



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



2024-1814  
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 8401 South Dixie Highway,  
Rudolph, Ohio 43462

**Investigative Activity:** Interview with Witness  
**Involves:** Robert Van Norman (O)  
**Date of Activity:** 07/01/2024  
**Author:** SA Joshua S. Rammel, #175

**Narrative:**

On July 1, 2024, Special Agent (SA) Josh Rammel (Rammel) spoke with Robert Van Norman (Van Norman) regarding the Officer Involved Critical Incident (OICI) that involved the Wood County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) and deceased individual George Eric Taylor (Taylor).

The interview was conducted by the use of a cell phone with SA Rammel contacting Van Norman at [REDACTED]. The interview was recorded using a digital audio recorder. A copy of the recording was attached to this report.

SA Rammel began the interview by identifying himself and confirming with Van Norman that he was willing to speak with SA Rammel. Van Norman advised that he was willing to "help out" in any way he could. Van Norman provided basic identification information such as his full name, date of birth, and address.

Van Norman stated that he served in the Marine Corp with Taylor and had known Taylor since 1994/1995, and that Van Norman and Taylor had been friends and in contact since that time. Van Norman also mentioned that Taylor had been to Van Norman's house in Pennsylvania. Van Norman explained that Taylor had been present at Van Norman's wedding, and that Van Norman's mother would cook Taylor a special meal when he came to visit.

SA Rammel indicated that he was initially told that Van Norman was Taylor's [REDACTED] coach. SA Rammel inquired as to what that meant. Van Norman advised that the title of [REDACTED] coach was not really a thing, but that there was a group of friends who served together who would help each other get through episodes of [REDACTED]. Van Norman explained that this was set up by the individuals due to the Veterans Association (VA) having "cookie cutter" questions and never appeared to fully understand how [REDACTED] affects people. Van Norman stated that they seem to have a better success rate speaking with people who served together. Van Norman clarified that he was not a licensed therapist or anything like that.

Van Norman described an incident that occurred in April 2024, where Taylor was having a

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█ episode and contacted another individual whom they both served with who currently lives in Iowa; (Tony). Van Norman advised that he was told about Taylor's episode and decided to help Tony out and contacted Taylor. Van Norman stated that Taylor was having issues with his wife Jessica Taylor (Jessica) at the time, but that it did not appear to be as serious as when Van Norman spoke with Taylor on June 15, 2024.

Van Norman mentioned that Taylor called him around 11:00–11:30pm on June 15, 2024. Van Norman stated he initially thought "oh shit" because the call was so late and that was never a good sign. Van Norman described Taylor as being "beyond distraught" and "very upset". Van Norman indicated that he went into "big brother mode" and tried to figure out what was wrong. Taylor informed Van Norman that he was having issues with Jessica and that earlier in the day Jessica told Taylor that they "were done" and told Taylor to "just leave". Taylor proceeded to go home and started drinking a large bottle of "Tito's" vodka. Van Norman informed SA Rammel that Taylor sent him images of a Ka-bar knife. In one of the images Taylor had the knife to his throat and the bottle of Tito's, see Investigative Report (IR) 26 previously authored by SA Rammel for details regarding the messages. Van Norman advised SA Rammel that Taylor made it seem like Jessica was very "abusive" towards Taylor.

Van Norman mentioned that he kept trying to relate his own experiences to Taylor and at one moment Taylor's phone call ended. Van Norman told SA Rammel that he went into "panic mode" and attempted to use social media to find where Taylor lived in order to get emergency help. Van Norman stated that he contacted several police departments in Ohio and eventually was able to track Taylor's location down to his address and made contact with the WCSO. Van Norman described additional issues arose because Van Norman was calling Taylor by his middle name Eric instead of George, but eventually Taylor was properly identified.

Van Norman indicated that once he was able to get authorities to respond to Taylor's address, he texted Taylor and told him that help was on the way. Taylor responded through text with "what?" and told Van Norman that Taylor was going to kill himself in front of them if WCSO arrive on scene. Van Norman stated that he contacted WCSO and tried to call off the wellness check. Van Norman told Taylor that Taylor needed to go to the VA Hospital in order to get help. Taylor eventually agreed to have authorities respond to which Van Norman called the WCSO to have them respond again. Van Norman informed the WCSO that Taylor had █ and would be confrontational with responding officers. Van Norman informed WCSO that he knew Taylor had a knife but was unsure about guns in the house. Van Norman also requested that an ambulance respond as well in order to take Taylor to the hospital.

Van Norman mentioned that he received a text from Taylor telling him that the WCSO had arrived. Van Norman indicated that provided a sense of relief and ended up falling asleep before waking up around 6:30am on June 16, 2024. Van Norman contacted the WCSO in order to get an update on the situation. This led to SA Rammel eventually contacting Van Norman, see IR 8 previously authored by SA Rammel, and informing Van Norman of Taylor's death.

Van Norman stated that he keeps playing the "what if game" due to blaming himself for possibly being responsible for Taylor's death. Van Norman indicated that a therapist told him that it appeared that Taylor already had it "figured out" and that Taylor just "did not know how to do it". Van Norman expressed that he also believed that Taylor had his "mind made up" when the WCSO responded to the wellness check. Van Norman also provided several other

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scenarios that could have been worse in the event that Van Norman did not contact police. Van Norman also spoke with Tony about Taylor and both could not believe that Taylor would have put a law enforcement officer in this position. Van Norman stated that he saw on the news that Taylor pulled a rifle on the responding WCSO.

Van Norman advised that he did not know if Taylor contacted anyone else leading up to the incident. Van Norman stated that Taylor did not speak with Tony at all, and that when it came to Taylor the only people he would have called in this type of incident were Tony and Van Norman.

Van Norman mentioned that Taylor was always very proud of his daughters from his first marriage, and there never appeared to be any type of incidents where Taylor had such a bad [REDACTED] response. Van Norman told SA Rammel that Taylor and Jessica had only been married for a few months and that Van Norman did not know why Taylor went so "head over heels" for Jessica, but that it had been nothing but issues between her and Taylor. Van Norman advised that he does not know what happened over the weekend between Taylor and Jessica leading up to the incident, but Taylor kept saying that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Jessica and whatever happened between them "put him (Taylor) over the edge". Van Norman stated that he had never met Jessica, but only knew a few things from speaking with Taylor, which Van Norman described as all being "bad". Van Norman expressed his issues with Jessica receiving all of Taylor's benefits because they were still married, and that Van Norman believed everything should go to Taylor's kids. Van Norman expressed that he had a great relationship with Taylor's family outside of Jessica, and that they all seem to hold Jessica at least partially responsible for Taylor's death.

Van Norman ended the conversation by reading a few of the messages sent back and forth between him and Taylor (the same messages described in IR 26). Van Norman then sent all the messages to SA Rammel. Van Norman explained that he does not have any ill-will towards the WCSO and that Van Norman hopes that SA Rammel's investigation is able to show whether the shooting was valid or not.

Van Norman advised that he would remain available in the event that SA Rammel had any additional questions. SA Rammel also informed Van Norman that he was free to contact SA Rammel if Van Norman had any questions or concerns moving forward, and that SA Rammel would provide as much information as he could.

The conversation was then concluded.

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. It is suggested that the full recording be reviewed to clarify any content or contextual questions regarding the information from the interview.

#### **Attachments:**

Attachment # 01: robert van norman interview (2) 2024-07-01

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