



**Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Prosecutor Summary**

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



To: Dennis Watkins, Trumbull County Prosecutor
Cc: SAS Charles Moran, Special Agent Supervisor, Ohio BCI
From: SA Joseph Goudy, Special Agent, Ohio BCI
Date: April 1, 2025
Involves: Jason A. Cain
Case Title: Officer Involved Critical Incident - 3487 Belmont Avenue,
Youngstown, Ohio, 44505
BCI Case Numbers: Special Investigations (SIU): 2024-3954
Crime Scene (CSU): 2024-3954
Cyber Crime (CCU): 2024-3954
BCI Laboratory: 24-39209

INVESTIGATIVE REQUEST

On Monday, December 16, 2024, Captain Ray Buhalla of the Liberty Township Police Department requested the assistance from the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation's (BCI) Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Crime Scene Unit (CSU) in conducting an independent investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding an officer-involved critical incident. The incident reportedly occurred on December 16, 2024, in the area of 3487 Belmont Avenue, Liberty Township, Ohio and resulted in the death of Jason A. Cain.

PREFACE

This report serves as a synopsis of the investigation into the December 16, 2024 officer-involved shooting in Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio. This report only summarizes the information that the investigative team determined to be the most useful in achieving an overall understanding of what occurred in this incident. Every fact and detail are not presented in this summary report. Therefore, it is recommended that each individual report from which this document is derived be read in order to obtain a complete understanding of this investigation. Further, audio and/or video recordings exist for the majority of the interviews conducted, revealing further details of statements given regarding the incident.

This investigation was conducted with the purpose of determining, to the extent possible, the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident. As unbiased

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collectors of fact, the investigative team has not and will not render any opinion of the legality of officers' actions. Instead, it is anticipated that this investigation will provide the basis of information for decisions to be rendered by the appropriate authorities.

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INVESTIGATIVE TEAM

BCI Special Agent Joseph Goudy (Goudy) was assigned as the lead SIU case agent. SA Goudy received assistance in the investigation from SA Matthew Armstrong (Armstrong), SA Nicholas Valente (Valente), and SA Allison Fletcher (Fletcher). BCI Special Agents Larry Hootman (Hootman) and Chad Doran (Doran) of the Crime Scene Unit processed the scene of the incident, documenting, preserving, and collecting possible evidence. BCI Special Agent Bill Conn of the Cyber Crimes Unit conducted an extraction and analysis of the cell phones recovered from within the 2021 Jeep Cherokee. The investigation was supervised by Special Agent Supervisor Chuck Moran. Additionally, various personnel from the BCI crime laboratory performed scientific analysis on submitted items of potential physical evidence.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS

The following is a partial list of investigative activities or methods which were employed during the course of this investigation by the investigative team, in an effort to thoroughly and accurately locate and document all pertinent facts and circumstances regarding this incident:

- Recorded interview of the 1 officer who discharged his weapon
- Recorded interviews of 5 officers who were involved in the incident, at the scene, or otherwise deemed to potentially have relevant information
- Neighborhood canvass of the area surrounding the scene
- Recorded interview(s) of other subjects directly involved in the incident
- Interviews of 3 civilian witnesses to the incident
- Obtained and reviewed police reports of prior law enforcement contacts with the subject
- Obtained and reviewed open and closed-source biographical information on the involved subject, including criminal history reports, OHLEG, driving records, etc.
- Review of all available dash cameras involved in the incident
- Review of all available body cameras involved in the incident
- Review of vehicle event recorder data for the 2021 Jeep Cherokee
- Processing of the scene for potential evidence (photographing, searching, measuring, documenting, and collecting)
- 3D scans / model of incident area
- Processing of involved vehicle(s) for potential evidence
- Shooting reconstruction and trajectory analysis

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- Reviewed audio communications on the radio frequencies utilized during the incident
- Review of 911/phone communications related to the incident
- Review of dispatch/CAD records pertaining to the incident
- Reviewed phone/text records obtained via search warrant from wireless service provider
- Review of the department's reports, photographs, and investigative materials pertaining to the incident, excluding any Garrity statements or information derived from any compelled statement
- Obtained search warrants for the subject's phone and performed an analysis of the data present
- Conducted forensic laboratory examinations to include:
 1. Firearm identification testing of involved firearms, casings, and bullets
 2. Firearm operability testing
- Obtained search warrant to analyze electronic evidence, to include:
 1. Cellular phones
- Reviewed data obtained from aforementioned items of electronic evidence
- Collected and reviewed the departmental personnel files of the officers involved in the shooting, to include training and disciplinary records (if any)
- Reviewed firearm qualification and training records for involved officers
- Verified the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) certification status of the officer(s) who discharged their weapons
- Obtained the department's policies and procedures regarding use of force for prosecutorial review
- Enhancement of audio/video recordings through the assistance of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission
- Obtained a court order for medical records of Jason A. Cain
- Reviewed medical records of those injured, obtained through court order
- Reviewed EMS records pertaining to their response and the treatment administered
- Performed records checks, including LEADS and NCIC off-line search, for the vehicle(s) involved in the incident
- Reviewed tips, social media posts, and pertinent statements made in the media regarding the incident

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INCIDENT SUMMARY/OVERVIEW

On Monday, December 16, 2024, at approximately 1430 hours, the Liberty Township Police Department (LTPD) received a FLOCK alert from the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Gypsy Avenue. The alert indicated a stolen license plate on a white Jeep Cherokee, bearing Ohio license KMQ-4492. The plate was reported stolen from a Walmart parking lot in Hermitage Pennsylvania (See Hermitage Police Report #20241214M8163). After receiving the alert, LTPD officers responded to the area in which the vehicle was located by another LTPD officer, Brandon Rice (Rice), who was working a side job at a nearby bank. The vehicle was located in the parking lot of Harbor Freight, located at 3487 Belmont Avenue, Liberty Township, Ohio.

After locating the vehicle, two unmarked LTPD vehicles, driven by Captain Ray Buhalla (Buhalla) and Detective Robert Altier (Altier), arrived in the parking lot to confirm that the vehicle was in the lot. After confirmation was made, Captain Buhalla, who was driving an unmarked black 2024 GMC Yukon, made the decision to box in the Jeep Cherokee to prevent it from fleeing. The second unmarked LTPD vehicle, with Captain Buhalla, was described as a black Dodge Ram which was driven by Detective Robert Altier (Altier). Once the decision was made, additional marked LTPD units arrived in the parking lot. This is a common tactic used by law enforcement to surround a vehicle to prevent it from leaving.

As the LTPD marked units arrived in the parking lot, they proceeded to box in the Jeep Cherokee. After the LTPD vehicles got into position, officers exited their vehicles and began to give commands for the driver to exit the vehicle. At this point, the white Jeep Cherokee revved its engine and began to drive in reverse striking the front of Captain Buhalla's vehicle. After the vehicle was struck, [REDACTED] fired the first of his five gunshots, striking the Jeep in the rear window. At this point, the Jeep drove forward, it struck another LTPD vehicle driven by Officer Nick Ryan (Ryan). As the Jeep continued forward, dash camera video shows that [REDACTED] walked behind the Jeep and fired four more rounds from his duty weapon into the back window, which resulted in the driver, Jason A. Cain (Cain) being struck in the back of his head by a bullet. After the gunshots were fired, the Jeep continued straight and drove through the front of the Harbor Freight store before stopping.

At that point, LTPD officers ordered the front passenger, Hannah Tillery (Tillery) to exit the Jeep and to walk back towards them. Once Tillery was detained, LTPD officers approached the Jeep to secure it and to administer emergency first aid to the driver, Cain, until EMS arrived. After EMS arrived and provided additional emergency medical assistance to Cain, they eventually transported him to St. Elizabeth's hospital in

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Youngtown, Ohio. Cain eventually succumbed to his injuries on Friday, December 20, 2024.

In the days leading up to the incident, Captain Buhala recalled receiving a BOLO regarding Cain allegedly being in possession of stolen firearms from his (Cain's) father. In addition, Captain Buhalla recalled a second BOLO originating from Hermitage Pennsylvania. This BOLO was about Cain being in possession of the stolen license plate which happened to be on the Jeep Cherokee at the time of this incident. After the incident, it was learned that the Jeep was also reported stolen from 625 West Ridge Ave, Sharpsville, Pennsylvania, 16150. (See Sharpsville Report #20241213M2224). This was Cains ex-girlfriend's residence.

INVOLVED SUBJECT – JASON CAIN



Name: Jason Cain
DOB: 04/15/1993
SSN: [REDACTED]
Height: 5'10"
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown
Address: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Life-saving emergency measures from the gunshot wound was provided to Cain immediately after he was removed from the vehicle and secured. Cain was eventually transported to St Elizabeth – Mercy Hospital for further medical attention. On December 20, 2024, Cain had succumbed to his injuries while at St Elizabeth - Mercy Hospital in Youngstown, Ohio.

BACKGROUND

Jason A. Cain

- 31-year-old male
- Driver's license status: Valid

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- Computerized Criminal History (CCH): [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- Active Warrant: Niles Police Department

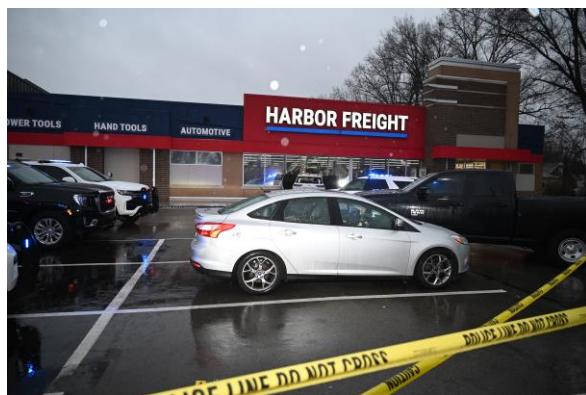
AUTOPSY REPORT

The autopsy report for the decedent (Jason A. Cain) has not been received as of this date. This will be submitted upon completion by the Mahoning County Coroner's Office.

SCENE PROCESSING AND EVIDENCE DOCUMENTED/COLLECTED

The BCI Crime Scene Unit was requested to respond to the scene of the shooting in order to document and preserve any items of potential evidence. Multiple agents responded and processed the scene, to include photographing and mapping the area, as well as the search for, documentation, and collection of items of possible evidence. Detailed crime scene reports were completed with the below information only summarizing some of the more significant findings.

Upon the arrival of the Crime Scene Unit (CSU), SA Larry Hootman (Hootman) and SA Chad Doran (Doran) began processing the scene. The CSU photographs below depict the secured scene.



