



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



Officer-Involved Critical Incident - Officer Involved Critical Incident - 909 Garden Ave., Middletown, OH 45044 (L)

To: Michael Gmoser, Butler County Prosecutor  
Cc: SAS Kevin Barbeau, Special Agent Supervisor, Ohio BCI  
From: SA Richard Ward, Special Agent, Ohio BCI  
Date: July 30, 2025  
Involves: Michael Baker  
Case Title: Officer Involved Critical Incident - 909 Garden Ave., Middletown, OH 45044 (L)  
BCI Case Numbers: Force Investigations (FIU): 2025-1666  
Crime Scene (CSU): 2025-1666  
Cyber Crime (CCU): N/A  
BCI Laboratory: 25-116431

**Investigative Request**

On Tuesday, May 27, 2025, Chief Earl Nelson of the Middletown Police Department requested assistance of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation's (BCI) Force Investigations Unit (FIU) 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 May 27, 2025, at 909 Garden Avenue and resulted in the shooting death of Michael Baker by Middletown Police [REDACTED]

**Preface:**

This report serves as a synopsis of the investigation into the May 27, 2025, officer-involved shooting in Middletown, Butler 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 to obtain a complete understanding of this investigation. Further, audio and/or video recordings exist for many 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 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 Richard Ward assigned as the lead SIU case agent. SA Ward received assistance in the investigation from SA Ken Smith, SA Lauren Frasier, SA Steve Seitzman, SA Doug Eveslage. Crime Scene Technicians Amy Cruvey and SA Holley Ryczek of the Crime Scene Unit processed the scene of the incident, documenting, preserving, and collecting possible evidence. The investigation was supervised by Lead Special Agent Richard Ward. Additionally, various personnel from the BCI crime laboratory performed scientific analyses 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, to thoroughly and accurately locate and document all pertinent facts and circumstances regarding this incident:

- Recorded Interview of Middletown Police [REDACTED] who discharged his service weapon.
- Recorded interviews of Middletown Police Officers Brian Singleton, Adam Grindstaff, Mark Hoyle and Steven Crank. Officers who were involved in the incident, at the scene, or otherwise deemed to potentially have relevant information.
- Recorded interview(s) of the subject involved and others subjects directly involved in the incident.
- Neighborhood canvass of the area surrounding the scene.
- Interviews of family members or associates of Michael Baker, Aubree Baker (daughter) and Mary Lou Dunn (friend).
- Obtained and reviewed post-mortem examination (autopsy) and toxicology reports.
- Obtained and reviewed open and closed-source biographical information on the involved subjects, to include criminal history reports, OHLEG, driving records, etc.
- FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC) checks on any non-law enforcement weapons involved in the incident (to determine if reported stolen).

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Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) trace on any non-law enforcement weapons involved in the incident (to determine ownership history).

- Review of all available body cameras involved in the incident.
- Review of all available surveillance video which captured any portion of the incident.
- 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.
- Review of the department's reports, photographs, and investigative materials pertaining to the incident, excluding any Garrity statements or information derived from any compelled statements.
- Conducted forensic laboratory examinations to include Firearm identification testing of involved firearms, casings, and bullets, firearm operability testing and DNA swabbing.
- 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 video recordings through the assistance through Amped Replay software.
- Reviewed EMS records pertaining to their response and the treatment administered.

### **Incident Summary/Overview**

In the morning hours of Tuesday, May 27, 2025, the Middletown Police Department conducted a pre-raid briefing at the police department for the purpose of executing multiple search warrants throughout Butler County related to an ongoing narcotics investigation. At approximately 0720 hours, Middletown police officers/detectives descended on 909 Garden Ave., Middletown, for the purpose previously mentioned.

██████████ operating a marked Middletown police vehicle clad in the standard police uniform, was the uniform presence as officers approached the residence.

Detectives Hoyle (Halligan), Crank (ram), Grindstaff (lethal cover) and Singleton (rear) proceeded to the residence with ██████████ Crank, Hoyle and Grindstaff on the elevated porch. Officers announced their presence while setting the Halligan tool with the ram.

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Moments after, the outer security door opened, Michael Baker opened the interior door and pointed a silver Smith & Wesson revolver at officers positioned on the front porch. [REDACTED] who was in the direct line of fire and squared up with Baker, discharged his Glock model 17 four (4) times striking and killing Baker. Baker retreated back inside the residence and fell to the living room floor. (At 0721 hours, [REDACTED] body-worn camera captured Baker, shirtless open the interior door holding/pointing a silver revolver, Figure 1.)

