



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



2022-1472
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 2793 Waterpark Drive, Mason,
OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Christopher Keene (S)
Date of Activity: 07/20/2022
Activity Location: Warren County Sheriff's Office – Business – 822 Memorial Drive ,
Lebanon, OH 45036, Warren County
Author: SA Kenneth J. Smith, #53

Narrative:

On July 12, 2022, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) was requested to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) that took place at the Baymont hotel, located at 2793 Waterpark Drive in the city of Mason. During the OICI, an operator with the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team mortally wounded a suspect and recent River City Correctional Center escapee, Thomas Cromwell (Cromwell), during a hostage rescue situation.

On July 20, 2022, at 1301 hours, BCI Special Agents Richard Ward (SA Ward) and Kenneth Smith (SA Smith) interviewed Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. Officer Christopher Keene (Officer Keene) regarding his involvement in the OICI. The interview was conducted at the Warren County Sheriff's Office. Officer Keene was represented by Fraternal Order of Police attorney Stephen Lazarus. The interview was recorded on a handheld digital recording device.

The details below summarize the pertinent portions of the recorded interview and are not a verbatim account. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview and may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full audio recording be reviewed to clarify the content of the interview.

Officer Keene was read the BCI Notice of Criminal Investigation and the form was signed by both Officer Keene and SA Ward.

Officer Keene was a Senior Patrol Officer with the City of Franklin Police Department, badge number 218. His normal duty hours are on the dayshift were from 0700 to 1500 hours, with set days off of Sunday and Monday. On the day of the incident, Officer Keene was off duty. He had worked no overtime or special duty in the hours before the callout. For the SRT callout Officer Keene was dressed in the uniform of the day which consisted of camouflage shirt and

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pants, boots and a tactical vest. He was armed with an issued AR-15 rifle and his issued Glock 17 handgun.

Officer Keene responded from home in his city owned vehicle. He does not wear a body worn during SRT operations. Officer Keene has been with the City of Franklin Police Department since 2003 and on SRT since 2017.

After receiving the page for the callout, Officer Keene turned on his radio and began listening to the callout while he was getting ready. Commander Gregory Nate Trout had called on the radio for an immediate response team. Officer Keene notified dispatch that he was responding and drove with lights and sirens to the scene. He arrived on the scene and was advised that there was an escapee barricaded with a hostage in a hotel room and that he would be relieving Mason Patrol units who had established a quick response team. Once enough personnel were on scene, the responding operators went to the third floor and Team Leader Doddy placed Officer Keene first in the stack.

The subject, Thomas Cromwell (Cromwell), made contact with the team outside the room in the hall. Team Leader Donnie asked Cromwell what he needed and advised that the SWAT Team was in the hall and he should come out and surrender himself. Officer Keene advised that they did hear the female hostage from time to time inside the room and that as time went on they could hear her becoming upset. The team then stood by in the hall while the team leaders and commander devised a plan of action and called for additional equipment. According to Officer Keene, once negotiators made contact with Cromwell, the team in the hallway did not communicate with him again.

Team Leader James Doddy went to the command center to plan with the team commander and then briefed the operators over the radio. If an entry had to be initiated, a shotgun breach was to be performed on the door while porting holes through the drywall with explosives and ramming the door prior to entry. The SRT team had prior knowledge that Mason officers had tried earlier to force entry into the room and that the door was barricaded and Cromwell had threatened to hurt the hostage.

SRT members were advised that during different points of the negotiations, Cromwell threatened suicide by cop, that they would have to kill him to save her, that he was going to go out in a glorious death. They also received information that he possibly had mental health issues and had shot someone in the past. The team in the hall at different times could hear Cromwell laughing, cheering, and yelling as well as smelled smoke that Officer Keene believed to be narcotics of some kind.

As negotiations continued and hours passed, Hamilton County Police Association SWAT came in to relieve Warren County around 2300 hours. The Warren County SRT Team then went to a nearby firehouse to rest. The team stood by at the firehouse for a few hours until Team Leader Doddy received a call that Cromwell had posted a live video showing him holding a knife and threatening the hostage. Things were ramping up and the Warren County Team was needed back at the scene.

Officer Keene and his team again took up positions in the 3rd floor hallway outside of room 310. The team commander (Trout) announced over the radio that the plan was going to be

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executed. During the countdown, the breach was executed on the room, the door opened slightly and Officer Keene was able to enter the room. The door had been barricaded from the inside making entry difficult. There was an upside-down recliner on the floor behind the door. Officer Keene used the flashlight on his rifle and observed Cromwell and the hostage in the center of the room. Officer Keene recalled seeing the reflection of his tactical light off the knife blade being held to the hostage's throat. Cromwell was using the hostage as a shield. He remembers the hostage crying and could see Cromwell's mouth moving but couldn't understand what he was saying. Officer Keene described Cromwell as "amped". Officer Keene states that he yelled "Police" or "drop it". Officer Keene then moved towards the left and forward of the bathroom door. Officer Keene states that he could observe the muscle tension in Cromwell's arm and on his face. Cromwell pulled the hostage closer to him and his head moved out from behind hers. Officer Keene states that he thought Cromwell was going to slit her (hostage's) throat, so he fired one round from his rifle striking Cromwell. Cromwell and the hostage then fell forward and to the left and the hostage was able to get away from Cromwell. Officer Keene then yelled at her to get out of the room. Officer Keene continued to cover Cromwell and stated that he still had the knife. Another officer then stepped up and secured Cromwell. Officer Keene feels that his actions were in compliance with the Franklin Police Department's Response to Resistance Policy.

The interview was concluded at 1332 hours.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2022-07-20 / Officer Chris Keene Audio Interview

Attachment # 02: Last Negotiation Call 07.11.2022_260a

Attachment # 03: 2022-07-20 / Off. Chris Keene Criminal Notification Form

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.

Exhibit 2

Included as a separate file.

Exhibit 3



MIKE DEWINE

★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★



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Criminal Investigation Notification

1. This investigation is being conducted in order to determine whether any criminal laws have been violated on the part of those involved in this incident. Specifically, to collect facts and information to be provided to the prosecutor and/or grand jury in order for them to determine whether the conduct involved is authorized or prohibited by criminal statutes.
2. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may decline to answer or cease the interview at any time. You are entitled to have an attorney present if you wish.
3. The criminal investigation is separate from any internal, administrative investigation which your employer may or may not be independently conducting. You are not being compelled to give any statement or answer any questions. This is not a "Garrity" interview (where you could be required to answer).

Christopher Keene
Printed Name of Interviewee

7/20/22 1303
Date / Time

[Signature]
Signature of Interviewee

[Signature]
BCI Agent (Printed)

[Signature]
BCI Agent (Signature)