



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



2024-2738

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 345 Lincoln Ave.,
Lancaster, OH 43130 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with LPD witnessing officer
Involves: Officer Kurtis Schmidt
Activity Date: 11/26/2024
Activity Location: 33 N. Market St., Lithopolis, OH
Authoring Agent: SA Aja Chung

Narrative:

On Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 1645 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Aja Chung (SA Chung) and SA James Poole (SA Poole) interviewed Lithopolis Police Department (LPD) Officer (Ofc.) Kurtis Schmidt (Ofc. Schmidt). The interview took place at 33 N. Market St., Lithopolis, OH. The interview was audio recorded.

Ofc. Schmidt was identified as being a police officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the September 7, 2024 arrest of Chad Evangelista (Evangelista) which occurred in the area of 720 W. Waterloo St., Canal Winchester, Ohio. On that incident date, Evangelista was arrested by the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office for disorderly conduct and obstruction of official business and transported to the Fairfield County Jail. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by Ofc. Schmidt.

Ofc. Schmidt advised he has been employed by the LPD for about one and one-half (1.5) years and a police officer for a total of eleven (11) years. Ofc. Schmidt was working overtime due to Honeyfest. He indicated his duty hours on the incident date were from 1400 hours to 0000 hours, with Sunday and Monday leave days. During the incident, Ofc. Schmidt wore his standard police uniform with an external ballistic vest and duty belt. Ofc. Schmidt advised he carries a taser on his duty belt amongst other equipment. Ofc. Schmidt confirmed he was wearing his body-worn camera (BWC), and it was activated during the incident. He considered himself to be well-represented as a police officer during the incident. He stated he was not under the influence of any substance that would impair his memory or judgment during the incident or during the interview with BCI. He does not wear corrective lenses.

Ofc. Schmidt confirmed Fairfield County dispatches LPD, so he was able to hear who was dispatched to calls. Ofc. Schmidt heard [REDACTED] who commonly works the Canal Winchester area, get dispatched to a suspicious person complaint. After a few moments had passed, Ofc. Schmidt advised he overheard radio traffic that [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] was in a foot pursuit. Ofc. Schmidt said he heard [REDACTED] sound as if he was in a struggle or altercation over the radio. Ofc. Schmidt stated he activated his emergency lights and sirens and responded to the scene.

Ofc. Schmidt stated he and LPD Chief arrived simultaneously to the scene, and there was a Franklin County Sheriff's Office deputy already there. Ofc. Schmidt stated he observed the Franklin County deputy and [REDACTED] having a hard time getting Evangelista, who was handcuffed, to sit in the backseat of the Franklin County Sheriff's Office cruiser. Ofc. Schmidt stated Evangelista, in effort to not get in the backseat of the cruiser, would prop his foot against the frame of the cruiser or twist his body so Evangelista could grab on to the door.

Ofc. Schmidt confirmed Evangelista would say things that did not make sense pertaining to the current situation. Ofc. Schmidt said Evangelista would say that he did not do anything wrong and follow up by saying something unrelated. Ofc. Schmidt advised he thought Evangelista was experiencing some mental or emotional distress possibly due to drug use. Ofc. Schmidt advised Evangelista did not request a medic but would have had one respond to the scene had Evangelista request for one.

Ofc. Schmidt confirmed that he helped [REDACTED] retrace his footsteps and recover some of [REDACTED] equipment that was dropped during the altercation.

Ofc. Schmidt advised when he and [REDACTED] arrived back to the arresting location, Evangelista was moved from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office cruiser to the backseat of [REDACTED] cruiser. Ofc. Schmidt stated he held on to Evangelista's arm while handcuffs were exchanged on Evangelista. Ofc. Schmidt indicated Evangelista got into [REDACTED] cruiser without incident.

Ofc. Schmidt was asked if he observed any other law enforcement personnel who used force. Ofc. Schmidt advised he did not observe any force applied by others than pushing Evangelista to get him into the backseat of the cruiser. Ofc. Schmidt explained the pushing he applied on Evangelista was on either Evangelista's chest or back area.

Ofc. Schmidt confirmed he did not know Evangelista, nor had he ever come into prior contact with Evangelista.

Ofc. Schmidt advised he did not think his actions, or the actions of others were criminal in nature and were consistent with his training. Ofc. Schmidt confirmed that nobody has tried to influence his statement or asked him to lie to BCI agents.

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Note: this report was placed in an order to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview and may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full audio recording be reviewed to clarify any content or contextual questions regarding the information from the interview.

The interview concluded at approximately 1708 hours.

The interview was audio recorded. The audio recording was attached to this report. The signed BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form is also attached to this report. Please see the attachments for further details.

References:

None

Attachments:

1 - LPD Ofc. Schmidt audio interview

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