A visitor to Baker, Mary Lou Dunn, was deep inside the residence in the kitchen area and was struck on her right leg by bullet fragments. Dunn was removed to the hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. Officers began life saving efforts on Baker, but Middletown Fire Department medics pronounced Baker deceased at the scene. (At 0721 hours, [REDACTED] body-worn camera captured a silhouette of Mary Dunn deeper inside the residence. Additionally, a silver revolver discarded on the living room floor, Figure 2.)

Once BCI completed the processing of the scene at 909 Garden Ave, Middletown Police continued with their original narcotics search warrant. Located inside the bedroom of Michael Baker was suspected narcotics and drug paraphernalia. These items were documented and made part of this case file.

*Figure 1*



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Figure 2



**Decedent**

Michael Baker w/m; DOB:04/07/1978; SSN: [REDACTED]

**Autopsy Report**

The autopsy findings conducted by the Butler County Coroner's Office were as follows:  
[REDACTED]

The reported cause of death: [REDACTED] The manner of death was determined [REDACTED]

The toxicology report determined Baker [REDACTED]

**Physical Evidence**

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

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were fired from each firearm. Of the casings/projectiles recovered, the following identifications were made:

The silver Smith & Wesson five shot capacity revolver w/ four unfired rounds, model 642-2, serial number: CZH-5794 was deemed operable. DNA was recovered and BCI reserved the right to conduct comparison testing if necessary.

The four 9mm casing recovered from the exterior of the residence matched [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Glock model 17 issued duty weapon, serial number: [REDACTED]

**Witnesses**

The following paragraphs are extremely abbreviated versions of each witness's account. More detailed accounts can be found by reading the separate reports written by the interviewers and by reviewing the recordings of each interview.

**Mary Lou Dunn's statement:**

Dunn stated that she arrived at 909 Garden Avenue approximately 30 minutes prior to law enforcement entering the house and that she came over to see her friend's residence (Michael Baker) and to cook him breakfast sausage. Dunn explained a quick series of events, how she heard a loud bang, saw people everywhere, and was shot by an unknown person. SA Eveslage asked Dunn to describe the events in better detail and asked if she heard the police knocking on the door and announcing that they were executing a search warrant, but Dunn stated, "No," and that she just heard a loud bang and did not know what it was.

SA Eveslage asked where she was located when she heard the loud bang, Dunn said she was standing in the kitchen. SA Eveslage asked where the kitchen was located in the residence, and Dunn said it was in the back of the house. SA Eveslage asked Dunn if she wore hearing aids or if she has any trouble hearing, which she replied, "No."

SA Eveslage asked Dunn to describe what the police officers were wearing when she saw them in the house, and she stated that they were all dressed in black and did not remember seeing any police markings. SA Eveslage asked if she saw any red and blue lights flashing outside the residence or if she remembers any knocking or announcements from outside of the residence prior to the large bang, but Dunn still stated, "No."

Dunn explained that she was standing in the kitchen cooking sausage while Michael Baker was on the couch in the living room by the front door, wearing no shirt and had

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green shorts on. She said that when she heard the loud bang, she walked towards the dining room, got shot, and then went back into the kitchen. She said that the "police or someone" put a tourniquet on her leg and started medical treatment but she was not sure who they were. As she was exiting the residence she described seeing Michael Baker lying on the floor with blood around him and one of the police officers saying he was shot multiple times.

Det. Leukhardt asked if anyone else was in the residence, and Dunn stated that Michael Baker's adult daughter, Aubree Baker, was there that morning but left for work prior to the police arriving. Det. Leukhardt asked Dunn if she had anything in her hands when the police made contact with her, but she said that she was not sure and explained that she possibly had a spatula in her hand and SA Eveslage asked Dunn if there was anything else that she thought was important that he should know, but Dunn replied, "No." SA Eveslage read a BCI Consent to Search form to Mary Louis Dunn which allowed BCI to collect her clothing from the hospital and also collect her cell phone that was left at 909 Garden Avenue. Dunn signed the Consent to Search form acknowledging understanding what the consent form meant. Dunn described her cell phone as an Android with a blue butterfly case and the provided password '██████████' to unlock the phone. Dunn agreed to let SA Eveslage take photos of the gunshot wound to her lower right leg.

**Aubree Baker's statement:**

Around 7:45am, Aubree stated that she received several calls from her neighbors telling her that two people were shot at her house and that police had a search warrant. One neighbor, "TV" asked Aubree if she was okay. Aubree said that she was at work and didn't know anything about what happened. Aubree saw a Fox19 News article that someone had passed and another person was shot at her address. Aubree's friend Tammy said that she took Aubree to Atrium Hospital and they weren't able to get any information, so they came to the house.

