



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



2023-0290
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 1818 Jisco West Rd, Jackson,
OH 45640 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Dep. Leif Smith (W)
Date of Activity: 02/08/2023
Activity Location: Smith, Dep. Leif – Business – 350 Portsmouth Street, Suite102,
Jackson, OH 45640, Jackson County
Author: SA Craig Call

Narrative:

On January 31, 2023, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Investigations and Crime Scene Units were requested by Jackson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) Sheriff Ted Frazier to investigate an Officer Involved Critical Incident (shooting) between members of the JCSO and William Beach (Beach). BCI was informed the incident occurred at 1818 Jisco West Road in Jackson County, Ohio and resulted in Beach being fatally shot by JCSO Lieutenant [REDACTED] (Lt. [REDACTED]).

BCI Special Agent Craig Call (SA Call), Special Agent Jim Mulford (SA Mulford), and Special Agent Jimmy Poole (SA Poole) responded to the Jackson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) to make contact with JCSO deputies in reference to obtaining witness statements from the involved officers. Upon our arrival, we initially met with Sheriff Frazier and were informed the deputies involved did not wish to make a formal witness statement without speaking with legal counsel first.

Agents met with JCSO Lt. [REDACTED], Sgt. Jason Wilson, Deputy Nicholas Spangler, and Deputy Leif Smith in a conference room at JCSO in order to obtain their contact information and contact information for their attorneys. Lt. [REDACTED] was identified as the sole involved officer that fired his weapon and his Attorney Keith Washburn was present with him. Sgt. Wilson, Deputy Spangler, and Deputy Smith indicated they would all be represented by Attorney Michael Moore and provided me with his contact information.

On February 8, 2023, SA Call and SA Mulford met with Attorney Michael Moore and Deputy Smith at the JCSO. Deputy Smith prepared a signed written witness statement prior to the meeting and agreed to provide agents with an audio recorded interview in the presence of Attorney Moore. SA Call was provided with a copy of Deputy Leif's statement and thoroughly reviewed it prior to the start of the interview. This report is a summation of the interview and an audio copy along with the signed written witness statement have been added to the case

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file.

The audio recording device was initiated at approximately 1236 hours.

Deputy Smith is a six year veteran of the JCSO, has been assigned to his current position as a uniformed deputy for four years, and served as a corrections officer for two years. Deputy Smith also served with the United States Marine Corps for four years previous to his time at JCSO. Deputy Smith acknowledged the signed written witness statement he provided was true and accurate to the best of his knowledge.

Deputy Smith's recorded audio statement is consistent with his signed written witness statement and the follow up questions Deputy Smith answered were also consistent with his written statement.

Deputy Smith wrote as a part of his statement describing when the actual shooting took place, "At this time a decision was made to breach the front door with a ram, and then back off the door to open a better point of view inside the residence. This was also going to be an opportunity to try and open up better communications. Lt. █████ grabbed the ballistic shield, I was next in the tactical formation with the door ram, and Deputy Spangler was behind me. All three of us made contact at the front door. Lt. █████ stepped off to my left giving me access to the front door. I made one solid strike with the ram forcing the door almost halfway open. It appeared that there were items behind the door preventing it from opening all the way. I immediately placed the ram next to the steps and got cover behind Lt. █████ and drew my firearm. Lt. █████ announced, "Sheriff's Office, come out with your hands up now, Now!" At this time I heard what sounded like the suspect yell, "motherfucker." And then there was one gunshot fired. Lt. █████ then advanced into the doorway and began yelling, "Do not move".

William was lying on his back on the floor kicking his legs and moving his arms. Lt. █████ continued to shout at William to stop moving and resisting. At this time I began asking Lt. █████ if there was a gun and where it was at. Lt. █████ advised that it was behind him."

Deputy Smith further detailed the events after Lt. █████ and he made entry into the residence as, "I was able to locate near Lt. █████'s feet what appeared to be a 1911 Style handgun, with what appeared to have a rough wood looking style grip, and a blued slide. Lt. █████ then engaged William with his Taser, due to William continuing to resist, and not obey commands. The taser appeared to have no effect, due to the placement of the probes, and the clothing William had on. I put my handgun in my left hand and drew my taser for Lt. █████ to try and re-engage with the taser. Lt. █████ continued to advance so I holstered my taser, and firearm, and jumped over a box to help Lt. █████ secure William. It was at this moment Lt. █████ advised that William had been struck by the gunshot. Lt. █████ and I began rendering aid to William. I shouted for other units to get E.M.S to us, and to retrieve me a trauma kit. Units passed Lt. █████ and I gauze, while Lt. █████ and I helped keep pressure on the gunshot wound, which was on his right side, just below his collarbone. Gauze was applied while I was waiting for someone to hand me Combat gauze. Combat Gauze was acquired and applied. I also had cut his shirt up the middle to better assess his injuries. I put on a set of blue gloves, and did a swipe under his right shoulder blade, which I had blood on the gloves. E.M.S arrived on scene, and William was placed on a poleless litter and carried out of the room. I did a last minute sweep of the inside and then walked out. I stood by until I was given the order from the sheriff to go back to the office. I waited at the office until BCI arrived at the office and did what was asked by them."