(Image #1)



(Image #2)

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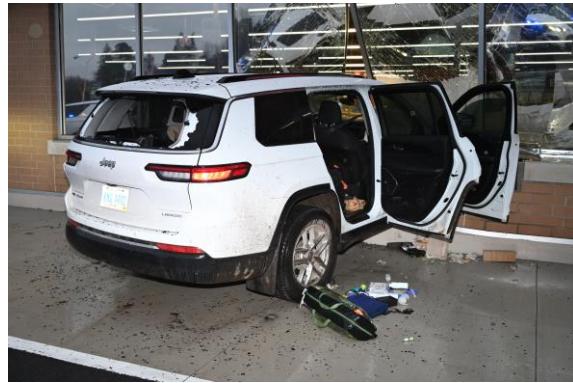
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(Image #3)



(Image #4)

For further information, please refer to the report titled, “2024-12-16: Initial Scene Processing (IRW-4).”

BCI LABORATORY ANALYSIS

The actual reports should be consulted as the following synopsis does not include many of the details from the full reports.

The BCI Firearms Section performed an analysis of the officers' firearms, as well as the firearm-related evidence collected from the scene, vehicles, and autopsies (casings and bullets). By comparing evidentiary cartridge casings/projectiles to known standards from each weapon, identifications were able to be made as to which casings/projectiles were fired from each firearm. Of the casings/projectiles recovered, the following identifications were made:

SUBMITTED ITEMS

Matrix Item #	Lab Item #	Description
001	1	One (1) fired 9mm Luger cartridge case
002	2	One (1) fired 9mm Luger cartridge case
003	3	One (1) fired 9mm Luger cartridge case
004	4	One (1) fired 9mm Luger cartridge case
005	5	One (1) fired bullet jacket
016	6	One (1) Glock 9mm Luger semi-automatic pistol, model 45, serial number [REDACTED] one (1) magazine, and seventeen (17) 9mm Luger cartridges
017	7	One (1) fired bullet
018	8	One (1) fired bullet
021	9	One (1) lead core fragment
023	10	One (1) fired bullet
025	11	One (1) fired 9mm luger cartridge case
028	12	One (1) copper fragment and five (5) lead fragments

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FINDINGS

Item Description	Comparison	Conclusion
Item #6: Glock pistol	N/A	Operable
	Items #1-4 and 11: Five (5) fired 9mm Luger cartridge cases	Source Identification
	Items #5, 7, 8, and 10: One (1) fired bullet jacket and three (3) fired bullets	Source Identification

Item Description	Comparison	Conclusion
Item #9: One (1) lead core fragment	N/A	Unsuitable [^]

Item Description	Comparison	Conclusion
Item #12: One (1) copper fragment and five (5) lead fragments	N/A	Unsuitable [^]

CONCLUSION

█████████████ duty weapon (lab item #6) was found to be operable. ██████████ duty weapon was conclusively linked to five cartridge casings (Lab items #1-4 and 11) found at the scene along with one fired bullet jacket and three fired bullets (lab items #5,7,8, and 10). Lab item #12, the one copper fragment and five lead fragments that were originally removed from the brain of Jason Cain during the autopsy was found to be unsuitable for testing.

WITNESSES

This section contains information about witnesses that were interviewed after the incident.

HANNA TILLERY (PASSENGER IN JEEP)

Hanna Tillery was the front seat passenger of the Jeep at the time of the incident. The interview was audio and video recorded on December 16, 2024, at the Liberty Township Police Department.

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

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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.

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 that 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

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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 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 that 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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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.

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

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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.

For further information, please refer to the report titled, "2024-12-16: Witness Interview – Hanna Tillery (OICI-19 CivilWithIntRpt-1)."

ANDREW CHAPMAN (MANAGER OF HARBOR FREIGHT)

Mr. Chapman stated that he was the On-Duty Manager at the time of the incident in question. Mr. Chapman stated that one of his employees, Princess Garcia, stated over the store radio that there was some type of police activity in the front parking lot. Mr. Chapman stated that he looked out the front store window which faces west into the parking lot and observed police officers approaching a vehicle in the parking lot with their weapons drawn. At that time, the vehicle then started moving and ramming into the police cars. Mr. Chapman then stated that he yelled at his employees to get back, and they began to run to the rear of the store. Mr. Chapman further stated he was running toward the rear of the store, he heard a loud crash, looked back and saw the vehicle crashing through the front of the store. Mr. Chapman stated that he did not hear any gunshots. Mr. Chapman stated that he stayed at the rear of the store until contacted by the police.

SARAH McALLISTER (ASSISTANT MANAGER OF HARBOR FREIGHT)

Ms. McAllister stated that she was the Assistant On-Duty Manager at the time of the incident in question. Ms. McAllister stated that she walked to the front store window upon hearing the radio message of police activity in the front parking lot. Upon approaching the front window, she heard Mr. Chapman yelling "run", and she started running to the rear of the store. At about the same time, she heard what sounded like three gunshots and then a loud crash. Ms. McAllister stated she looked back and saw the vehicle crashing through the front of the store.

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LINDY NERI (STORE ASSOCIATE OF HARBOR FREIGHT)

Ms. Neri stated that she was seated in her car in the front parking lot, which was parked directly west of the subject vehicle. Ms. Neri stated that she was on the phone talking when she noticed a bunch of police cars pulling up and surrounding the car next to hers and police officers getting out of their cars with their guns drawn. Ms. Neri then stated that at that time she crouched down in her front seat to take cover. Ms. Neri stated that shortly afterward, crouching down, she heard five to six gunshots. Ms. Neri stated that she waited several minutes before she leaned up and looked out her passenger window and saw that the subject vehicle had crashed into the front of the store.

PRINCESS GARCIA (STORE ASSOCIATE OF HARBOR FREIGHT)

Ms. Garcia stated that she was looking out the front window of the store, as described in Mr. Chapman's statement, when she saw a white Jeep pull into the parking lot and park. Ms. Garcia further stated that shortly after the Jeep parked, a bunch of police cars pulled up with their lights on and surrounded the Jeep. The police got out of their cars with their guns drawn. Ms. Garcia stated that she announced on the store radio what was going on. She then started backing away from the window and started to run to the back of the store when she heard gunshots. She then saw the white Jeep crash through the front of the store. Ms. Garcia stated that she stayed at the rear of the store until contacted by the police.

ROBERT ALEXANDER (SUPERVISOR AT HARBOR FREIGHT)

Mr. Alexander stated that he heard the message over the store radio and looked out the front store window as described in Mr. Chapman's statement, Mr. Alexander stated that he saw the white Jeep back into a police car and then saw the police car hit the front of the white Jeep. Mr. Alexander stated at this time he started to run to the rear of the store when he heard five- or six-gun shots and then saw the white Jeep crash through the front of the store. Mr. Alexander stated that he stayed at the rear of the store until contacted by the police.

For further details, please refer to the report titled, "2024-12-16: Neighborhood Canvass-3487 Belmont Avenue (OICI-18 NeighborhoodCan-1)."

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INVOLVED OFFICER INTERVIEW

The following paragraphs is the officer's account of his actions pertaining to this incident and discharging his weapon. More detailed accounts can be found by reviewing the recordings of the interview.

[REDACTED]

On the day of the incident, [REDACTED] stated that while he was at the LTPD station at the start of his shift, he conducted roll call for the shift officers. It was during that time that they received the Flock alert to the stolen Jeep Cherokee at Belmont Avenue and Gypsy. [REDACTED] stated he was originally planning on staying at the LTPD to conduct administrative duties until the Flock alert came across. At that time, [REDACTED] stated that everyone ran out of the LTPD station to respond to the area of the Flock alert.

[REDACTED] stated that Officer Brandon Rice noticed the stolen Jeep, while working a side job at Premier bank, parked in the lot of the Harbor Freight. When they got into the area, he heard Captain Buhala mention boxing the vehicle in to avoid a pursuit. After [REDACTED] arrived in the area, additional units arrived in the area and got into position waiting for the go ahead to move in. Shortly thereafter, [REDACTED] stated he heard Captain Buhala say to move in and box in the vehicle.

At this point, [REDACTED] described the locations of where the responding units were in relation to the stolen Jeep. [REDACTED] stated that Officer Nick Ryan (Ryan) and Detective Robert Altier (Altier) were directly in front, facing the stolen Jeep, while Captain Buhala was directly behind it. [REDACTED] stated that he positioned his LTPD vehicle next to Captain Buhala's on the passenger side and Officer Christian Thoma's (Thoma) LTPD vehicle was on Captain Buhala's driver's side. He further stated that he eventually noticed Officer Rice's LTPD vehicle on his [REDACTED] passenger side.

[REDACTED] stated that after he got into position, he immediately exited his vehicle to get back and behind the pillars of his vehicle, "in case any bullets start flying" (21:30). [REDACTED] stated that he learned that tactic from CQB training. After [REDACTED] exited his vehicle, he stated he was giving the driver of the stolen Jeep commands. [REDACTED] also stated that at this point, he did not know where Captain Buhala was. [REDACTED] then stated that the driver, "put the car in reverse and just rammed into Buhala's SUV, it's a GMC Yukon" (22:16).

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At this point, [REDACTED] stated:

"At this point, I knew Altier was in front over here by his truck and Nick Ryan was behind, he got out, behind his pillar of his, his vehicle. And at which point, he was ramming back towards us, and I was like {sigh} he's like, oh shit, this is not. Apparently, there was a gap enough for him to get enough motion to start ramming cars. And at that point, it was coming, the car was coming back towards us, it hit Buhala's SUV, severely, really hard. Cause I mean it shook everything, it was loud as hell. At which point, I didn't, I was thinking he was trying to come back towards us, to get through us, UNINTELLIGIBLE shit, this guy's gonna run me over, I fired once. In which point, the car started going forward and hit, I thought initially he hit both the cars in front. Apparently, from watching the video, he only hit Nick Ryan's car. I don't know how he missed Altier's car. But I seen Nick Ryan's car getting launched. Well, I had no clue where Nick Ryan was. Last I knew him to be was behind his vehicle. So, I'm thinking, shit, he's gonna kill this kid. I didn't know where Ray was, Captain Buhala was. Here, I hear he was still inside his vehicle, but I didn't know that because his tinted windows (22:28).

[REDACTED] continued by saying how all the officers were giving verbal commands to the driver of the stolen Jeep. [REDACTED] further stated that he believed they did not hear each other giving the commands. This was his understanding after reviewing the BWC video prior to the interview. [REDACTED] stated that he observed the stolen Jeep angled towards Officer Ryan's vehicle. At that point, [REDACTED] stated he moved forward because the stolen Jeep continued to ram the other LTPD vehicles around it. [REDACTED] stated, "I was like, I don't know where my fellow cops are, he's going to kill these guys." (24:09) [REDACTED] further described the scene as the parking lot being filled with people and it being 3:00 in the afternoon. [REDACTED] stated, "And then I step forward, and I fired again." (24:29). [REDACTED] described how the stolen Jeep was angled facing southeast.