Aubree told agents that she heard that her dad answered the door with a gun. She said that the only reason he would do that is because Aubree's ex-boyfriend lives nearby, is violent, and has robbed the house before. Aubree said that she knows her father to have a gun for "safety purposes". She said that he keeps it under his bed or in his closet. She said that it's a silver gun but did not know any other details.

Tammy said that Michael is not aggressive and he is very timid. Aubree said that there are other people that frequent the house and have keys to the house. One is named "Squeak" Watkins, described as a White male in his mid 40's, bald, with tattoos. Aubree

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said that Squeak is Mary's cousin and he drives a newer black GMC truck. A White male named Joey usually hangs around with Squeak. Aubree said that they would hang out and smoke marijuana.

Aubree's brother is Taylor Baker. She called and spoke briefly on the phone with Taylor, who said that he was already aware that their father had passed. Agents asked Aubree if she knew why police would be serving a search warrant at the house. Aubree said that her dad was not into drugs and believed that Mary, and the people she knew, were the possible target.

### Officer Interviews

The following paragraphs are extremely abbreviated versions of each officer's account of his or her actions pertaining to this incident and/or discharging their weapon. More detailed accounts can be found by reading the separate reports written by the interviewers and by reviewing the recordings of each interview.

### Interview of Involved [REDACTED]

*"My date of hire as a police officer with the Middletown Division of Police was [REDACTED]. My assignment is as a [REDACTED] with [REDACTED]. Prior to this assignment I was assigned as [REDACTED] road patrol officer, and I had previously worked with the Special Operations Unit on several occasions serving search warrants. My regular duty hours are from [REDACTED] and on May 27, 2025, I reported at [REDACTED] and was working until operations had been concluded. On the day of the incident, the unit tasked with the service of warrants included a seven-person team including a five-officer Special Operations unit, a one-officer uniformed patrol officer, and I was providing additional uniformed [REDACTED]. Our mission was to serve high-risk search warrants that were the result of narcotics investigations. I was identified as unit [REDACTED]. At the time this incident occurred, I was wearing a department issued Middletown Police uniform which included a dark blue uniform shirt and pants, a prominently displayed police badge, a department issued duty belt with a taser and other approved police equipment, and an outer bullet proof vest. I was carrying my department approved Glock 17, semi-automatic 9mm pistol, loaded with department issued ammunition. I believe I had most recently qualified with this weapon during regular scheduled qualifications on May 22, 2025. I was not carrying a secondary or back-up weapon. I was equipped with a body worn camera which I engaged prior to approaching the front door of the residence. I was not wearing glasses or contacts, and my uncorrected vision and hearing are good. I am in good health, and I do not take any medications that would impair my ability to perform my duties. I had not consumed any alcohol in the twenty-four hours prior to my shift.*

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*On May 27, 2025, I attended a roll call with the team assigned to serve search warrants. This pre-deployment briefing provided information on the search warrants to be served, included a site assessment of the locations with photos (including 909 Garden Ave.), and we received information on the residents at each location where warrants would be served. I was not the affiant for the warrant and I specifically recall there was no intelligence disseminated that included information indicating weapons had been seen at the locations. After serving a warrant at a previous location, I proceeded with 4 members of the Special Operations Unit to 909 Garden Ave. Middletown, Ohio 45044. 909 Garden Ave. is a tan single-story home in a residential neighborhood, with an elevated front porch. I do not recall having previously responded to calls for service at 909 Garden Ave. in my capacity as a Middletown Police Officer. I also do not believe I have had previous contact with the suspect or other residents involved in this incident. The weather on the day of the incident was cloudy and temperatures were moderate.*

*The four-officer Special Operations unit and my marked patrol unit arrived in two separate vehicles and parked several houses east of the 909 Garden Ave. residence. My [REDACTED] remained in the vehicle because, based on the intelligence that indicated weapons had not been seen at the residence, we did not believe the deployment of a [REDACTED] was necessary. We approached the target residence on foot and single file. I was at the front of the line of officers because I was wearing a full Middletown Police uniform and I was easily recognizable. When we reached the front of the residence, Detective Singleton separated from the group and moved towards the back door to secure the rear and east side of the residence. A four-man team, which included Detectives Hoyle, Crank, Grindstaff and me, prepared to contact the residents and make entry into the front of the residence.*

*We first visually confirmed the address as the house listed on the search warrant. I was assigned to provide a uniformed presence and cover for the Detectives assigned to breach the front door to make entry into the residence. I was positioned in front of the door and moved to the front step to provide additional cover and support as Detective Mark Hoyle prepared to use the Halligan tool to breach the outer security door. Detective Hoyle was equipped with the Halligan, a pry tool used to open the screen door. Detective Steve Crank was equipped with the ram to assist in breaching the door to the residence if residents refused entry. The front door had a metal outer security door and a wood and glass front door. As we stood outside the front door, Detective Grindstaff gave several loud clear commands announcing our presence as "Middletown Police," and stating police had a search warrant for the residence. I was positioned approximately 8-10 feet from the front doorway on the first step down from the*

