloodstains and medical equipment were on the pavement nearby, and there was a suspected bullet hole in the windshield of the sedan. Three police cruisers were near the Lexus; BTPD cruiser 9, Westerville Police Department cruiser 26, and Minerva Park cruiser 256. SA Austin provided BTPD with the VIN of the Lexus (JTHBJ46G882176570) for the application of a search warrant; processing of the vehicle was held until the search warrant was obtained.

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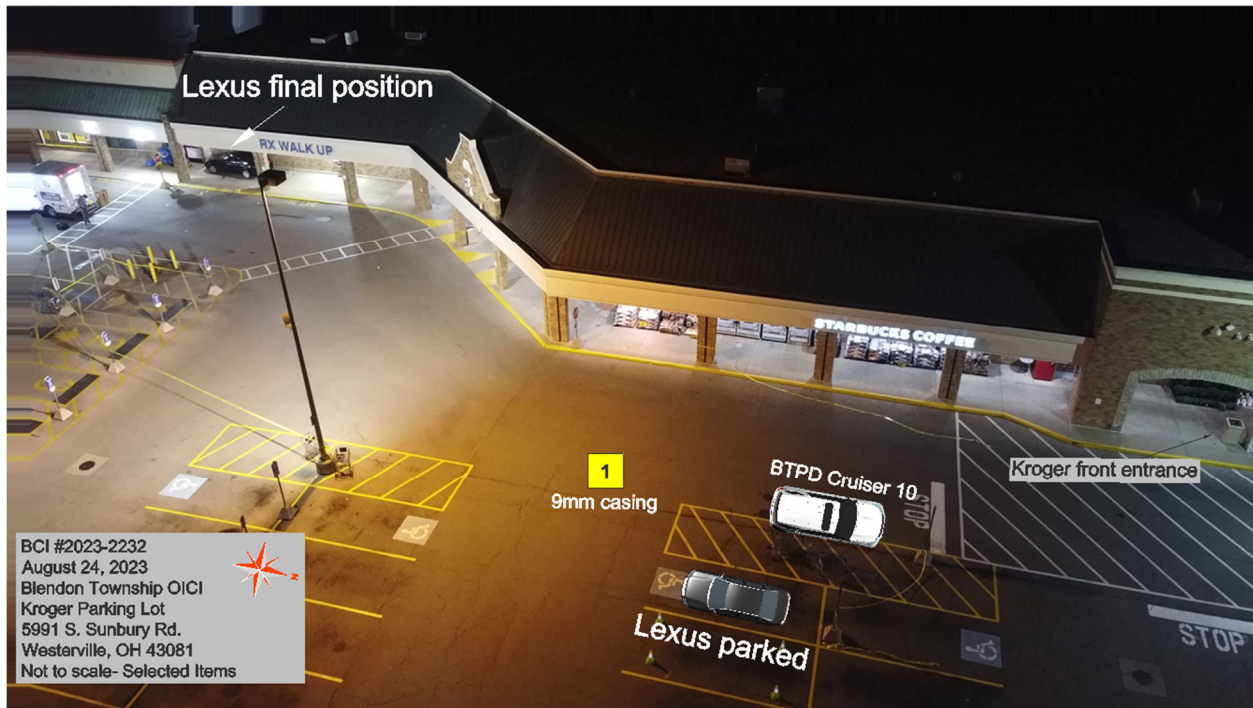


Image 1. Diagram from drone photograph of selected items

SA Austin used a Leica 3D scanner to measure/document the scene and a drone was used to photograph the scene after cruisers were removed. SA Austin was incorrectly informed that at the time of the shooting, the black Lexus was in the second spot east of BTPD cruiser 10. This parking spot was marked with green cones for illustrative purposes. Upon further review of surveillance video from Kroger, the black Lexus was observed parked, facing southbound, in the handicap parking spot on the south side of the row. A green cone, reportedly placed by responding officers, was located in the parking lot behind BTPD cruiser 10. Underneath it, SA Austin located a Hornady 9mm Luger +P casing that was collected as item 1. *(It should be noted that the packaging and evidence inventory state the item was incorrectly located near cruiser 9).*