[REDACTED] then described hearing the engine revving by saying,

"All of a sudden you hear the gas rev, I mean, somebody, someone stomped the gas pedal, loud as hell and the car shot, like shot forward straightened out and went right into the building" (24:44).

[REDACTED] then described the actions they took after the vehicle drove into the building. He stated that a ballistic shield was obtained, and the female was removed from the stolen Jeep and secured in an LTPD vehicle. Furthermore, [REDACTED] stated that emergency medical treatment was provided for the driver. [REDACTED]

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stated that when Detective Sergeant Schuster arrived on scene, Captain Buhala told him to get [REDACTED] away from the scene. Just before leaving the scene, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated that he was having trouble holstering his duty weapon due to the light falling off and into the holster. This prevented the gun from initially being secured inside the holster.

SA Goudy asked [REDACTED] to describe how the Flock alerts were typically received. He stated that they would receive an alert on their phones via an application which would indicate license plates coming back with active warrants or as stolen. He further stated that this particular alert came from the area of Belmont Avenue and Gypsy Avenue in Liberty Township.

When [REDACTED] was asked to describe the LTPD's agency approach to Flock alerts involving stolen vehicles, he stated it depended on the situation. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated that they would initially try to locate the vehicle first and establish the appropriate plan to safely conduct a felony stop. [REDACTED] was asked if the approach taken on the day of the incident aligned with the agency training regarding this matter. He stated that it did and briefly described the method again. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated that due to how the LTPD vehicles were positioned, he was surprised that the stolen Jeep was able to maneuver around the way it did.

SA Goudy asked [REDACTED] when he fired his first gunshot. [REDACTED] replied:

"It wasn't until he started ramming the cars and he had hit Buhala's vehicle really hard and knocked it. I, and I, I, I honestly at that point, even when he was ramming, I'm like, shit, he's gonna come back, run us over, push us outta the way. And then, then I fired and then he decided to go forward and started ramming forward after I'd fired" (29:12).

[REDACTED] stated he was near the rear quarter panel of his LTPD vehicle when he fired the first gunshot.

[REDACTED] continued to describe his actions after firing his first gunshot. He stated:

"And then the vehicle started ramming forward and I seen it hit the marked cruiser, which would been Officer Nick Ryan's cruiser and launched that. And I had, last I knew Nick Ryan to be, was behind his vehicle, like, we're trained, this is how we do the vehicle stuff. I'm like, shit. Did he get out of the way? Is he, you know, I knew Altier was behind his truck, but I, I, at which point I seen

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Altier, I don't even know where Altier went. I seen people like running just to for cover" (30:17).

[REDACTED] stated that his sight picture during the first gunshot was the rear window of the stolen Jeep. Furthermore, he added that it was consistent with the CQB training he has had. [REDACTED] described more of the training, which consisted of shooting into vehicles and the effect it would have on the bullet trajectory.

[REDACTED] was asked when he fired the next four gunshots into the Jeep. He stated that it was after the stolen Jeep rammed into Officer Ryan's LTPD vehicle. At this point, [REDACTED] stated he began to move forward towards the stolen Jeep.

[REDACTED] stated:

"I was looking right at the vehicle, and I was trying to put my rounds right where the driver would be. The driver's seat area would be, trying to eliminate the threat before he ran one of the cops over or ran anybody over and killed anybody" (32:43).

[REDACTED] was asked if he was able to see into the vehicle, to which he stated that he was not able to due to the tint on the back window. He was then asked if he heard anyone yelling from inside the stolen Jeep, he stated that he did not hear anything coming from within the stolen Jeep. [REDACTED] was asked what he was able to hear during the incident, he replied:

"Cars getting rammed, smashed, loud and then after I fired, moved up and fired again, I heard the gas, somebody, I see somebody 'cause I mean him or I heard the gas pedal be, somebody stomped it to the ground and then the motor revved like super high and then the car just shot, but his wheels were cut so it sh, it was facing at an angle south, the wheel, so it, it shot, it turned to the left, straightened out, went right into the building" (33:22).

SA Goudy asked [REDACTED] if he was near any sort of cover while he was moving forward towards the stolen Jeep. He replied:

"I think I was moving. I moved up trying to just stop the threat before anybody got hurt by him. Which I probably shouldn't have stepped outta cover, but I was trying to, like, think if my coworkers were about to be killed by this guy" (34:10).

[REDACTED] was asked if he knew where the other officers were at the time when he fired the last four gunshots. He replied:

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"No. As last I knew, they were behind their vehicles from cover like we trained to do. And it wasn't until, you know, watching the video I seen that some people had done some stuff that not really what we trained to do" (35:30).

██████████ was asked if his actions were consistent with his training, he replied that they were. Furthermore, ██████████ added:

"...I was unaware that Nick Ryan came around his passenger side and ran, I guess out into the open right where the car could have either shot, UNINTELLIGIBLE shot, he ran all the way to Thoma's cruiser. I thought he was still there. We don't do that. If you run to cover, you stay behind cover. I mean, he put himself, I mean, I'm not trying to bash him, but he exposed himself and I never saw that. I, I, last I knew he was behind his vehicle. And when his vehicle got hit, I didn't know where the hell he was, if he got knocked, if he jumped out of the way or what he did" (35:49).

At this point, ██████████ stated that Officer Rice told him while on scene that if he ██████████ did not move forward, he (Officer Rice) would have fired also. ██████████ stated that at the time of the incident, he was not aware of Officer Rice's location. ██████████ stated that he did not know the locations of Captain Buhala, Officer Ryan, and Detective Altier. ██████████ mentioned again how he did not know Captain Buhala's location, as to whether or not he was still inside his vehicle. He stated he wasn't sure if Captain Buhala moved out of the way, got knocked down, or got hit.

██████████ was asked if, based on his training, he thought that Officer Ryan and Detective Altier were in danger, he replied:

"Yes, based on my training. I thought these two are like, shit, he's gonna kill these two. And I don't know what happened. You know, when he backed up and ran into Buhala, I didn't know where the hell Buhala went to (39:37).

██████████ was asked if there was any other option available other than the use of deadly force. He stated, "At the point he was ramming cars, and I didn't know where my officers were, I felt no" (41:18).

For further information, please refer to the report titled, "2025-02-19: Video Interview - ██████████ (OICI-22InvolvOfcInt-1)."



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WITNESS OFFICER INTERVIEWS

The following paragraphs are of each officer's account of their actions pertaining to this incident. More detailed accounts can be found by reading the separate reports written by the interviewers and by reviewing the recordings of each interview.

OFFICER BRANDON RICE – BADGE #931 – UNIT #10

On the date of the incident, Officer Brandon Rice (Rice) was working a security side job at Premier Bank which was located at 3500 Belmont Avenue in Youngstown, Ohio. Premier Bank was located just a short distance down the road from where the shooting incident later occurred.

While at the bank, Officer Rice received a notification on his personal phone for a Flock Camera hit on a stolen license plate. The notification indicated the vehicle was northbound on Belmont Avenue traveling towards Officer Rice's location. Officer Rice began looking out the front window of the bank and observed a white Jeep Grand Cherokee that matched the description of the Flock Camera hit. The vehicle was parked facing south in the parking lot of Harbor Freight and it was unknown if there were any occupants in the vehicle. Officer Rice got into his marked police cruiser and parked his vehicle in the Premier Bank drive through. From there, Officer Rice sat and observed the vehicle until additional officers arrived in the area.

A detective from LTPD was driving an unmarked police vehicle. He drove by the vehicle in the question and confirmed it was the vehicle from the Flock Camera hit. He also indicated the vehicle was occupied by two subjects. Officer Rice drove his police cruiser over to the vehicle location as additional officers arrived on scene. Officers positioned their vehicles surrounding the Jeep Grand Cherokee. This was done in an effort to prevent the subject from fleeing the scene.

One unmarked LTPD vehicle and one marked LTPD police cruiser were parked to the front of the stolen vehicle and one unmarked and three marked LTPD police cruisers were parked to the rear. Officer Rice positioned his cruiser at the rear of the subject's vehicle. Positioned on his left was [REDACTED] in his marked police cruiser. Other officers also began exiting their police vehicles and verbal commands were given to the subject to show his hands and exit the vehicle. Multiple verbal commands were given, and the subject did not respond or comply. Officer Rice was still unable to observe any of the occupants inside the vehicle.

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The subject then accelerated the vehicle in reverse and struck an unmarked police vehicle. The subject then quickly accelerated the vehicle forward. Officer Rice then heard three gunshots that sounded like “pop...pop, pop.” The stolen vehicle then accelerated forward and struck the front window of Harbor Freight. Officers approached the vehicle, and a female exited the passenger side. Upon her exit, she stated something to the effect that “you guys shot him.” The female was then detained for further investigation. Officer Rice, [REDACTED], and a detective then used a shield to approach the passenger side of the vehicle to make contact with the subject/driver. The driver was found unresponsive. Officer Rice requested medical personnel to respond, and officers began rendering aid to the subject.

When the vehicle accelerated forward, Officer Rice was concerned an officer was standing in front of the vehicle. Due to this, he feared for the safety of the other officers on scene. Officer Rice also feared for his own safety due to the nature of the incident. Officer Rice believed from the moment he received the Flock Camera hit to the time the shooting incident occurred was approximately 3-5 minutes. He then stated from the time officers “boxed in” the subject/stolen vehicle until the time of the shooting incident was approximately 15 seconds.

For further information, please refer to the report titled, “2024-12-16: Witness Officer Interview – Brandon Rice (OICI-21 UninvolOfcIntRpt-1).”

DETECTIVE ROBERT ALTIER – UNMARKED BLACK DODGE RAM

Detective Altier stated that, while he was out conducting an operation with the MCDTF, he received information regarding a FLOCK alert for a stolen vehicle in the area. The FLOCK alert indicated that there was a white Jeep Cherokee with a stolen license plate in the area and to be on the lookout. During that time, Detective Altier responded to the area where the alert came from. Detective Altier stated that Officer Brandon Rice stated over the radio that he had located the vehicle parked in the parking lot of Harbor Freight. At this point, Detective Altier made his way there.

Upon arrival in the parking lot, Detective Altier stated that as he drove by the vehicle, he confirmed the license plate with dispatch and indicated that the vehicle was tinted with two occupants. At this point Detective Altier stated that Captain Buhala asked, “you got a vest on, I said, I’m getting one on now.” (05:59 mark) Detective Altier stated that after he drove by the Jeep, he drove further down the parking lot to put his ballistic vest on. Detective Altier described his vest as to having law enforcement identifiers, such as the word “police” in large white letters. Detective Altier also stated that he had his badge hanging from around his neck.