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*elevated porch. When there was no response to repeated announcements, Detective Hoyle used the Halligan tool to pry open the locked security door to provide access for Detective Crank to use the handheld ram to breach the front door. Suddenly, as Detective Hoyle breached the outer security door, the interior door opened inward. When the door opened, I saw a heavysset, shirtless, white male open the door, extend his arm beyond the threshold and point a gray revolver directly at me. I recall the male, later identified as Michael A. Baker, look directly at me with an angry look on his face. The suspect was pointing the gray revolver, with a fully extended arm at a 90-degree angle, through the doorway and directly at me and in the direction of Detective Hoyle. After breaching the outer security door, Detective Hoyle remained to the side of the doorway and in close proximity to the suspects extended arm.*

*I had no cover or concealment from the suspect's weapon, and I immediately recognized the deadly threat. I already had my weapon out and in a low ready position as we were breaching the front door of the residence. I responded to the threat and fired four rounds at the suspect from approximately 10-12 feet, before the suspect retreated into the residence and fell to the ground. Prior to the door opening, and until shots were fired, I do not recall hearing any statements or other noise from inside the house. My backdrop was the interior of the residence, and I did not observe any other person in the backdrop behind the suspect.*

*After the suspect retreated into the residence and fell to the ground, I paused to ensure the threat did not continue before entering the residence through the front door with the other officers. I immediately approached the suspect and attempted to place him in handcuffs. I did not immediately observe the revolver lying on the floor to my right because I was focused on securing the suspect. He was not responding, and I turned him over to ensure he did not have possession of any weapons. I discovered a cell phone under him but did not recover any weapons. I then observed the revolver on the floor to my right approximately 2-3 feet from the suspect. I advised another Detective to guard the position of the weapon while I continued to attempt to secure the suspect in handcuffs. Once the suspect was handcuffed and the residence was secured by the other officers, I exited residence with Detective Hoyle. After exiting through the front door, we proceeded to move the police vehicles to side of the roadway to facilitate a clear path for the responding medics. After clearing the ingress to 909 Garden Ave., I was placed in the rear of a cruiser and did not reenter residence. I was eventually transported to the police station.*

*At the time I fired my weapon, the suspect was standing inside the threshold of the open front door to 909 Garden Ave. approximately 8-10 feet from my position on the steps of the front porch. The suspect had fully extended his arm in my direction and*

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*was wielding a gray revolver. I had no cover or concealment from the threat. I believe I fired four shots in rapid succession. My target was the suspect's center mass. The backdrop for my shots was the interior of his apartment. I was in a standing position when I fired my duty weapon. At the time I fired my weapon, I was responding to an immediate and deadly threat of serious physical harm to myself and to Detective Hoyle, who was partially exposed and within 2-3 feet of the open doorway. I fired my weapon to protect myself and Detective Hoyle. At the time I fired my weapon, I believed that an immediate response was the only means to stop an imminent threat of death or serious injury to myself or other officers."*

**Officer Adam Grindstaff's statement:**

*"My date of hire as a police officer with the Middletown Division of Police was January 27, 2020. I was previously employed by the City of Monroe, Ohio police department and was hired on Feb. 23, 2016. My assignment with Middletown PD is as a Special Operations Unit Detective, with [REDACTED]. My regular duty hours are from [REDACTED], and on May 27, 2025, I was working from [REDACTED]. On the day of the incident, I was working with a five-officer Special Operations unit that included an additional one-officer uniformed patrol unit and a uniformed [REDACTED] assigned to the Special Operations Unit. We were tasked with the mission of serving high-risk search warrants that were the result of narcotics investigations, securing the locations, and conducting subsequent searches. The unit was utilizing one un-marked police SUV and a marked police unit for the execution of search warrants. I was identified as unit V-14. At the time that this incident occurred, I was wearing a maroon T-shirt, dark camo patterned shorts, and an outer bullet proof tactical vest, prominently marked in white with "POLICE" on the front and back. I was carrying a department issued Daniel Defense AR-15 style rifle loaded with department issued ammunition. I had recently qualified with this weapon on May 15, 2025. As a secondary weapon, I was carrying my department approved Glock 26, semi-automatic 9mm pistol, loaded with department approved ammunition. I was not equipped with a body worn camera. I have prescription contacts and was wearing them during the incident in question. My corrected vision and hearing are good. I am in good health, and I do not take any medications that would impair my ability to perform my duties. I had consumed a minimal amount alcohol around 8:00 pm on the evening prior to my shift. I consumed no other alcohol.*

