



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



2024-3649

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 6880 Sunset Strip Ave  
NW, Room #220, North Canton, Ohio, 44720

**Investigative Activity:** Witness Officer Interview  
**Involves:** Trooper Mike Vitullo (W)  
**Activity Date:** 11/26/2024  
**Activity Location:** BCI - Richfield  
**Authoring Agent:** SA Allison Fletcher

**Narrative:**

On Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 1238 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Matthew Armstrong (Armstrong) and SA Cory Momchilov (Momchilov) interviewed Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Trooper Mike Vitullo (Vitullo). The interview took place at BCI - Richfield, located at 4055 Highlander Parkway, Richfield, Ohio, 44286. The interview was audio and video recorded.

Trooper Vitullo was identified as being a police officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the November 18, 2024 officer-involved shooting which occurred in the area of 6880 Sunset Strip Avenue NW, Room #220, North Canton, Ohio 44720. Reportedly, Trooper Vitullo did not 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.

Any time references made correspond to the time elapsed during the video recorded interview.

Trooper Vitullo stated his radio call sign on November 18, 2024, was his last name, "Vitullo" and his badge number was 1843. He has been employed by the OSHP for nineteen years and has been a police officer for a total of nineteen years. During the incident, Trooper Vitullo wore his standard police uniform with a police badge affixed to it. He also wore an external ballistic vest and duty belt. He responded to the scene in his personal vehicle. During the incident he was a passenger in OSHP Special Response Team (SRT) armored vehicle that was referred to as "Bear." The armored vehicle was marked with OSHP emblems and emergency lights. He was equipped with a body-worn camera (BWC) and he did not have any other recording devices on his person. He considered himself to be well-represented as a police officer during 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.

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Prior to the shooting incident, Trooper Vitullo was at the Canton OSHP post located at 4711 Shuffel Street NW, North Canton, Ohio 44720. He overheard radio traffic on the PA system dispatching road patrol units to assist Jackson Township Police Department (JTPD) with closing down the interstate due to an ongoing incident. Trooper Vitullo felt this was an odd request and went to the dispatch center located on post to gather more information.

The dispatchers contacted JTPD for additional information. It was learned that shots had been fired and there was a barricaded subject at the Rodeway Inn located at 6880 Sunset Strip Avenue NW in North Canton, Ohio.

JTPD eventually requested the assistance of OSHP SRT. Trooper Vitullo mentioned their armored vehicle had recently left the Canton Post to head towards Cleveland. Arrangements were made to have the vehicle turn around and respond to the Rodeway Inn.

Trooper Vitullo responded to the scene location in his personal vehicle. He was initially unfamiliar with the area until he arrived and recognized the Cracker Barrel restaurant located adjacent to the motel. Trooper Vitullo recalled arriving on scene sometime during the late morning or early afternoon, possibly between 1000 and 1200 hours.

Once on scene, Trooper Vitullo observed Canton Regional SWAT team members (Canton SWAT), and their armored vehicle parked close to the entry door of Room #220 of the Rodeway Inn. Trooper Vitullo gathered his equipment from his personal vehicle which included his shield, drone, helmet, and additional "entry gear" and approached the Canton SWAT team.

A short time later, the OSHP armored vehicle, "Bear", arrived on scene. Trooper Vitullo and additional OSHP SRT members began loading the armored vehicle with the required equipment. During that time, Trooper Vitullo recalled hearing a volley of gunfire and hearing multiple bullets pass over his head. He described the bullets as making a "whistling" noise. During the volley of gunfire, Trooper Vitullo believed there were multiple different guns being fired that were coming from the area of the motel. He was unable to observe who was shooting except for a Canton SWAT sniper positioned at the rear of the Rodeway Inn parking lot who appeared to be firing his gun.

Trooper Vitullo went on to describe the gunfire, stating, "so it was like we were kinda in the middle of a gunfight, is essentially what it felt like" [14:25]. Trooper Vitullo estimated a ten-minute time lapse from the time he arrived until the volley of gunfire began. He described the scene as chaotic.

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Once the "Bear" was loaded, Canton SWAT requested OSHP SRT to use the armored vehicle to move the involved subject's vehicle that was parked in front of room #220. Trooper Vitullo recalled that the vehicle was some kind of large Dodge pickup truck. Trooper Vitullo was a passenger in the Bear, while OSHP Trooper Skipper drove the vehicle. Trooper Skipper was able to push the Dodge pick-up out of the way. During that maneuver, Trooper Vitullo explained that this put him and the other officers inside the Bear in a vulnerable position to possibly be struck by gunfire from the subject. Because of this, they kept all "ports" (i.e. small doors on the side of the armored truck used by operators to fire weapons through) closed. The Bear then remained in position in front of Room #220.

Trooper Vitullo also mentioned additional officers who were inside the Bear with him, and they included, OSHP Sergeant Castellanos, OSHP Trooper Burgos, U.S. Marshall Chris Alstrom (Alstrom), and 3-4 Canton SWAT officers that he could not recall their names. All the officers remained inside the vehicle even while engaging in the subject.

Trooper Vitullo recalled the officers inside the vehicle having a group discussion on how to manage the situation. The OSHP units did not have access to the radio channel being used by Canton SWAT, so all information was being funneled through the Canton SWAT officers. It was learned that the officers who were operating from the Canton SWAT armored vehicle were requesting the windows to Room #220 be removed due to officer safety issues of not being able to see inside the room or see the subject.

Trooper Vitullo volunteered to use a less lethal 40mm launcher that utilized wooden projectiles. He took a position in the turret of the Bear and fired approximately fifteen less-lethal rounds to shoot out the window of Room #220. Trooper Vitullo stated the decision to fire was a group decision based upon what was needed at the time by all officers on scene. His purpose in firing the less lethal firearm was to break the glass of the window and all rounds were aimed at the window. While in the turret, Trooper Vitullo did not observe the subject or believe any gunfire was directed at him. He did, however, hear gunfire in the background but he did not know who was firing. He believed it was likely law enforcement based upon the radio traffic he overheard inside the Bear.

While inside the Bear, Trooper Vitullo said it was difficult to hear additional gunfire due to most sounds being muffled. He did recall seeing one of the Canton SWAT officers firing his weapon but was unsure who the officer was or how many rounds he fired. He later observed a BWC video that showed the Canton SWAT officer firing approximately ten rounds from the port of the Bear.



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Although Trooper Vitullo never saw or heard the involved subject, he feared for his safety and the safety of other officers on scene. He was especially concerned about his safety when he was firing the less lethal rounds from the turret because he was partially exposed.

Trooper Vitullo estimated that dozens of rounds were fired during the entirety of the incident. While he was on scene he heard three separate volleys of gunfire.

Trooper Vitullo was unsure of any other officers who fired their weapons. He recalled Sergeant Castellanos utilizing approximately three flashbangs prior to officers making an entry. Trooper Vitullo provided one of the flashbangs to Sergeant Castellanos.

Trooper Vitullo did not make entry into Room #220 and did not engage or observe the subject at any other time.

The interview concluded at approximately 1316 hours.

The interview was audio recorded. The audio recording was attached to this report. Please see the attachments for further details.

**References:**

Reference Item G – Officer Interviews

**Attachments:**

1. 2024-11-26 Audio Recorded Interview - Trooper Mike Vitullo