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After Detective Altier put his vest on, he stated that Captain Buhala was asking where the other marked units were. Detective Altier then stated that Captain Buhala said, "let's just, let's just pin him in right here. We do that so we don't get into a pursuit, um, one of the things we've been talking about was to try to amp back down on the pursuits because everybody runs nowadays." (06:32 mark)

Detective Altier stated that Captain Buhala said, when all of the marked vehicles are in the area, they would all move in to pin the vehicle in and conduct a vehicle take down. As they began to move in, Detective Altier stated that he positioned his vehicle near the front of the Jeep and bumped into the vehicle to know he was close to the vehicle, while Captain Buhala pulled directly behind with his emergency lights and sirens activated. At this point, Detective Altier stated that he also had his emergency lights activated on his vehicle. Shortly thereafter, additional marked units arrived to assist.

Detective Altier stated,

"I bailed out, we do the vehicle CQB training, I bailed out, started to go behind my vehicle, Officer Ryan had pulled in parallel to me, he had already bailed out, he was positioned up behind his vehicle, I yell, coming to you, I ran up, I said behind you. I got behind him on, like, his back right shoulder. We were looking up and I said, well, we're in a real bad spot. I said we're not, we gotta get out of here. Right about that time, I heard the suspect gunning his motor, (made sound of a revving engine), I said Nick, we gotta get the hell out of here, we're in, were in a fucking bad spot, I said, I said let's go." (07:55 mark)

At this point, Detective Altier described how he moved from his previous position towards the back of his truck. During this time, he stated that he heard the Jeep striking another one of their vehicles. When Detective Altier was in view, he observed the Jeep crashing into Captain Buhala's vehicle and pushing his vehicle backwards.

Detective Altier stated that he did not know where Captain Buhala was at that moment. Detective Altier continued to describe the smashing and grinding sounds he heard caused by the Jeep crashing into the LTPD vehicles. At this point, Detective Altier stated that while he was looking for a safer place to be, he looked back to see if Officer Nick Ryan was still behind him. It was at this moment that Detective Altier became concerned about Officer Ryan's safety because he was no longer behind him. Detective Altier was concerned about Officer Ryan because he observed the Jeep crashing into and pushing Officer Ryan's vehicle. Detective Altier stated the last known position of Officer Ryan was behind the right rear side of the LTPD-marked vehicle that was being crashed into and pushed by the Jeep.

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At this point, Detective Altier described when he first noticed [REDACTED].

Detective Altier stated,

"I saw [REDACTED] I saw him up and I heard pow, and I'm like, oh fuck, whose, where's that coming from. And then I saw [REDACTED], I can actually see him shooting. And when he was shooting, the other vehicle, the suspect's vehicle was just plowing into what appeared to me, plowing into uh, another officer, Nick Ryan's vehicle. And then he, after he makes that contact and pushes that vehicle out of the way, the suspect vehicle continues to go forward, uh, smashes into the building, goes into the building." (10:10 mark)

After the vehicle smashed into the building, Detective Altier stated that the officers on scene took cover and began giving commands to the occupants of the Jeep. During this time, a female exited the front passenger seat and was ordered to walk back towards the officers. As the female approached Detective Altier, he stated that he immediately detained her and patted her down just before handing her over to another officer, so he could continue clearing the subject's vehicle. It was at this time that Detective Altier, upon the request from other officers, retrieved his task force issued ballistic shield to use as officers decided to advance on the Jeep.

Detective Altier stated that once a plan was made to advance on the Jeep, he maintained the shield as they made their approach. Detective Altier stated that when they approached the passenger side of the Jeep, he observed the subject, Cain, sitting in the driver's seat with a "large black object on his leg." Detective Altier stated that he thought it might have been a gun. He described it as to being black with tubes coming out of the front of it. After seeing the object Detective Altier believed it to be a gun, he reached in to grab the object. After retrieving the object, he moved it over to the passenger side floor area. In addition, he removed a folding knife that was clipped to Cain's belt or pocket area and moved that to the side away from him. (12:40 mark)

Detective Altier stated that they then moved over to the driver's side where they eventually began administering emergency aid to Cain. Detective Altier stated that due to the damage to the vehicle, they were not able to open the door and remove him from the vehicle. During this time, Detective Altier stated that he noticed a wound to Cain's head, at which time they began treating the wound until EMS arrived.

For further information, please refer to the report titled, "2024-12-19: Witness Officer Interview - Detective Robert Altier (OICI-21 UninvolOfcIntRpt-2)."

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CAPTAIN RAY BUHALA – BADGE #902 – UNMARKED BLACK GMC YUKON

Captain Buhala recalled that in the days preceding the officer-involved shooting he received a BOLO for the subject regarding an allegation that the subject had stolen firearms owned by his father. Captain Buhala also noted that earlier on the day of the officer-involved shooting he received another BOLO pertaining to this subject. This second BOLO put out by Hermitage Police included information about the male subject having stolen license plates from a Walmart to place on the stolen vehicle he was driving.

Leading up to the officer-involved shooting, Captain Buhala was notified of a Flock surveillance camera hit indicating the Flock camera located at Gypsy Road and Belmont Road had picked up the stolen vehicle operated by the subject. The vehicle in question was traveling from south to north into Liberty Township. This Flock camera is located approximately four city blocks from the Harbor Freight parking lot. When the Flock hit notification was sent out, a Hermitage Police Officer who disseminated the most recent BOLO relayed over the police radio to [REDACTED] that the Flock hit was for the BOLO sent out earlier that day. Captain Buhala heard this radio traffic as well.

Based on the Flock hit and the related radio traffic that followed, Captain Buhala left the police station to join the patrol officers in attempting to locate the stolen vehicle.

Captain Buhala drove directly from the police station to the scene using his police lights and sirens. Captain Buhala estimated he arrived at the Harbor Freight parking lot at approximately 1431 or 1432 hours.

As Captain Buhala arrived, he observed Officer Robert Altier (Officer Altier), who was also driving an unmarked vehicle, driving past the subject vehicle and confirmed it was the vehicle in question the officers were looking for. Captain Buhala believed Officer Altier's unmarked vehicle was a black Dodge Ram. In addition to Officer Altier, other officers present in the area at the time were [REDACTED], Officer Thoma, Officer Nick Ryan (Officer Ryan), Officer Brandon Rice (Officer Rice), and Captain Buhala himself. In total, there were two unmarked police vehicles and four marked police vehicles.

The subject vehicle was parked in a parking space towards the front of the store and occupied by two people. The subject vehicle had pulled through a parking space and parked in the space directly past and adjacent to the first space in a manner that would indicate the easiest route to exit the parking space would be for the subject to drive forward and immediately into the lane of traffic in the parking lot.

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Captain Buhala used his police radio to tell the other officers in the area that they would try and “take down” the subject vehicle while it was still in the parking lot to avoid a possible pursuit if the subject did not cooperate. Captain Buhala and the other officers formulated a plan of how to approach the subject vehicle. The plan was for Captain Buhala to first approach the subject vehicle and block its ability to back out of the parking space using his unmarked police vehicle. Officer Altier would then quickly approach the subject vehicle from the front with his unmarked vehicle so that the subject could not escape driving forward. The other officers in marked police cars would then converge on the subject’s vehicle as well. The group of officers approached the subject’s vehicle as planned, arriving within moments of each other.

Captain Buhala used police-style emergency lights while he approached and parked behind the subject. Captain Buhala parked approximately two to three feet behind the subject’s vehicle. Captain Buhala’s emergency lights included a pull-down visor light, red and blue flashing lights in the grill of the vehicle and flashing of the vehicle’s regular lights. Captain Buhala remained inside his vehicle and briefly activated his vehicle’s siren as a way of further signaling to the subject that he was law enforcement and was parked behind the subject and blocking his exit path. After pulling up behind the subject’s vehicle and blocking the subject’s path to back out of the parking space, Captain Buhala stayed seated in his vehicle. The other officers quickly pulled up and further blocked the subject’s vehicle, limiting its ability to potentially flee the scene. Captain Buhala was able to see from his position inside his vehicle that Officer Altier had also used emergency flashing lights coming from his dashboard when he approached the subject vehicle.

Officer Ryan parked his marked police vehicle to the southeast of the subject in the main driveway in front of the store near the subject vehicle. Officer Thoma parked his marked police vehicle nearby to the left/east of the subject vehicle. [REDACTED] parked his marked police vehicle facing the subject vehicle to the right of Captain Buhala. Officer Rice’s vehicle was somewhere to the southwest of the subject’s vehicle. These other officers quickly exited their vehicles and began to approach the subject vehicle on foot.

As the group of officers approached the subject vehicle, Captain Buhala observed the subject put his hands up to comply with their orders. Captain Buhala believed at that moment the subject was compliant, and the incident would end quickly with further compliance from the subject. However, the subject did not continue to listen to the officers’ orders. Rather, Captain Buhala next heard the subject’s engine begin to rev up, and the subject backed his vehicle into Captain Buhala’s vehicle, a GMC Yukon. The subject struck Captain Buhala’s vehicle with enough force to move Captain Buhala’s

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vehicle a short distance. It was clear to Captain Buhala that the subject backed into his vehicle with significantly more force than someone normally backing out of a parking space would use.

When asked how much time transpired from the moment officers exited their vehicles, approached the subject, and began giving commands to the time the subject began to back out and struck his vehicle, Captain Buhala estimated 15 to 20 seconds transpired and recalled it being a significant amount of time for the situation.

Captain Buhala stated it was daylight out at the time of this incident. Captain Buhala felt it was readily apparent to the subject that he knew he was interacting with the police at the time, as there were numerous uniformed police officers and marked police cars present at the time. Captain Buhala did not hear the subject or the passenger in the vehicle ever make any verbal statements.

After the subject had backed in and struck Captain Buhala's vehicle at a high rate of speed, the subject put his vehicle in drive and began to drive towards Officer Ryan's marked police vehicle, which was parked in front of the store. As the subject began to drive forward, Captain Buhala observed [REDACTED] out the corner of his eye to his right. Captain Buhala began to hear shots being fired at that time. Captain Buhala believed he heard around four shots fired. All the gunshots were fired in quick succession in one grouping. As the shots were being fired, the subject's vehicle traveled at a high rate of speed directly towards Officer Ryan's vehicle near the front of the store. The subject vehicle struck Officer Ryan's vehicle, continued forward, and then struck the storefront and crashed partially into the store. After crashing into the store, officers yelled commands at the subject to show his hands and exit the vehicle.