*On May 27, 2025, I attended a role call which included a briefing of the locations where search warrants would be served. This briefing included information about 909 Garden Ave., to include a site assessment providing information on where the entry would be made and intelligence on the potential residents. I was not the affiant for the*

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*warrant. Following the service of another search warrant at another location, I proceeded with four members of the team to 909 Garden Ave. Middletown, Ohio 45044. 909 Garden Ave. is a single-story home in a residential neighborhood, with an elevated front porch. I do not recall having previously responded to calls for service to this location in my capacity as a Middletown Police Officer. I also do not believe I have had previous contact with the suspect involved in this incident. The weather on the day of the incident was cloudy and temperatures were moderate.*

*The four-officer Special Operations unit and the marked [REDACTED] [REDACTED] arrived in two separate vehicles and parked several houses east of the 909 Garden Ave. residence. We approached from our vehicles, single file, until we reached the front of the residence, when Officer Singleton moved towards the back door to secure the rear of the residence. The four officer team, which included [REDACTED] Detective Crank, Detective Hoyle and me, prepared to announce our presence and make entry into the front of the residence. Detectives Hoyle and Crank were equipped with a Halligan and ram to assist in breaching the door to the residence if residents refused entry. I assumed a position against the side of the structure, to the left of the front door, between the door and a window. The front door had a metal outer security door and a wood and glass front door. As we stood outside the front door, I gave several loud clear commands announcing our presence as "Middletown Police," identifying the residence as "909 Garden Ave." and stating police had a search warrant for the residence. I was positioned approximately 2-3 feet from the doorway. As I continued to make announcements, Detective Hoyle used the Halligan tool to pry open the locked security door to provide access for Detective Crank to breach the front door. Suddenly, the interior door opened inward, and a male pushed the outer security door open. The male pointed a silver revolver just outside the doorway and aimed the weapon directly at [REDACTED]. The revolver appeared to be raised to a 90-degree angle and pointing at [REDACTED]. Although my view of the suspect's body was blocked by the frame of the door, I immediately recognized a silver barrel and the cylinder of the revolver as they protruded beyond the doorway. [REDACTED] who was in line with the open doorway, had no cover or concealment. I observed [REDACTED] fire several rounds at the suspect from approximately 10-12 feet, before the suspect retreated into the residence and fell to the ground. Prior to the door opening, and until shots were fired, I do not recall hearing any statements or other noise from inside the house.*

*Although my position to the left of the open doorway provided some cover and concealment from the suspect's position in the doorway, I was unable to see the interior of the residence, had no target acquisition on the suspect, and was not in a position to fire my weapon. After [REDACTED] fired his weapon, I entered the*

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*residence with the other Detectives to secure the interior and to provide medical care to the suspect. After I entered the house, the suspect was yelling but any statements were indiscernible. I quickly cleared two bedrooms and secured the residence. I returned to [REDACTED] who had remained with the suspect, and assisted in placing the suspect into handcuffs. The medics arrived and pronounced the suspect before attending to the female suspect who had an injury. During this time, I maintained visual control over the suspects weapon which remained on the floor where it had fallen. I maintained this position inside the residence until I was relieved, and a guard duty was established.*

*At the time I observed [REDACTED] fire his weapon, I had observed the suspect open the door with a weapon in his hand pointed in the direction of [REDACTED]. I believe [REDACTED] was responding to the suspect's deadly threat. I did not fire my weapon because I was not in a position to see the suspect, or to obtain acquisition of the target from my position outside, and to the immediate left of the doorway."*

**Officer Mark Hoyle's statement:**

*"My date of hire as a police officer with the Middletown Division of Police was March 17, 1998. My assignment is as a Detective in Narcotics, with [REDACTED]. My regular duty hours are from [REDACTED], and on May 27, 2025, I was working from [REDACTED]. On the day of the incident, I was working with a five-officer Special Operations unit that included an additional one-officer uniformed patrol unit and a uniformed [REDACTED] assigned to the Special Operations Unit. We had the mission of serving high-risk narcotics search warrants that were the result of a narcotics investigation. The unit arrived in one un-marked police SUV and one marked police unit for the execution of the search warrants. I was identified as unit V-12. At the time this incident occurred, I was wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, jeans, a blue and white baseball cap and a black, outer bullet proof tactical vest, prominently marked in white with "POLICE" on the front and back. I was carrying my department approved Glock 19, semiautomatic 9mm pistol, loaded with department issued ammunition. I believe I had most recently qualified with this weapon during regular scheduled qualifications on August 20, 2024. I was not carrying a backup firearm, and I was not equipped with a body worn camera. I have prescription glasses and was wearing them during the incident in question. My corrected vision and hearing are good. I am in good health, and I do not take any medications that would impair my ability to perform my duties. I had consumed a small amount of alcohol in the twenty-four hours prior to my shift, but none in the 12 hours prior to the shift.*

