



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



2025-1603
Officer Involved Critical Incident - 4482 Hampton Woods
Ct., Columbus, Ohio 43230 (L)

Investigative Activity: Uninvolved Officer Interview
Involves: SWAT Officer Robert Vass
Activity Date: 05/20/2025
Activity Location: CPD SWAT Headquarters
Authoring Agent: SA Eric Runyan

Narrative:

On May 20, 2025 at approximately 0420 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agents Ryan Scheiderer (SA Scheiderer) and Eric Runyan (SA Runyan) obtained a recorded statement from Columbus Division of Police (CPD) Officer Robert Vass (Officer Vass) regarding the May 19, 2025 fatal shooting incident between CPD officers and Jerry Smith (Smith) that occurred at 4482 Hampton Woods Court in Columbus, Ohio. The contact with Officer Vass took place at the CPD Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) building. Prior to providing a statement, Officer Vass was notified that BCI was conducting a criminal investigation into the shooting incident, and he confirmed he would provide a voluntary statement. The following is a summation of the statement of Officer Vass and additional details can be found in the attached audio recording.

On May 19, 2025, Officer Vass (Badge #1780 and radio call sign 546) was assigned to CPD SWAT Red Team. Officer Vass was on duty at the CPD SWAT Headquarters at the time of the incident. Officer Vass and other SWAT officers were notified by CPD K9 Officer Brian Carter (Officer Carter) to monitor their radio on CPD Channel one (1). Officer Carter advised the SWAT officers there was an ongoing domestic dispute during which shots had already been fired at responding CPD officers. Officer Vass received a call from the supervisor on scene of the incident requesting that SWAT respond. Officer Vass drove Armored Rescue Vehicle One (ARV-1) to the scene. Officer Vass refers to ARV-1 as BearCat 1 during his interview. Officer Vass placed ARV-1 initially in front of the door until ARV-2 was ready to move into position. Office Vass later moved ARV-1 to the southwest corner of the residence. Officer Vass stated he could see all the windows and doors. Officer Vass stated over the radio he could see Smith with a gun in his left hand attempting to break the window with the handgun. Officer Vass was relieved of his role driving ARV-1. Officer Vass staged on the south side of the residence with other Red Team officers preparing for emergency entry into the

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residence, if needed. Officer Vass was assigned as the “flashbang and penetrator” of the emergency entry team. Officer Vass was advised Smith was speaking with negotiators and Smith had made statements that he would come out but then stated he wasn’t going to come out. Officer Vass was advised Smith had told negotiators if police entered the residence, Smith would kill the female inside the residence and himself. Officer Vass advised he heard shots being fired from inside the residence toward officers. Officer Vass stated from his location to the south of the residence; he could not see the front door. Officer Vass heard gunshots from the residence two (2) times. Officer Vass heard shots fired by unknown SWAT officers.

The Franklin County Sheriff’s Office (FCSO) drone team had arrived on scene. The drone was deployed and Officer Vass monitored the drone footage on a separate screen. The drone entered the residence and Officer Vass could see Smith inside suffering from a gunshot wound and motionless on the floor. Officer Vass could not see a firearm on the drone footage. Officer Vass relayed his observations to the SWAT entry team as they approached and secured the residence. Officer Vass moved forward and took a position as the “door officer”. Officer Vass stated he observed a fired cartridge casing on the front porch of the residence.

Officer Vass observed Columbus Fire Department (CFD) Tactical Emergency Medical Support (TEMS) Medics tend to Smith and those medics advised Officer Vass they had declared Smith deceased. Officer Vass radioed the time of that pronouncement over the radio.

Officer Vass confirmed he did not discharge his firearm or Taser during the incident. Officer Vass didn’t have any additional information and the contact was ended at approximately 0429 hours.

References:

None

Attachments:

CPD Officer Robert Vass Audio 5.20.2025

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