The subject did not exit the vehicle. However, the female who was seated in the front passenger seat did exit the vehicle. Captain Buhala escorted the female (known to be Hanna Tillery) away from the crashed vehicle and to the marked police vehicles. Officer Altier then retrieved a shield from his vehicle. A group of officers approached the subject vehicle while using the shield as cover. Captain Buhala believed, upon approaching the subject's vehicle, these officers found the subject with a gunshot wound to his head. As the officers approached the subject, Captain Buhala was entering the store. Upon entering the store, Captain Buhala confirmed that no one was injured inside the store.

Captain Buhala and the other officers immediately called for EMS to provide additional assistance to the subject after reaching him and learning he had an apparent gunshot injury to his head. When asked, Captain Buhala stated that he believed [REDACTED] firing his weapon was appropriate for the circumstances at the time [REDACTED]

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did so. When asked, Captain Buhala stated that he did not believe [REDACTED] would have known the location of the other officers at the time he fired. Captain Buhala added that [REDACTED] yelled out questioning where Officer Ryan was immediately after firing his weapon.

For further information, please refer to the report titled, “2024-12-16: Witness Officer Interview – Captain Ray Buhala (OICI – 21 UninvolOfcIntRpt-3).”

OFFICER NICK RYAN – BADGE #928 – LTPD VEHICLE #09

Earlier that day, a BOLO (be on the lookout) was issued for a vehicle with stolen license plates. Prior to the incident, officers received a Flock alert indicating the vehicle from the BOLO had entered the township. Officer Rice believed he had located the vehicle and Detective Altier confirmed the involved vehicle’s location and presence. Officers then set up in the area but out of view of the involved vehicle. The plan was to converge on the vehicle and box it in, so it had nowhere to go.

Once everyone was in place, Captain Buhala gave the call to “take down” the vehicle. He drove to the vehicle which was located in the parking lot in front of Harbor Freight. Det. Altier was in front of Officer Ryan in an unmarked vehicle. Det. Altier parked directly in front of the subject vehicle. Officer Ryan drove around Det. Altier with his emergency lights on and parked near the front driver side area of the subject vehicle.

Since this was a high-risk felony stop, his first goal was to get to a position of cover. Officer Ryan exited his cruiser and moved to the rear portion of his cruiser. He could hear another officer giving commands. Once there, he realized he was in a crossfire situation with officers positioned at the rear portion of the subject vehicle. He then ran past the driver’s side of the subject vehicle to the driver’s side area of Officer Christian Thoma’s vehicle. As he did so, he could see the male driver of the subject vehicle was a white male.

The subject then put the vehicle in reverse. He could hear the engine revving and saw the subject vehicle back up and strike Captain Buhala’s vehicle. At that point, he heard a gunshot. There was a brief pause, then the subject vehicle began driving away, and he heard another shot. The subject vehicle took the same path Officer Ryan had just come from. He did not see the subject vehicle strike his cruiser, but after it passed his cruiser, he could see damage on the front of his cruiser. The subject vehicle then crashed into the front of Harbor Freight.

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When he heard the gunshots, he did not know who was firing. He feared for his safety throughout the incident and explained that when the subject vehicle reversed into Captain Buhala's vehicle, they were all outside of their vehicles. He believed the subject was trying to flee and he feared for the safety of the other officers because he did not know where they were.

After the vehicle crashed into Harbor Freight, the female was given commands. He saw her exit the passenger's side of the vehicle. However, he was focused on the driver's side and was not involved in securing the female passenger. He could not see the driver's hands or body but knew the subject was not showing his hands, despite being given commands to do so.

Another officer obtained a shield and officers approached the vehicle. They indicated the subject had a visible injury. At that time, he secured his firearm and assisted with rendering aid to the subject. Officer Ryan did not know where [REDACTED] was positioned when firing because he could not see [REDACTED]. He did not know if there were other bystanders in the immediate area because he was focused on making sure he was out of the way once the subject vehicle began moving.

When asked if there was any additional information, he would like to add to his statement Officer Ryan said he wanted to reiterate "The suspect, to my best knowledge looked at me in a fully marked police uniform. I was in a fully marked police vehicle in front of his vehicle. Um, and we were giving loud verbal commands to him that, um, I feel like he would have heard from inside his motor vehicle" (18:05).

Officer Ryan said the officers were giving the subject commands for approximately 10 seconds prior to the vehicle moving in reverse. After the subject reversed into Captain Buhala's vehicle, there was a 3 – 5 second pause where he thought the subject was going to stop. Then the engine began revving again, and the vehicle took off into the front of Harbor Freight. He said all the cruisers, including the two unmarked cruisers, had emergency lights activated.

For further information, please refer to the report titled, "2024-12-16: Witness Officer Interview – Nicholas Ryan (OICI-21 UninvolOfcIntRpt-4)."

OFFICER CHRISTIAN THOMA – BADGE #930 – LTPD VEHICLE #20

Earlier that morning, he had received a flyer for a stolen license plate that had been placed on a stolen vehicle. Then, that afternoon, they received an alert from the Flock system for a white Jeep with stolen license plates which was traveling north on Belmont

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Ave. Upon viewing the photograph from the Flock alert, he realized the alert was related to the information he had received earlier in the day.

Officer Brandon Rice was working a side job in the area and informed the officers that the involved vehicle was parked in front of Harbor Freight. Captain Buhala and Detective Altier were in unmarked vehicles. Det. Altier confirmed the plate on the involved vehicle was correct. Since the vehicle had two occupants, Captain Buhala directed officers to "take down" the vehicle in the parking lot to prevent it from going out on the roadway. He explained the "take down" involved surrounding the stationary vehicle to prevent it and the occupants from escaping.

Captain Buhala approached the vehicle and parked less than 5 feet from its rear bumper. Det. Altier approached it from the front. Officer Thoma pulled up and parked along the driver's side of Captain Buhala's vehicle and at the rear of the involved vehicle. There he could see the driver's side of the involved vehicle. Officer Ryan parked on the right side of Det. Altier's vehicle and at the front of the involved vehicle. [REDACTED] parked on the passenger side of Captain Buhala's vehicle and behind the involved vehicle.

Officer Thoma exited his cruiser and pointed his firearm at the driver's side door of the involved vehicle. He could see the driver was a white male. He ordered the driver to show his hands several times. The subject looked at him and put his hands up. The subject then reached down, and the Jeep started moving backward until it struck Captain Buhala's vehicle. He ordered the driver to stop again. He then got back into his cruiser to pin the vehicle in, but he heard a gunshot and saw the Jeep starting to move forward. The Jeep then struck another cruiser, and he heard several more gunshots. Officer Thoma jumped back out of his cruiser thinking the subject was returning fire or firing at him and ran to the rear driver's side portion of his cruiser. The Jeep then made a sharp left turn and drove straight into the front of Harbor Freight. Officer Thoma then ordered the driver to show his hands, but the driver did not comply.

A female passenger exited the Jeep screaming and crying. She was apprehended by another officer. He saw Detective Altier, along with Officer Brandon Rice and [REDACTED] [REDACTED], utilizing a shield to approach the vehicle. They indicated the driver had a gunshot wound. Officer Thoma then assisted in rendering medical aid. When Officer Thoma first heard the gunshots, he did not know who was firing. He reiterated that he thought the subject was firing at him because the subject had his hands up before reaching down. He estimated 20 seconds elapsed from the time they converged on the vehicle until it began moving in reverse. He did not hear the occupants of the vehicle say anything during that time. During the incident, other officers also gave commands,

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but he was not sure which officers. He did not remember if sirens were used during the accident. Before the incident occurred, other officers mentioned the subject involved with the stolen vehicle might be armed.

For further information, please refer to the report titled, "2024-12-16: Witness Officer Interview – Christian Thoma (OICI-21 UninvolOfcIntRpt-5)."

DISPATCH-RELATED INFORMATION

The table below contains the radio data and content of the radio traffic for the transmissions believed to be most relevant to the actual shooting incident.

Date & Time	Duration	Officer Name/Radio ID
Start: 2024-12-16 14:38:01	Dur: 00:06	LTPD7891789
That FLOCK hit you just got, that's the BOLO I sent this morning about Hermitage.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:38:08	Dur: 00:03	LTPD7891065
Copy, I'm en route, I'll check Belmont.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:38:45	Dur: 00:05	LTPD7891066
Sarg, what's that plate? I can't pull my FLOCK up [unintelligible].		

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Start: 2024-12-16 14:39:00	Dur: 00:03	LTPD7891670
HMQ4492		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:39:07	Dur: 00:02	LTPD7891066
Alright, vehicle please?		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:39:11	Dur: 00:02	LTPD7891670
Newer, white Jeep Cherokee.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:39:44	Dur: 00:08	LTPD7891074
Ok, that vehicle might be over in front of Harbor Freight in the parking lot.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:40:00	Dur: 00:07	LTPD7891074
Parked next to a silver, a small silver car. I haven't seen anybody get out of it.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:40:59	Dur: 00:03	LTPD7891074
Ya it's the white one parked in front of the store I believe.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:42:00	Dur: 00:09	78 LBTP PD 91871
Radio, in front of Harbor Freight, there's a white Jeep parked next to a silver car. I believe that's it.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:42:09	Dur: 00:02	LTPD7891066
Ok, king, mary, queen.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:42:15	Dur: 00:03	LTPD7891670
Affirmative, king mary queen 4492		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:42:20	Dur: 00:05	LTPD7891066
[Unintelligible] a lot of pedestrians here just FYI.		

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Start: 2024-12-16 14:42:52	Dur: 00:08	LTPD7891066
Confirming, king mary queen 4492, occupied two times in front of Harbor Freight guys.		
Start: 2024-12-16	Dur: 00:05	LTPD7891057
Rob you got your vest here? We'll just take it while it's sitting here.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:43:24	Dur: 00:02	LTPD7891670
Cap let us know when you want us to go in.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:43:31	Dur: 00:03	LTPD7891066
I'll block it from the front Cap whenever you're ready.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:43:36	Dur: 00:03	LTPD7891057
Ya you guys can get in.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:44:15	Dur: 00:01	LTPD7891074
Shots fired.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:45:06	Dur: 00:01	LTPD7891793
Cannot see the driver.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:45:12	Dur: 00:02	Unknown
902 start a squad.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:48:19	Dur: 00:03	LTPD7891065
GSW to the suspect, head wound.		
Start: 2024-12-16 14:50:59	Dur: 00:04	LTPD7891066
Trauma medical applied to the wound. We are stabilizing, waiting on fire.		

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VIDEO RECORDINGS

The following section contains an abbreviated version of the witness and involved officers body worn camera videos, along with their assigned LTPD vehicle's dash camera video.