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Officer-Involved Critical Incident - Officer Involved Critical Incident - 909 Garden Ave., Middletown, OH 45044 (L)

*On May 27, 2025, I attended a roll call which included information on the search warrants to be served and included a site assessment of the locations involved. I was not the affiant for the warrant. After serving a warrant at a previous location, I proceeded to 909 Garden Ave. Middletown, Ohio 45044. 909 Garden Ave. is a single-story home in a residential neighborhood, with a front porch. I do not recall having previously responded to calls for service at 909 Garden Ave. in my capacity as a Middletown Police Officer. I also do not believe I have had previous contact with the suspect involved in this incident. The weather on the day of the incident was cloudy and temperatures were moderate.*

*The four-officer Special Operations unit and the marked patrol unit [REDACTED] arrived in two separate vehicles and parked several houses east of the 909 Garden Ave. residence. We approached single file until we reached the front of the residence, when Detective Singleton moved towards the back door to secure the rear of the residence. A four-man team, which included [REDACTED] Detective Crank, Detective Grindstaff and me, prepared to contact the residents and make entry into the front of the residence. I was equipped with the Halligan, a pry tool used to open the outer security door. Detective Steve Crank was equipped with the ram to assist in breaching the door to the residence if residents refused entry. The front door had a metal outer security door and a wood and glass front door. As we stood outside the front door, Detective Grindstaff gave several loud clear commands announcing their presence as "Middletown Police," identifying the residence as "909 Garden Ave." and stating police had a search warrant for the residence. I was positioned approximately 2-3 feet from the doorway. When there was no response to repeated announcements, I used the Halligan tool to pry open the locked security door to provide access for Detective Crank to use the handheld ram to breach the front door. After several attempts, the security door opened. Suddenly, the interior door opened inward and a person, later identified as Michael A. Baker, pointed a silver handgun directly at [REDACTED] When the door opened, I was positioned to the immediate left of the doorway and near a window with Detectives Crank and Grindstaff. I had limited cover and concealment from the residents inside the structure. I was able to see the suspect's extended arm and a grey revolver in the suspect's hand. The suspect had the weapon pointed at a 90-degree angle in the direction of [REDACTED] who was in line with the open doorway. I observed [REDACTED] fire several rounds at the suspect from approximately 6-10 feet, before the suspect retreated into the residence and fell to the ground. Prior to the door opening, and until shots were fired, I do not recall hearing any statements or other noise from inside the house.*

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*Although my position to the immediate left of the open doorway provided some cover and concealment from the suspect's vantage point, I would have been exposed had the suspect taken any steps through the doorway. I was unable to see the interior of the residence and was not in a position to fire my weapon. After [REDACTED] fired his weapon, I entered the residence with the other Detectives to secure the interior and to provide medical care to the suspect. Upon entering the residence, [REDACTED] pointed out the suspect's weapon, a revolver, lying on the floor inside the residence only a few feet from where the suspect had fallen. I confirmed to [REDACTED] that I had seen the weapon. After I entered the house, I assisted Detective Crank by providing him with a tourniquet to apply to a female inside the residence. I assisted in securing the interior of the residence, aired on the radio that shots had been fired, and then exited the residence to retrieve a medical bag for Detective Crank. I then assisted [REDACTED] by escorting him to the patrol car while medics entered the scene and provided medical attention to the male and female inside. I remained with [REDACTED] following the incident until he was removed from the scene.*

*At the time I observed [REDACTED] fire his weapon, I had observed the suspect open the door with a weapon in his hand pointed in the direction of [REDACTED]. I believe [REDACTED] was responding to the suspect's deadly threat."*

**Officer Brian Singleton's statement:**

*"My date of hire as a police officer with the Middletown Division of Police was June, 2021. My regular assignment with Middletown PD is as a Special Operations Unit Detective, with [REDACTED]. My regular duty hours are from [REDACTED] and on May 27, 2025, I was working from [REDACTED]. On the day of the incident, the unit tasked with the service of warrants included a seven-person team including a five-officer Special Operations unit, a one-officer uniformed patrol officer, and an additional uniformed [REDACTED] assigned to the Special Operations Unit. We were tasked with the mission of serving high-risk search warrants that were the result of narcotics investigations, securing the locations, and conducting subsequent searches. The Special Operations Unit was utilizing one unmarked police SUV and one marked police unit for the execution of the search warrants at 909 Garden Ave. I was identified as unit V-15. At the time that this incident occurred, I was wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and an outer bullet proof tactical vest, prominently marked in white with "POLICE" on the front and back. I was carrying a department approved Glock 26, semi-automatic 9mm pistol, loaded with department approved ammunition. I am unsure when I most recently qualified with my weapon, but I was current with all required qualifications. I was not carrying a secondary weapon. I was not equipped with a body worn camera. My uncorrected vision and*