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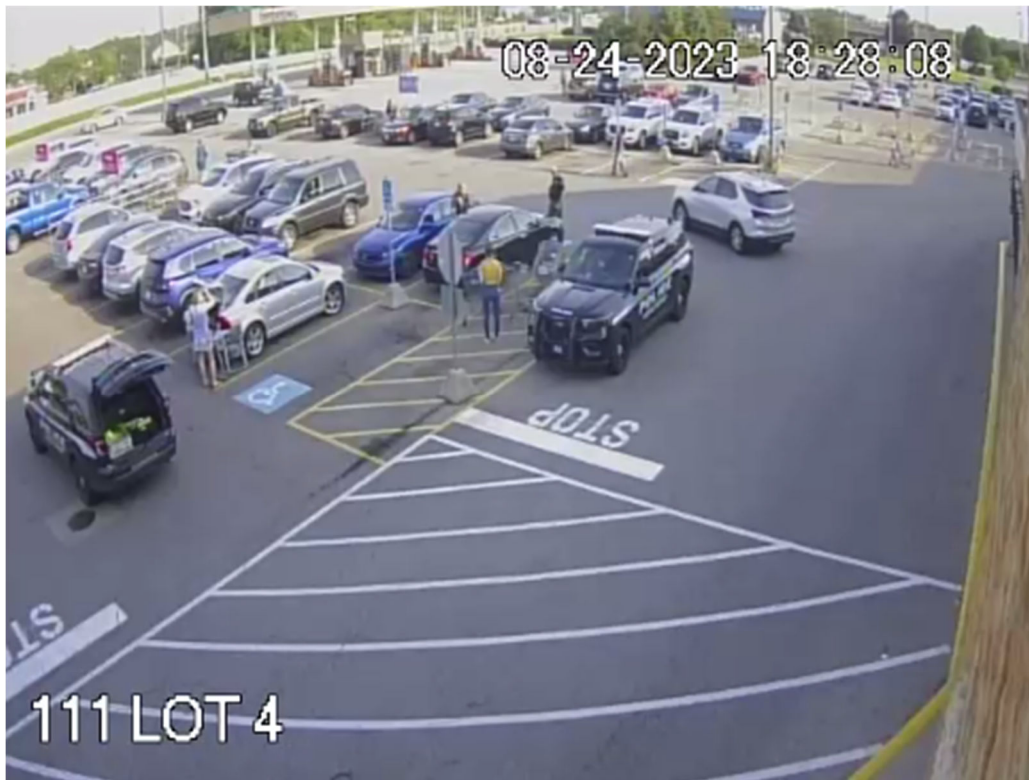


Image 2. Screenshot from Kroger showing Lexus location- provided by SA Kyle Douglass

Multiple items were located on the pavement/sidewalk near the curb by the driver side of the black Lexus. A white sheet with suspected bloodstains contained various medical supplies and packaging. These items, along with other suspected medical intervention equipment, were photographed and collected together as item 2. A pair of handcuffs and a tan medical gear pouch with "Grubb" on it were photographed and returned to BTPD. A multicolored floral bag with suspected blood soaked into the fabric was next to the curb. The bag was found to contain five bottles of Lunazul tequila that each had some type of suspected anti-theft device attached to the top. The bottom of the bag contained shards of broken glass and suspected bullet holes were observed near the top on both sides of the bag. The bag and its contents were collected together as item 3.



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Image 3. Medical intervention supplies (item 2) and bag with tequila (item 3)

SA Austin processed the black Lexus after being notified by BTPD Lieutenant Josh Retherford that a search warrant had been obtained. Suspected bloodstains were observed on the sidewalk by the open front driver door, door sill, door interior, and seat. Broken glass was on the dashboard and front driver floorboard. The car was found in park, with the push-button ignition off, and front driver seatbelt fastened. An Ohio temporary tag (Q686157) for a 2008 Lexus was located in the backseat along with multiple containers of laundry detergent. Two bottles of tequila were observed on the front passenger seat. An iPhone with a pink case (item #4) was located on the front driver floorboard; wi-fi was turned off and airplane mode was enabled prior to packaging. A zippered pink wallet (item #5) was found in-between the front driver seat and center console. The wallet contained various cards, an Ohio driver license for Young, and \$109 in US currency.

After the vehicle was moved with a tow-truck, the passenger side of the vehicle was examined. Black scuffs were observed on the brick wall behind the Lexus and it appeared that the vehicle had struck a bicycle rack and an outdoor cigarette ashtray. There was suspected crash damage to the front passenger corner of the vehicle. A total of 12 bottles of tequila were documented that were found in the front passenger area; some were loose in the vehicle and some were in a white bag. Two brightly-colored airsoft/toy guns were photographed, along with various prescriptions/medications and sonographic images belonging to Young. No other items of evidence were located in the vehicle.

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Prior to the Lexus being moved, SA Austin examined the suspected bullet hole in the windshield. This was labeled as ballistic event 1, or BE 1, for identification purposes. BE 1 was described as an oval-shaped perforating hole located in front of the front driver seat. BE 1 was approximately 18.5" from the upper driver side corner of the windshield and approximately 13.9" from the lower driver side corner of the windshield. Beveling (cratering) was observed on the interior of the windshield, indicating a generalized shot direction from outside to inside the vehicle. No suspected bullet holes were observed in the interior of the vehicle. Suspected dust from pulverized glass and a few small tears were located in the outside edge of the front driver seat. In order to identify angular data for the BE, SA Austin transected the long axis of the oval-shaped hole using a straight edge and marker. Measured against an established horizontal datum line across the windshield, the horizontal angle for BE 1 was 102°. This represented a trajectory from driver side to passenger side (90° would indicate a shot straight into the windshield).