Body Worn Camera and dash camera video files were received from LTPD on 12-18-2024. The following is a list of the video files received:

- 📁 BrandonRice 202412161440 WFN1005222 88286630
- 📁 BrandonRice 202412161443 CAR10 363094177
- 📁 ChristianThoma 202412161436 WFN1002236 44112649
- 📁 ChristianThoma 202412161437 WFN1002236 44112650
- 📁 ChristianThoma 202412161438 Car15 207678916
- 📁 [REDACTED] 202412161437 WFN1001099 103823142
- 📁 [REDACTED] 202412161440 WFN1001099 103823143
- 📁 [REDACTED] 202412161443 CAR [REDACTED] 193653488
- 📁 NickRyan 202412161442 CAR17 354232138
- 📁 NickRyan 202412161442 WFC1152617 82840153
- 📁 NickRyan 202412161525 WFC1152617 82840154

The video files listed below were received on 12-19-2024, due to the identical file above not able to be played.

- 📁 ChristianThoma 202412161436 WFN1002236 44112649
- 📁 ChristianThoma 202412161437 WFN1002236 44112650
- 📁 [REDACTED] 202412161437 WFN1001099 103823142
- 📁 [REDACTED] 202412161440 WFN1001099 103823143

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The following video snippets were obtained from [REDACTED] dash camera video file:

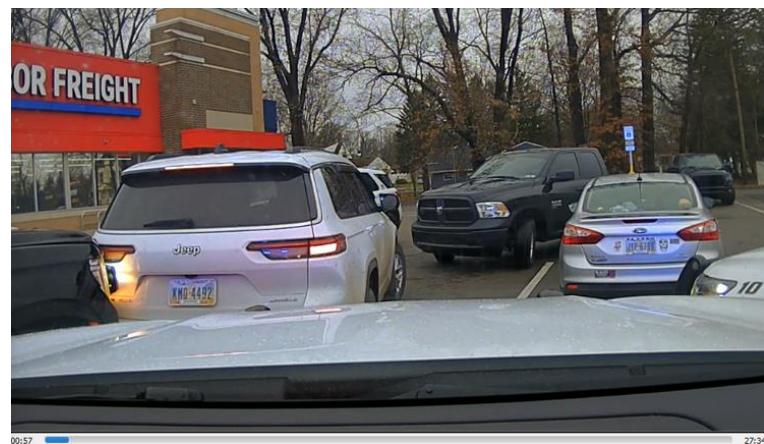
[REDACTED] 202412161443 CAR [REDACTED] 193653488

At the 00:47 mark, [REDACTED] arrived on scene positioned at an angle behind the stolen Jeep SUV. As [REDACTED]'s vehicle was coming to a stop, the Jeep had its reverse lights on and began to move in reverse. Detective Altier and Officer Ryan exited their respective vehicles.



(Image #5)

At the 00:57 mark, the Jeep SUV crashed into the black unmarked LTPD vehicle. During this time, [REDACTED] was heard yelling, "Put the car in gear, do it now."



(Image #6)

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At the 00:59 mark, as the Jeep drove forward, the first possible gunshot was heard, and a possible ballistic impact was seen on the rear window of the Jeep.



(Image #7)



(Enlarged Area)

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At the 01:02 mark, [REDACTED] moved toward the Jeep as it was driving forward. During this time, [REDACTED] fired four more gunshots in rapid succession.



(Image #8)



(Image #9)

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(Image #10)



(Image #11)

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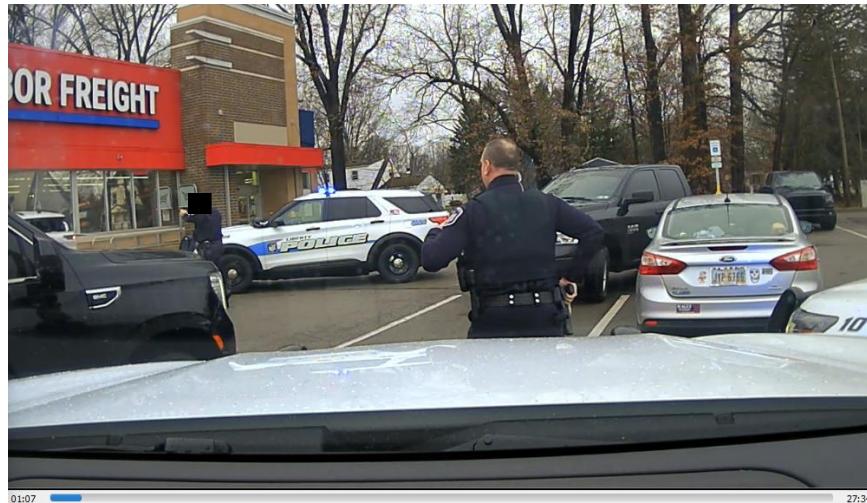


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At the 01:07 mark, the Jeep SUV crashed into the front wall of the Harbor Freight store. [REDACTED] approached the Jeep with his gun drawn and pointed in its direction. Officer Rice also moved forward toward the Jeep.



(Image #12)

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The following video snippets was obtained from Officer Brandon Rice's dash camera:

[BRANDONRICE 202412161443 CAR10 363094177](#)

At the 00:33 mark, Officer Rice arrived on scene with [REDACTED]'s LTPD vehicle just ahead of his. The stolen Jeep in a parking spot with its reverse lights activated.



(Image #13)

At the 00:47 mark, the Jeep drove forward and struck another marked LTPD vehicle. During this time, one gunshot was heard being fired.



(Image #14)

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At the 00:50 mark, [REDACTED] moved toward the Jeep with his gun drawn and fired four more gunshots, in rapid succession, into the rear window of the Jeep. At this time, the Jeep drove forward and crashed into an LTPD marked unit before crashing into the front of the Harbor Freight store.



(Image #15)

At the 00:53 mark, the Jeep crashed into the front of the Harbor Freight store. [REDACTED] walked toward the Jeep with his duty weapon pointed down in his left hand.



(Image #16)

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The following video snippets were obtained from the following dash camera video file:

[CHRISTIANTHOMA 202412161438 CAR15 207678916](#)

At the 03:59 mark, Officer Thoma arrived with the other responding LTPD units in an attempt to box in the white Jeep SUV. Officer Ryan exited his LTPD marked vehicle parked directly ahead of Officer Thoma.



(Image #17)

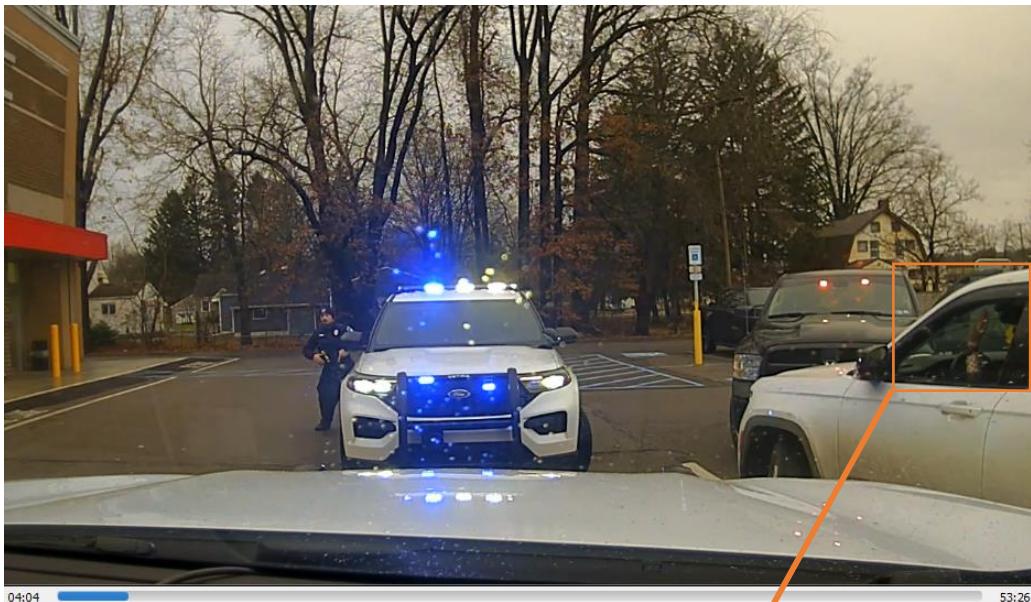
At the 04:04 mark, after the Jeep SUV drove in reverse briefly, Officer Thoma said, "Show us your hands now" multiple times, followed by "put your hands up, now!" During this time, the driver of the Jeep briefly rolled down his window and his hands were seen raised up. Immediately after, the driver put his hands back down and the window went back up. Officer Ryan began to run across to Officer Thoma's location.

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(Image #18)



(Enlarged Area)

Soon after firing his fifth and final gunshot, [REDACTED] walked toward the rear of the Jeep SUV, with his duty weapon still pointed at it, as it was driving forward and eventually crashed into the Harbor Freight store. A portion of the back window shattered as it drove forward.

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(Image #19)

For further information, please refer to the report titled, "2025-01-15: BWC/Dash Camera Video Review (OICI-16 NonOCICVidRev-1)."

**OHIO ORGANIZED CRIME INVESTIGATIONS COMMISSION (OOCIC) VIDEO REVIEW
AND TIMING CALCULATION**

SA Goudy reviewed and completed a timing analysis of the video footage recorded on the dash cameras from the LTPD vehicles on scene during the officer involved shooting incident. For this review and timing calculation, SA Goudy utilized the OOCIC video file titled 25-00005 Dash Cam Presentations. The audio waveform effect was used to help identify sounds and when they occurred within the video production, specifically when reviewing the video frame by frame.

Below is a summary of the OOCIC video review with timing calculations. The snippet photos below are labeled based on the original label numbers from the report titled, "2025-03-26: OOCIC Video Review.