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After some follow up questions in reference to the above paragraphs, Deputy Smith explained he never saw Beach or his actions prior to the shot being fired due to his positioning behind Lt. [REDACTED]. Deputy Smith described Lt. [REDACTED] as being directly in front of the door with the ballistic shield after the door was breached. Deputy Smith said he did not know who actually fired the shot until after Lt. [REDACTED] and he made entry into the residence and noticed Beach was shot. Deputy Smith said he realized at that time it was Lt. [REDACTED] who fired the shot he heard. Deputy Smith described hearing the shot while Lt. [REDACTED] Deputy Spangler, and he were on the front porch immediately outside the residence. Deputy Smith said he did have his JCSO issued Glock 17 handgun out of its holster when the shot was fired, however he did not fire then or at any time during the incident.

Deputy Smith did not have any additional information to add to the incident and the audio interview was concluded at approximately 1304 hours.

Immediately after discontinuing the recording device and while Deputy Smith was still in the presence of Attorney Moore, SA Call and SA Mulford asked if Deputy Smith had any previous personal or professional contact with Beach. Deputy Smith said he had no previous contacts of any kind with Beach.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: Deputy Smith Statement

Attachment # 02: 2023-2-8 Interview with Deputy Leif Smith

Jackson County Sheriffs Office

350 Portsmouth St. Jackson, OH 45640

Phone# 740-286-6464 Fax# 740-286-6465

On January 31st, 2023, I Deputy Smith, along with Sgt. Wilson, was dispatched to 1734 Jisco West Rd. in regard to a Trespassing call. Upon arrival Sgt. Wilson contacted the callers. Sgt. Wilson radioed me advising that a male attempted to get in the neighbor's truck, and that the male was last spotted behind the residence I was parked next too. The residence I was parked next to was 1818 Jisco West Rd. Sgt. Wilson and I exited our cruisers and attempted to make contact. Sgt Wilson made contact with an Amish style shed/house, next to the shed style house of 1818. While Sgt. Wilson was talking with the neighbors, I could hear movement inside the residence in 1818. Sgt. Wilson walked from the Amish residence and stated that Willy was living in the residence. Sgt. Wilson and I both knocked and attempted to contact Willy. I could hear movement in the house but no answer. At this time I walked around the back of the residence, where I found tracks in the snow, coming from the direction of the original callers. I advised Sgt. Wilson, who then contacted the people in the Amish shed, who were identified as Melissa Graham, and Shawn Norman. Sgt. Wilson asked them the full name of Willy. Melissa and Shawn advised that it was a William Beach.

At this time I contacted Chief Probation Officer Wes Skaggs, to see if he had William on probation. Wes advised that he did, and that he also was on an ankle monitor through Herb McGuire. At this time I called Herb, who advised that he did have a William beach, and that he would text me a location. Herb was able to send me a location that showed him on the property of 1818 Jisco West Rd. Sgt. Wilson and I attempted contact again with William, with negative contact. Lt. [REDACTED] and Deputy Reynolds arrived on scene, and was updated on the situation. We stood by until Chief Probation Officer Skaggs, and Officer Edwards, arrived on scene.

I spoke with Melissa and asked her if she had a key to the residence so we did not have to break the door. Melissa advised that you could open the door with a card. At this time Skaggs began knocking and announcing himself as Probation and ordered William to come out. There was no response. At this time I began to try and card open the door, I was unsuccessful. Lt. [REDACTED] tried to open the door with a knife and was unsuccessful. At this time Lt. [REDACTED] was able to open a window located next to the door. Lt. [REDACTED] raised the window and peeked his head inside. Lt. [REDACTED] was looking to his right when he shouted, "drop the ax." Lt. [REDACTED] then quickly retreated and advised us that he had an ax over his head waiting behind the door. All units on scene backed off of the porch and gained distance. Officer Skaggs's again began shouting at William, advising him to drop the ax, and to step outside. While Lt. [REDACTED] and Officer Skaggs's

began shouting commands, I was ordered to get my patrol rifle by Lt. [REDACTED]. I retrieved my rifle, and also a ballistic shield. Lt. [REDACTED] continued to shout orders to drop the ax and to step outside. Officer Skaggs then used a long piece of pipe to pull back a blanket that was hanging down in the window, obstructing our view. Officer Skaggs told William to drop the ax. Officer Skaggs then dropped the pipe and advised us that he also had a handgun in his hand. At this time all units fell back behind cover. Lt. [REDACTED] advised our dispatch that William had a firearm. All units remained behind cover.