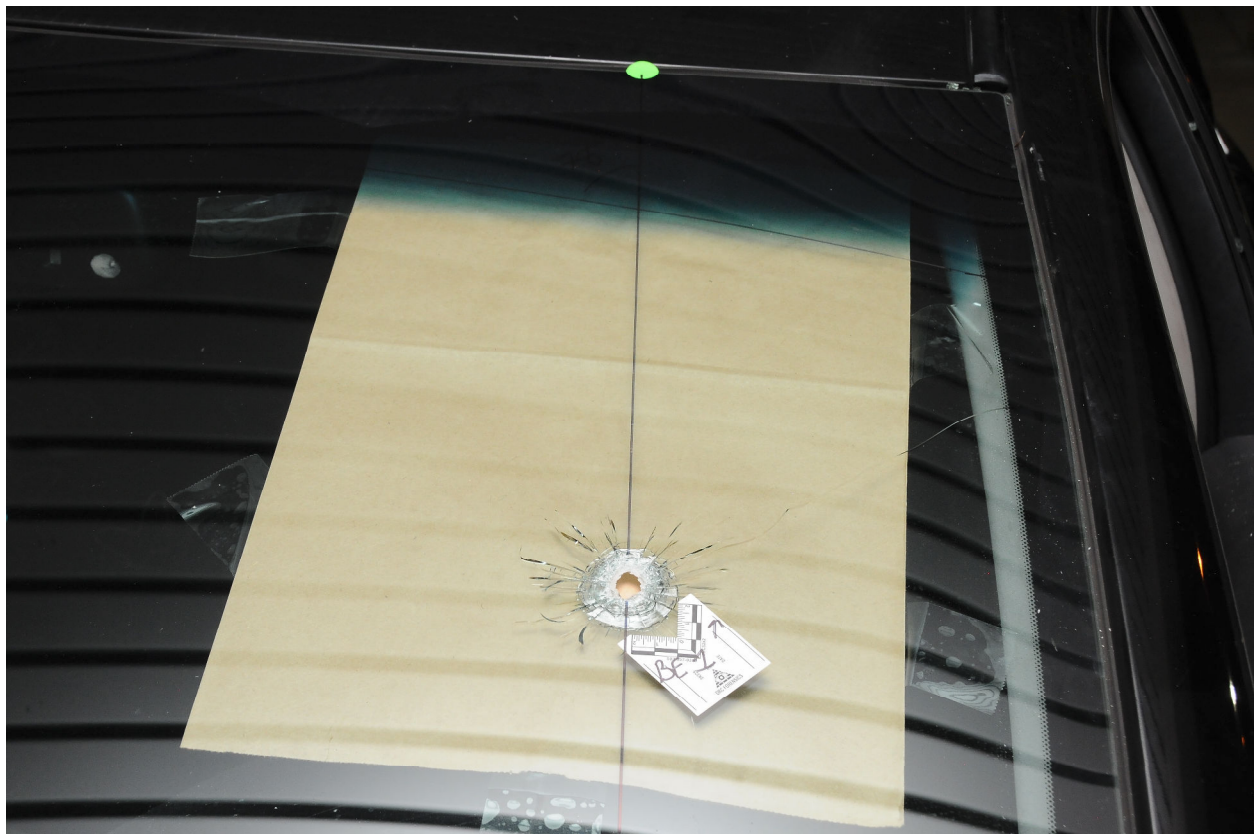


Image 4. Long axis of BE 1 into front driver area

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A trajectory rod was then placed over the line drawn through the long axis of BE 1 in order to be documented with the 3D scanner. Using Map360, a diagramming software, measurements of the scanned trajectory rod were used to visualize a 5° trajectory cone¹. The horizontal measurement with this method was 103° from the front driver corner of the vehicle towards the center of the vehicle. Due to the nature of BE 1 being a single bullet hole in glass, only horizontal angle measurements were obtained.



Image 5. 5° trajectory cone of BE 1 into windshield

¹ $\pm 5^\circ$ is a generally accepted level of error, as explained by Haag and Haag in their 2021 edition of *Shooting Incident Construction*, “~5 degrees is a reasonable uncertainty level for most bullet paths derived from actual scene work” (p. 129). For this reason, a $\pm 5^\circ$ cone accompanies the trajectory line.

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While on scene, SA Tackett released Young's clothing (scene 2/item 1) and Officer Grubb's duty pistol (scene 3/item 1) to SA Austin. Agents cleared the shooting scene at approximately 0240 hours after a copy of the search warrant and inventory was left in the Lexus. SA Austin then travelled to the BCI office in London and placed all evidence items either in the crime scene unit temporary locker or the drying cabinet (see scanned evidence inventory for details).