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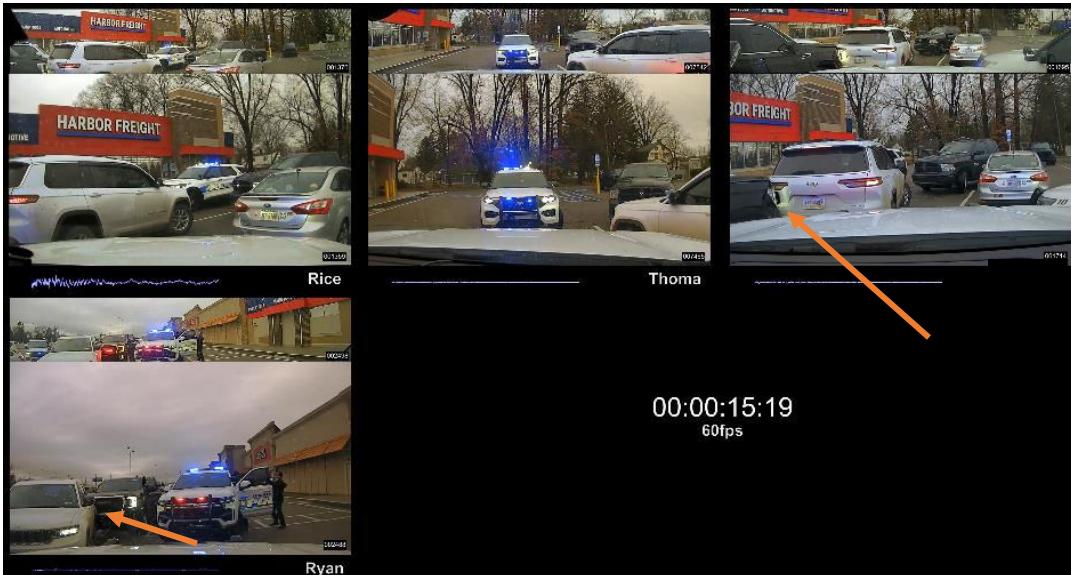


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At TC 00:0015:19 the Jeep backed into the unmarked LTPD vehicle driven by Captain Ray Buhalla (Buhalla).



(Figure 2: Sequential views from the 4 LTPD dash cameras.)

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At TC 00:00:17:03, in figure 3, a percussion sound was captured audibly on the audio waveform at frame #001766 of [REDACTED] vehicle. Four frames later (001770) a defect appeared on the back windshield of the Jeep, which was consistent with [REDACTED] slide of his gun going backwards indicating his weapon was discharged.



(Figure 3)



(Enlarged area of defect in window and slide going back on handgun)

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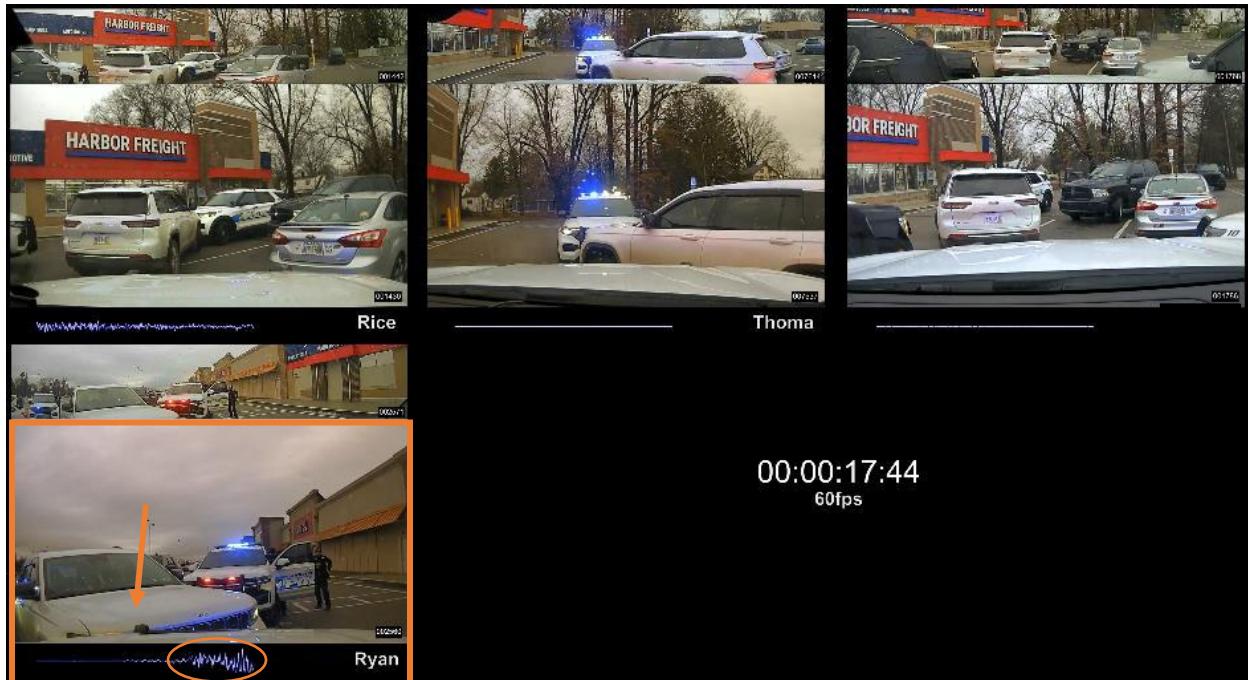


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At TC 00:00:17:44, in figure 4, a percussion sound was captured audibly on the audio waveform at frame #002560 of Officer Ryan's vehicle. This was consistent with the Jeep driving into the front left corner of the marked LTPD vehicle.



(Figure 4)

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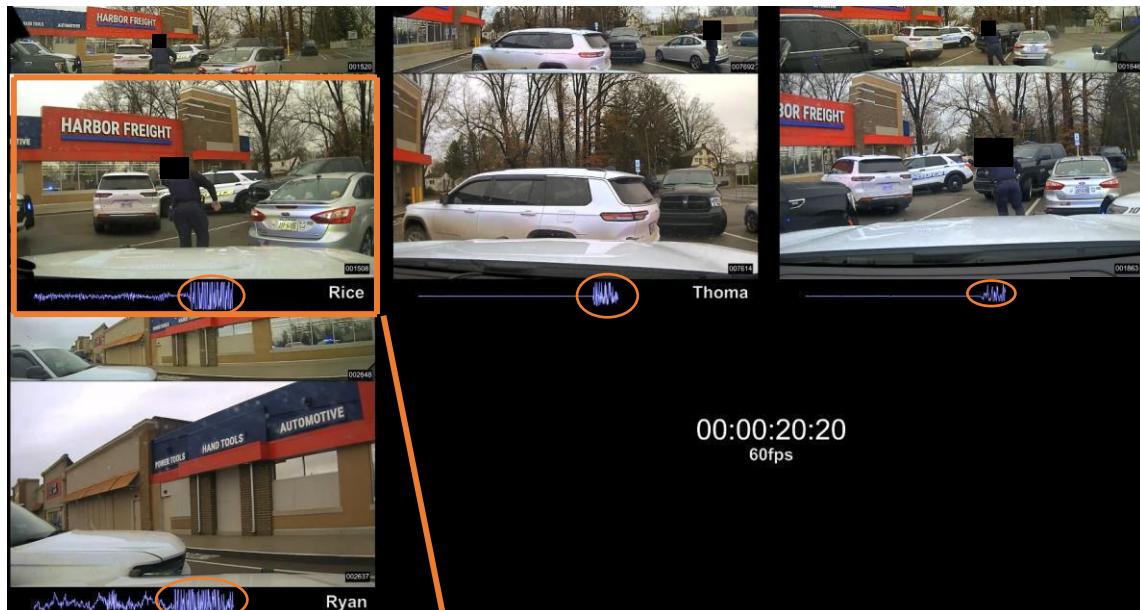


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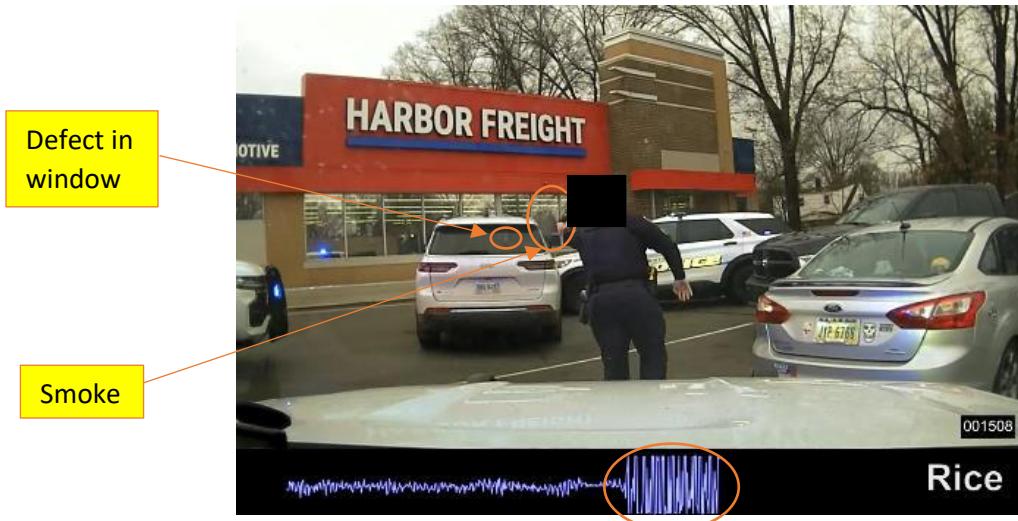


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At TC 00:00:20:20, in figure 5, a second percussion sound was captured audibly on the audio waveform at frame #001508 of Officer Brandon Rice's dash camera viewpoint. Smoke from [REDACTED]s duty weapon was observed along with another defect in the rear window of the Jeep.



(Figure 5)



(Enlarged Area)

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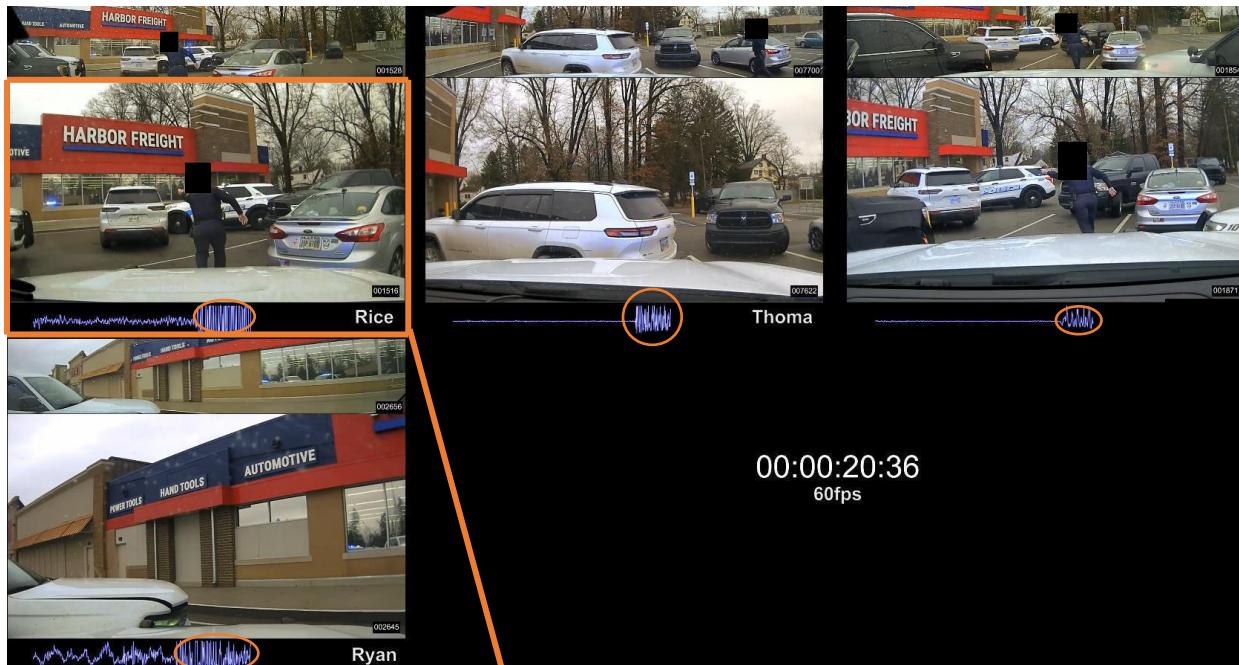


**Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Prosecutor Summary**



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

At TC 00:00:20:36, a third percussion sound was captured audibly on the audio waveform at frame #001516 of Officer Brandon Rice's dash camera viewpoint in addition to another defect in the rear window.