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*hearing are good and I was not wearing glasses or contacts. I am in good health, and I do not take any medications that would impair my ability to perform my duties. I had not consumed alcohol in the 24 hours prior to my shift.*

*On May 27, 2025, I attended a role call which included a briefing of the locations where search warrants would be served. This briefing included information about 909 Garden Ave., to include a site assessment and intelligence on the potential residents. I was not the affiant for the warrant. Following the service of another search warrant at another location, I proceeded with four members of the team to 909 Garden Ave. Middletown, Ohio 45044. 909 Garden Ave. is a single-story home in a residential neighborhood, with an elevated front porch. I do not recall having previously responded to calls for service to this location in my capacity as a Middletown Police Officer. I also do not recall having had previous contact with the suspect or the other resident involved in this incident. The weather on the day of the incident was cloudy and temperatures were The four-officer Special Operations unit detectives and the marked [REDACTED] arrived in two separate vehicles and parked several houses east of 909 Garden Ave. We approached from our parked vehicles, single file, until we reached the front of the residence, where I separated from the other officers and moved towards the back door to secure the rear of the residence. The remaining team members, which included [REDACTED] Detective Crank, Detective Hoyle and Detective Grindstaff, remained at the front where they intended to make entry through the front door of the residence. Detectives Hoyle and Crank were assigned and equipped with a Halligan pry bar and ram to assist in breaching the door to the residence if residents refused entry. Detective Grindstaff and [REDACTED] provided additional support for the service of the warrants. I assumed a position on the northeast corner of the structure which allowed me to observe the door on the north side (rear) of the residence, as well as maintain visual containment on the east side of the structure. As I maintained my position, I was able to hear several loud verbal commands being given by the officers at the front of the residence. These commands announced the presence of "Middletown Police," and advised residents police had a search warrant for the residence. As an officer at the front continued to make announcements, I heard loud banging indicating entry was being made on the front door of the structure. I then heard several gunshots, but I was unable to determine from my position whether the shots were fired from the inside or outside of the structure. I maintained my position briefly then quickly moved to the southeast corner of the structure, where I visually confirmed no officers appeared down and observed the other officers making entry through the front door. I then returned to my position on the northeast corner to maintain containment on the rear of the residence while the*

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*interior of the house was being secured. Prior to the door opening, and until shots were fired, I do not recall hearing any statements or other noise from inside the house.*

*After several minutes, I made entry at front in order to assist with interior containment and securing any persons inside. Upon entry, I observed a male down inside the front door and a gun on the floor in close proximity to the front door. I proceeded to the rear of the residence, and I assisted Detective Crank with first aid on a female that had sustained a leg wound. After Detective Crank applied a tourniquet, I maintained control of the female, and tightened her tourniquet, until medics arrived and provided medical attention. I remained with the female until medics removed the female from the residence. After exiting the residence, I assisted SWAT in canvassing the outside of the rear of the residence to determine if any other structures needed searched.*

*Due to my assigned position on the northeast corner of the structure, I was unable to see the front of the residence, and I did not have a visual on the other officers when shots were fired. I was initially unsure whether officers had fired, or had been fired upon, when they attempted to breach the front door to serve the warrant. After [REDACTED] fired his weapon, I entered the front of the residence to assist with securing the interior and providing necessary medical attention to any injured parties. I remained at scene until I was relieved by a supervisor."*

**Officer Steven Crank's statement:**

Detective Crank has been employed by the Middletown Police Department for nine years and a detective assigned to narcotics investigations for over four years. On May 27, 2025, multiple search warrants were executed as a result of ongoing narcotics investigation. After a pre-raid briefing that was conducted in the morning hours of the 27th, officers broke off to their respective locations. Crank executed a search warrant at another location prior to 909 Garden Ave., and once completed, the team prepared for the warrant execution at the Garden Avenue address.

