



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



2022-2876

Officer-Involved Critical Incident- Travis Hellinger

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer

Involves: Officer Christopher Bates

Activity Date: 12/21/2022

Activity Location: 100 Dillmont Drive, Columbus, Ohio

Authoring Agent: SAS Scott Stranahan

Narrative:

On Wednesday, December 21, 2022, at approximately 0910 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent Supervisor (SAS) Scott Stranahan conducted an interview Officer Christopher Bates of the Delaware Police Department. Officer Bates is a member of the Delaware County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team. On the morning of December 20, 2022, the Delaware County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team was requested to assist the Marion County Sheriff's Office with a search warrant in LaRue, Ohio. Officer Bates was present during this operation. The interview took place at 100 Dillmont Drive, Columbus, Ohio. The interview was audio recorded.

SAS Stranahan began the interview by identifying himself and explained that BCI was requested to conduct an investigation into the Officer Involved Critical Incident that occurred in LaRue, Ohio the previous day. Officer Bates stated he was present during this operation. Officer Bates stated he has worked for the Delaware Police Department since 2011 and has been assigned to the Delaware County SWAT Team since 2014. SAS Stranahan asked Officer Bates to describe his involvement in this incident.

Officer Bates stated on December 20, 2022, he was assigned to the Delaware SWAT Team MaxxPro armored vehicle. Officer Bates stated, the team he was assigned to was a perimeter team to provide additional manpower if necessary. Officer Bates stated, the Marion County SWAT Team's assignment was Tavis Hellinger's (Hellinger) residence, 256 N. Swain, LaRue, Ohio. The Delaware County SWAT Team members in their Bearcat vehicle were assigned to the area of Hellinger's pole barn and the team in the vehicle Officer Bates was in was given a perimeter assignment. Officer Bates stated, the MaxxPro vehicle his team was in, was unable to drive onto Hellinger's property. Officer Bates stated his team had a "backside view" of



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Hellinger's property. Officer Bates stated upon arrival on scene, his team remained inside the MaxxPro vehicle and awaited further instructions.

Officer Bates stated while inside the SWAT vehicle, there was difficulty receiving radio transmissions. Officer Bates stated, the assistant driver would often relay the radio traffic to other members of team inside the vehicle.

Officer Bates heard radio traffic stating a suspect (Hellinger) was on the railroad tracks behind Hellinger's residence. Officer Bates stated from their vantage point, they were able to see Hellinger on the railroad tracks. Officer Bates stated Hellinger was facing a group of SWAT operators while Hellinger was on the railroad tracks. Officer Bates did not know the identity of the SWAT operators on the railroad tracks but thought those operators were from the Marion County Team.

Officer Bates observed Hellinger pointing a flashlight toward the group of SWAT operators. Officer Bates stated from his vantage point he was unable to see if the light source was an actual flash light or a weapon mounted light system. Officer Bates estimated his vehicle was approximately 50 yards from Hellinger's location at that point. Officer Bates stated there was also foliage in the area that obscured their view.

Officer Bates heard radio traffic that a group of SWAT operators were following Hellinger on the railroad tracks. Officer Bates stated moments later, Hellinger and the SWAT operators moved out of their view. A short time later, Officer Bates heard additional radio traffic indicating that shots had been fired. Officer Bates stated from his vantage point he did not observe any officers discharge their weapons.

Officer Bates was unable to provide additional details regarding this incident and the interview was concluded.

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