(Figure 6)



(Enlarged Area)

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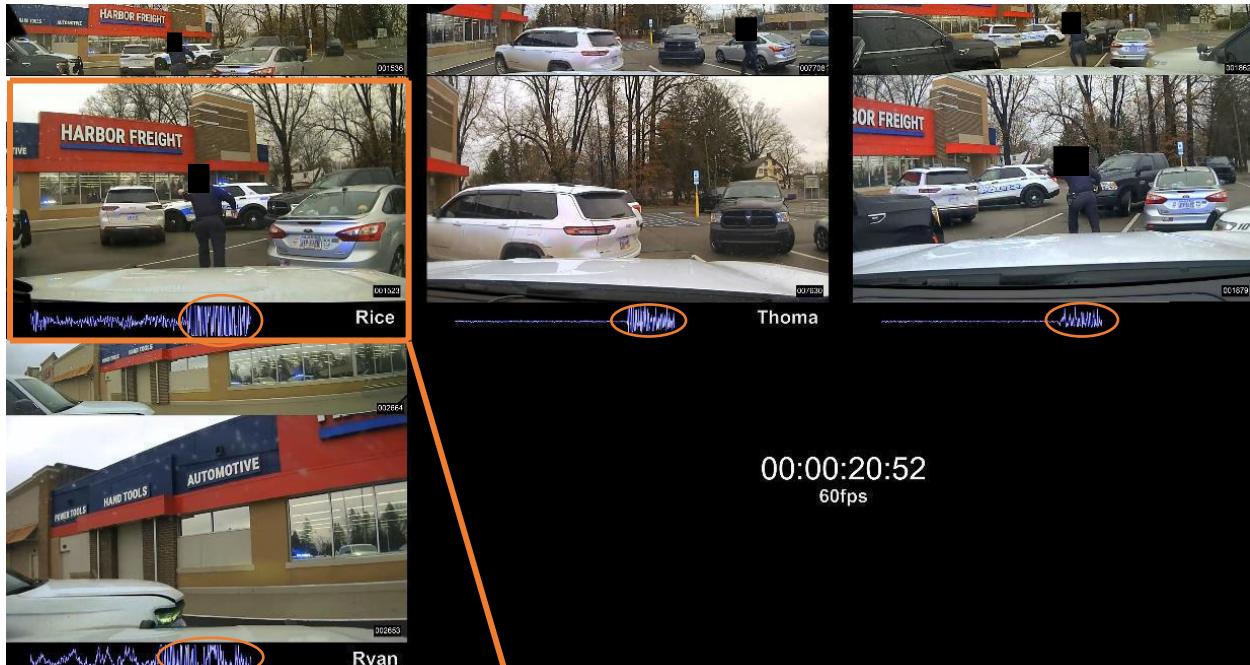


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**Officer-Involved Critical Incident – 3487 Belmont Avenue,
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At TC 00:00:20:52, a fourth percussion sound was captured audibly on the audio waveform at frame #001523 of Officer Brandon Rice's dash camera viewpoint in addition to another defect in the rear window.



(Figure 7)



(Enlarged Area)

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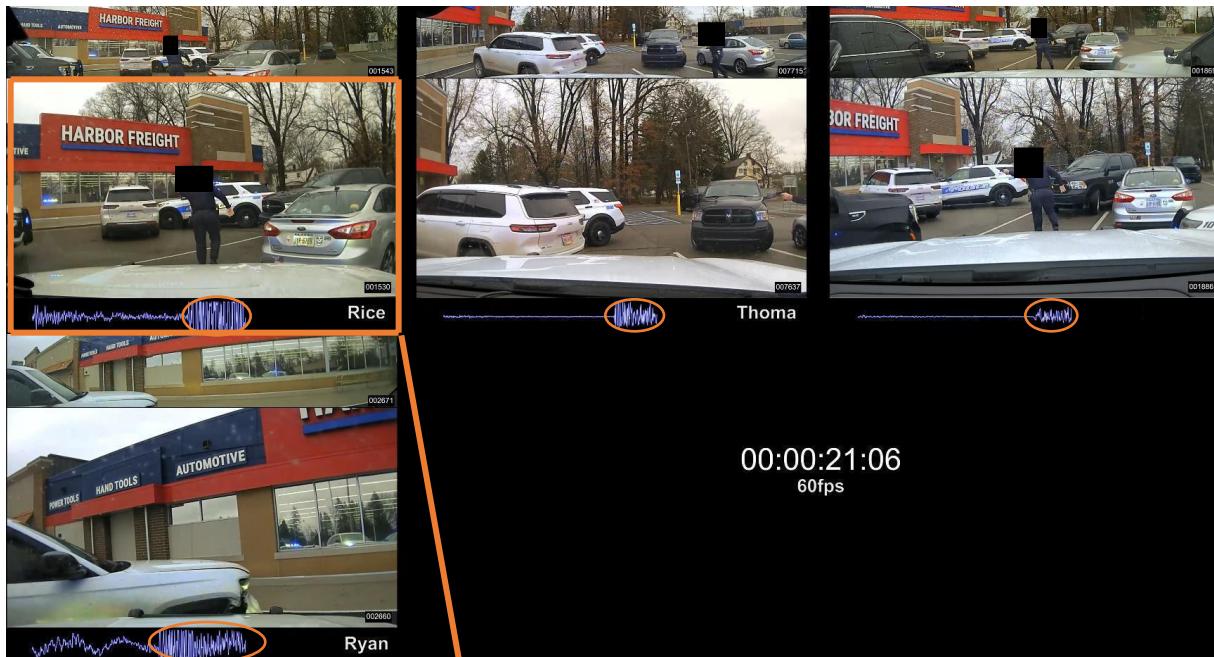


**Ohio Attorney General's Office
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**Officer-Involved Critical Incident – 3487 Belmont Avenue,
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At TC 00:00:21:06, a fifth percussion sound was captured audibly on the audio waveform at frame #001530 of Officer Brandon Rice's dash camera viewpoint. A defect appeared at the seam of the lower portion of the rear window and the tailgate. A portion of the rear window crumbled.



(Figure 8)



(Enlarged Area)

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Soon after the last percussion, the Jeep drove into the front wall of the Harbor Freight store.

Based on the data gathered from this video production, the approximate amount of time elapsed between significant events was calculated:

- 1.73 seconds elapsed from the first significant event (frame #00:00:15:19) of the Jeep backing into the black unmarked LTPD vehicle to when the first gunshot occurred (TC 00:00:17:03).
- 0.68 Seconds elapsed from when the first gunshot was fired to when the Jeep struck Officer Ryans vehicle (TC00:00:17:44)
- 3.34 seconds elapsed from when the Jeep stuck Officer Ryans vehicle to the fifth gunshot (TC 00:00:21:06).

The table below depicts the time that elapsed between the significant events:

Back Into Vehicle	1st Gunshot	Drive into Vehicle	2nd Gunshot	3rd Gunshot	4th Gunshot	5th Gunshot
Frame 00:00:15:19	Frame 00:00:17:03	Frame 00:00:17:44	Frame 00:00:20:20	Frame 00:00:20:36	Frame 00:00:20:52	Frame 00:00:21:06
Start	1.73 Seconds	0.68 Seconds	2.59 Seconds	0.26 Seconds	0.26 Seconds	0.23 Seconds
Total Time Elapsed						
5.75 Seconds						

For further information, please refer to the report titled, “2025-03-26: OOCIC Video Review, and the timing calculations attached to that report.

CONCLUSION

This officer involved shooting incident involved LTPD [REDACTED] Based upon the physical evidence, video and audio recordings, statements from law enforcement officers, statements from witnesses and the totality of the investigation, it was concluded that LTPD officers received a FLOCK alert regarding the stolen Jeep Cherokee being in the area.

When [REDACTED] along with the other LTPD officers arrived in the parking lot of Harbor Freight (3487 Belmont Avenue, Liberty Township, Ohio), where the Jeep was located, they attempted to surround the vehicle to prevent it from leaving. After several attempts were made to gain compliance from the driver of the Jeep, the Jeep tried to

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flee from the responding officers. In doing so, the Jeep crashed into two LTPD vehicles in the process. Responding officers were standing outside of their LTPD vehicles during this incident as they attempted to get the driver to comply with verbal commands.

It was at this time that, according to [REDACTED] interview, he felt officers' lives were in danger in addition to the general public that was in and around the parking lot of the plaza. It was at this point when [REDACTED] fired his duty issued Glock 45, 9mm pistol five times, striking Cain once in the back of the head.

The incident was visually and audibly captured on all the body worn cameras and dash cameras utilized by the responding officers. [REDACTED] body worn camera and dash camera visually captured the shooting portion of the incident. The number of shots fired by [REDACTED] was determined by the number of fired cartridge casings located at the scene along with the video footage.

This conclusion was based on the totality of the investigation. Throughout the investigative process, investigators continually evaluated the physical evidence, in conjunction with audio and video recordings, forensic findings, witness statements, involved officer statements and other information to ensure all relevant facts and circumstances surrounding this incident were obtained.

This investigation was focused on the officer involved shooting incident and the law enforcement use of force that led to the death of Jason A. Cain.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The preceding information comprises only a portion of facts and circumstances collected during the investigation of the officer-involved critical incident. For further review of specific information or documentation collected during the investigation, please refer to the individual reports and documents from which this summary was derived. Any questions regarding the content or context of the information contained in this document can be directed to the attention of Special Agent Joseph Goudy. SA Goudy can be reached via email at joseph.goudy@OhioAGO.gov or by telephone, at 614-208-3009.

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