Chief Deputy Conley was contacted and arrived on scene. Chief Deputy Conley also attempted to speak with William to try and get him to come out. William did begin speaking with Wes Skaggs. William was hard to hear at during the conversations, due to him staying in the residence. We received assistance from negotiators from the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Sherry Wells was the main negotiator, assisted by Gene Folden. A line for communication was established with what is called a throw phone. Lt. [REDACTED] grabbed the ballistic shield and provided cover for me to walk up to the window to throw the phone. I was able to throw the phone through the window, which I seen landed a few feet on the floor from the window. Lt. [REDACTED] and I then retreated back behind the vehicles for cover. Sherry Wells and Gene Folden attempted multiple times to buzz the phone to get William to answer. Sherry Wells, and Deputy Spangler at this point had William's attention and was communicating with William. At this point we were on the scene for several hours.

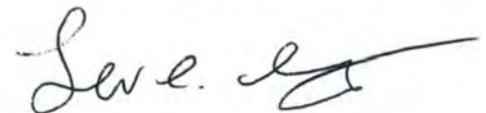
Sheriff Tedd Frazier also attempted negotiating with William. William was advised that he would be given a cigarette per his request if he came outside. William also confirmed at this time that he was armed with a firearm. William was advised to step outside unarmed and he would be given a cigarette. William refused and asked for the cigarette to be brought to him. He was advised not, due to him being armed. He then shouted, "fuck it, I don't want it then."

At this time a decision was made to breach the front door with a ram, and then back off the door to open a better point of view inside the residence. This was also going to be an opportunity to try and open up better communications. Lt. [REDACTED] grabbed the ballistic shield, I was next in the tactical formation with the door ram, and Deputy Spangler was behind me. All three of us made contact at the front door. Lt. [REDACTED] stepped off to my left giving me access to the front door. I made one solid strike with the ram forcing the door almost halfway open. It appeared that there were items behind the door preventing it from opening all the way. I immediately placed the ram next to the steps and got cover behind Lt. [REDACTED] and drew my firearm. Lt. [REDACTED] announced, "Sheriff's Office, come out with your hands up now, Now!" At this time I heard what sounded like the suspect yell, "mother fucker." And then there was one gun shot fired. Lt. [REDACTED] then advanced into the doorway and began yelling, "Do not move". William was lying on his back on the floor kicking his legs and moving his arms. Lt. [REDACTED] continued to shout at William to stop moving and resisting. At this time I began asking Lt. [REDACTED] if there was a gun and where it was at. Lt. [REDACTED] advised that it was behind him.

I was able to locate near Lt. [REDACTED]'s feet what appeared to be a 1911 Style handgun, with what appeared to have a rough wood looking style grip, and a blued slide. Lt. [REDACTED] then engaged William with his Taser, due to William continuing to resist, and not obey commands. The taser appeared to have no effect, due to the placement of the probes, and the clothing William had on. I put my handgun in my left hand and drew my taser for Lt. [REDACTED] to try and re-engage with the taser. Lt. [REDACTED] continued to advance so I holstered my taser, and firearm, and jumped over a box to help Lt. [REDACTED] secure William. It was at this moment Lt. [REDACTED] advised that William had been struck by the gun shot. Lt. [REDACTED] and I began rendering aid to William. I shouted for other units to get E.M.S to us, and to retrieve me a trauma kit. Units passed Lt. [REDACTED] and I gauze, while Lt. [REDACTED] and I helped keep pressure on the gun shot wound, which was on his right side, just below his collar bone. Gauze was applied while I was waiting for someone to hand me Combat gauze. Combat Gauze was acquired and applied. I also had cut his shirt up the middle to better assess his injuries. I put on a set of blue gloves, and did a swipe under his right shoulder blade, which I had blood on the gloves. E.M.S arrived on scene, and William was placed on a pole less litter and carried out of the room. I did a last minute sweep of the inside and then walked out. I stood by until I was given the order from the Sheriff to go back to the office. I waited at the Office until BCI arrived at the office and did what was asked by them.

Deputy Leif E. Smith

02/01/2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leif E. Smith", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.