Detective Hoyle, Grindstaff, Detective Singleton and himself drove to 909 Garden Ave., in one vehicle while [REDACTED] followed. Detective Crank parked his Chevy Tahoe east of the residence and [REDACTED] in a marked patrol vehicle parked behind him. Crank wore his outer body armor with police marking front and back with his Middletown Police badge displayed. Detectives approached the front door, which Crank described was not ideal. The front of 909 Garden Ave. had a window on both sides: a glass front door and a security exterior

door. Crank's responsibility was the ram and Detective Hoyle was responsible for the Halligan tool. Once the Halligan was set by Hoyle, the security door "caved in" on the

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frame and the security door was pulled out. When Hoyle went to reset the Halligan tool, the inner door opened and Crank pulled Hoyle away from the door's opening. Because Hoyle was in front of him, Crank could not see the Baker in the doorway. [REDACTED] who is to Crank's right and slightly lower possibly on a lower step, discharged his firearm into the residence, which Crank observed and felt. [REDACTED] then entered the residence and Crank followed behind. Once inside, Crank "shoulder checked" the bedroom to his right he observed Mary Dunn in the kitchen area while still announcing "search warrant." Crank observed the silver revolver on the floor as he proceeded through the interior of the residence. Crank was unaware if Baker discharged the firearm he reportedly possessed.

Detective Crank described Dunn as calm initially and did not observe any injuries to her but observed a blood pool around her right ankle. Crank looked back and noticed Detectives Grindstaff and Hoyle were with Baker and Detective Singleton was entering the residence. Crank received a tourniquet from Hoyle and applied to Dunn who began screaming in pain. Crank retrieved a medic bag for additional first aid. Grindstaff informed Crank he was to begin CPR on Baker, but the medic arrived and assumed lifesaving efforts.

Once the medics arrived, Crank and others exited the residence while Detectives Hoyle and Grindstaff provided scene security. Crank stated SWAT, who was part of the day's operation, but not present when the shooting took place arrived to secure the perimeter. SA Ward asked Crank once BCI had concluded their search reference the shooting did he and/or others continue the narcotics search and he replied, "yes." According to Crank, narcotics were located in the Baker's bedroom. SA Ward asked if Baker was the subject of the investigation and Sergeant Wilcox stated Alfred Watkins was the primary focus and Baker was a "peripheral player". According to Wilcox, Watkins, who frequented 909 Garden Ave. for short periods, sold narcotics during these short visits in March of 2025. Wilcox informed investigators a pole camera was in place which covered the front of 909 Garden Ave., which will be provided to BCI.

When asked, Detective Crank stated the actions of the officers were proper and within policy.

### **Dispatch-Related Information**

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On Friday, May 30, 2025, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations Special Agent Richard Ward received and reviewed the radio traffic "Law 10" from the Middletown Police Department related to this incident. The entirety of the audio recording (attached below) is 3:38 minutes.

- At the 2:41 minute mark on the audio recording, Victor 12 reported "shot fired 909 Garden" and requested two medics.
- Victor 12, two subjects with gunshot wounds and requested two medics.
- Victor 12 cleared medics to approach, and the scene is secure.

**Video Recordings:**

**Amped Replay analysis**

SA Seitzman observed that at frame 1856, an individual at the front door of the residence appeared to be holding a silver object resembling a handgun. SA Seitzman created still images of that frame. One still image was unannotated and not resized, while another still image retained the original image size with a rectangular annotation box surrounding the apparent firearm. Another still image was at 200% zoom, also featuring an annotation box around the apparent gun. The last image was the original image size with contrast enhanced by +1, brightness increased by +45, and an ellipse annotation added.

At frame 1884, SA Seitzman noted the presence of a second subject inside the residence, presumably Mary Louis Dunn. SA Seitzman created a still image with an ellipse annotation and text box added.

At frame 2045, as [REDACTED] is entering the residence, a silver object is visible on the ground to the right of the involved subject. The object is more clearly identifiable as a silver revolver in frames 43 and 4415.

SA Seitzman created still images of those frames. SA Seitzman added an ellipse annotation to the still image of frame 2045. SA Seitzman increased the brightness by +73 and added an ellipse annotation to the still image of frame 4343. Lastly, SA Seitzman added an ellipse annotation to the still image of frame 4415. SA Seitzman created a slowed-down video clip from frames 1809 to 1957. The playback frame rate was slowed to seven frames per second. SA Seitzman also performed a timing analysis of the video. The below-listed frames were approximations based on the activity and sound within the footage. The video/audio production indicated the video contained 30 frames per second. Time was calculated by dividing 1 second by 30 frames. The quotient revealed each frame represented 0.0333333333 seconds. Using this

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calculation, the amount of time that transpired between significant events can be approximately calculated by multiplying the number of frames captured between the events by the amount of time each frame represented (0.0333333333).

The product represents the approximate amount of elapsed time. The number was rounded to the nearest tenth (for instance, 4.49 seconds was rounded to 4.5 seconds).

**Conclusion:**

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 Richard Ward. SA Ward can be reached via email at [Richard.Ward@OhioAGO.gov](mailto:Richard.Ward@OhioAGO.gov) or by telephone at 937-620-8660.

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