



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



2024-1755

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 4500 Block of Sullivant Ave,
Columbus, OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Body Camera Review
Date of Activity: 06/20/2024
Activity Location: Cortaza, Noel Hernandez – Home – 1717 Pheasant Run Rd. E,
Columbus, OH 43228
Author: SA Ryan Emahiser, #36

Narrative:

Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Ryan Emahiser was requested to generally review the Columbus Police Department (CPD) Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage of the welfare check of Noel Hernandez Cortaza (Noel) that occurred on June 10, 2024, at approximately 17:31 Hours, at Noel's residence 1717 Pheasant Run Rd. E, Columbus, Ohio. SA Emahiser is fluent in Spanish and has been regularly requested to conduct interviews and translate throughout his law enforcement career. SA Emahiser was advised that the CPD welfare check on Noel at the Pheasant Run Road residence occurred earlier in the evening, hours prior to the CPD Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) being investigated involving Noel.

SA Emahiser was provided links to the two CPD officers' Axon BWC recordings that responded to the welfare check; Officer (Ofc.) Gunnar White (Ofc. White) and Officer Macy Johnson (Ofc. Johnson). Both recordings are approximately 23 minutes and 55 seconds, and both officers appear from the recording to be assigned to the same patrol car arriving to Noel's residence.

This Spanish review is general in nature, and for a full comprehension the entirety of both officers BWC recordings should be reviewed. This review is not a direct translation, and only a summary of the conversation between Noel, those present, and the responding officers.

At 17:29 Hours Officers Johnson and White arrive at the area of Noel's apartment and are met in the parking lot by numerous Spanish speaking apartment complex residents who know Noel, and one English speaking resident who also spoke Spanish helping responding officers communicate with Noel's cousin's wife who was also present. Noel's cousin's wife told officers through the translator, that Noel has had mental health issues, has tried to harm himself in the past (at least a year or more ago), is not believed to have any weapons in his residence, and is believed to be alone in his residence.

After speaking with the residents at 17:31:40 hours, Ofc White knocks on Noel's residence

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Approved By SAS James A. Mulford on
11/08/2024

door, announcing CPD, and Noel made contact with the officers from his 2nd story open window. The officers asked Noel if he was ok, and in Spanish Noel advised that he is fine but there were people making noise in the lower level of his apartment. Noel's cousin's wife began attempting to speak with Noel, and explained to Noel that the officers wanted permission to enter his residence to check for anyone downstairs. Noel said that no one had permission to enter his apartment, and that he was just tired.

At 17:35 hours, Noel's cousin arrived on scene in a red Honda, a Hispanic male wearing a red Hollister hoodie, blue and white ball cap, black pants, and brown work boots. The English speaking female called Noel's cousin Chepe'. Noel repeatedly told his family members that he was tired, was very hot, and wanted to be left alone. Noel's cousin Chepe' told Noel that they were all worried about Noel because earlier Noel was wandering around in the street, and they did not want Noel to get killed. Noel said he was upset that they called the police, and felt like they were just trying to send Noel to jail. Noel's cousin Chepe' told Noel that they were just worried about him and didn't want anything to happen to him.

Noel was asked by the officers, through the others present, if he was agitated with all of the people there and Noel said he was not and just wanted to rest. At 17:39:42 hours, Chepe's wife told Noel to rest, and Noel shut his window and did not speak with the family members or officers again.

At approximately 17:43 hours, Chepe' and his wife showed officers what is believed to be a video of Noel's actions from earlier in the day how Noel was acting. This was not able to be viewed in the BWC footage. Chepe' and his wife told officers through the translator that they wanted officers to take Noel, because they were worried about him, but Ofc. Johnson told them that CPD did not have enough information that would allow them to force entry to do so. The family members did tell officers that Noel did use drugs, but were unaware what type of drugs. Family members and friends were talking amongst themselves and Chepe's wife asked the others if they could get the key from the apartment complex office for the officers, but one of the friends said that the police still did not have enough information to enter.

At 17:50 hours, both officers advised the family members and friends to contact CPD if there were any additional issues with Noel, and at 17:51:16 hours, both BWC's were deactivated.

No additional pertinent information was obtained from the review of the BWC footage. The BWC footage is maintained on Axon Evidence by SA Matt Collins.

References:

No references.

Attachments:

No attachments.

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