



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



2022-1356

Officer-Involved Critical Incident - 1659 S. Main Street, Akron, Ohio
44301

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer Paul Barnes
Activity Date: September 13, 2022
Authoring Agent: Special Agent Cory Momchilov #64

Narrative:

On Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 2316 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Cory Momchilov (Momchilov) and SA Chuck Moran interviewed Akron Police Department (APD) Officer Paul Barnes (Barnes), who was accompanied by his attorney, Jason Wells, from the Fraternal Order of Police. The interview took place at 1460 Triplett Boulevard, Akron, Ohio. Fraternal Order of Police Akron Lodge #7 President Clay Cozart was also present during the interview.

The interview was audio recorded.

Officer Barnes was identified as being a police officer who had some level of involvement in the June 27, 2022, officer-involved shooting which occurred in the area of 1659 South Main Street, Akron, Ohio. Reportedly, Officer Barnes did not discharge a firearm during the course of the incident and arrived on scene after the shooting. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this officer.

On June 27, 2022, Officer Barnes, a K-9 officer was the driver of marked APD cruiser, Car 602. Officer Barnes was not working with a partner, other than his K-9. Officer Barnes was wearing his standard APD K-9 uniform.

Prior to the interview, SA Momchilov was advised that Officer Barnes had typed a supplemental report that documented his involvement in the June 27, 2022, officer-involved shooting. Officer Barnes wished to read the narrative out loud and then he would answer any follow-up questions if needed.

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Officer Barnes's typed narrative reads:

NARRATIVE

I arrived to the intersection of Wilbeth and Clairmont as shots began to start. I exited my cruiser and ran northbound into the parking lot. I positioned myself to the left of the Offices involved and asked them all if they were good. When they responded yes, I placed my gloves on my hands and we all moved in to place the suspect in handcuffs. I grabbed both of the suspects wrists and rolled him over onto his stomach. I continued to hold onto his left wrist then pulled his right wrist from under his body. I placed both wrists behind his back and another Officer placed handcuffs on the suspect. At this point other Officers arrived and immediately began to render aid. I held a flashlight for these Officers until AFD arrived.

SA Momchilov asked Officer Barnes what caused him to respond to the scene. Officer Barnes stated, "It was a vehicle pursuit and I have a useful tool (K-9) to apprehend fleeing people." SA Momchilov then asked, "Anything else about that vehicle pursuit?" Officer Barnes replied, "As far as what?" SA Momchilov then stated, "Anything unusual, any signals that were called out or..."

Officer Barnes stated, "I mean it started like a normal chase and then once they said Signal 21 that kind of means if you're not doing anything, get over here, we need your help. So, that's why I left where I was to go over there."

SA Momchilov asked Officer Barnes if he witnessed any portion of the officer-involved shooting. Officer Barnes stated he did not witness the shooting but heard the shots. SA Momchilov asked Officer Barnes his exact location when he heard the shots. Officer Barnes advised that he was westbound on Wilbeth Road, "parallel to where the suspect was running."

SA Momchilov asked Officer Barnes if he could see the individual running. Officer Barnes replied, "I saw him bale out of the car and then lost him behind the shrubs, up into the parking lot."

SA Momchilov asked Officer Barnes if he could describe the shots he heard in more detail. Officer Barnes stated, "It sounded like fireworks going off. Like the ones that are roped together."

SA Momchilov asked Officer Barnes if he could tell who was firing. Officer Barnes replied, "I could not, no, I actually thought it was fireworks. I had looked down, southbound down Clairmont, saw six or eight people standing in the intersection and thought, why are they lighting fireworks off when we're in the middle of a police pursuit."

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SA Momchilov asked Officer Barnes what other actions did he take on scene after he held the flashlight until AFD arrived. Officer Barnes stated he went down and spoke with some other officers who were not involved in the shooting who had advised that they had seen, what they thought, were fireworks going off above the tree line. Officer Barnes advised that he went a block south looking for fireworks. Officer Barnes advised that he then sat in his cruiser, outside the tape, until he was ordered to leave.

SA Moran asked Officer Barnes if he had any involvement in the actual vehicle pursuit. Officer Barnes stated that he was attempting to get into the pursuit and explained, "Our policy allows two but they will let me to get into the pursuit because of the dog. It creates less injury to the suspect, our officers, um. I got on the radio said hey, I'm right here, can I get in and then the sergeant was never able to get back on to allow me to get in."

SA Moran asked Officer Barnes if he could describe what he observed when the individual exited the vehicle and ran. Officer Barnes stated, "When he baled out of the car, I saw that he had, his whole, dark cloths but his whole head was dark. So, I was like he has his hood up, he's got, you know, Covid mask on, something like that and just took off running. I saw the officers get out of their cars, take off running that's why I didn't let my dog out and then he just kind of disappeared between the shrubs, I'd see like a glimpse of him up in. He was running up and away from me. So, he was running northwest as I was traveling westbound."

SA Momchilov asked, "When you release your dog, can he tell the difference between officers and the subject or is he just going to chase whomever." Officer Barnes stated, "I've seen, I've seen some K-9s run past the officers. He's never had an actual street deployment where a guy's baled and I've popped the door and he takes off. We're trained to call him off some, you know, innocent bystander walks between him and the suspect. He's, he's really driven to where if you're fleeing he's, he's going to hone in on whatever is closest and that could be an officer, that could be, you know, somebody walking down the street. If they're, it's like a predator, prey-type thing. This one's closer so, he's going to cheat and take the closest one."

Officer Barnes was wearing a body-worn camera at the time of the incident.

At the end of the interview, Officer Barnes was afforded the opportunity to view his body-worn camera footage. Officer Barnes declined.

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Figure 1



Figure 2

The above images are from Officer Barnes' body-worn camera footage. Based upon Officer Barnes' body-worn camera footage, Officer Barnes is seen running toward the sidewalk after shots have been fired (Figure 1). Officer Barnes is then observed assisting officers with first aid and holding his flashlight (Figure 2).

Attachments:

The audio recording of the interview is attached to this Investigative Report.

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