



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



2022-0407
 Officer Involved Critical Incident – 1783 Penfield Rd, Columbus
 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Ofc. [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] (S)
Date of Activity: 03/31/2022
Activity Location: – 3360 Tremont Road Suite 230, Columbus, OH 43221, Franklin County
Author: SA James Poole

Narrative:

On March 31, 2022, at approximately 0739 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) Special Agent James Poole (SA Poole) and Jim Mulford (SA Mulford) interviewed Columbus Division of Police (CPD) Officer [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] (Officer [REDACTED] – [REDACTED]) in response to an Officer Involved Critical Incident (OICI). The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this individual. Also present for the interview was Officer [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] Attorney, Lathan Lipperman.

On Thursday, February 24, 2022, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation Special Investigations and Crime Scene Units were requested by the Columbus Police Department to respond and investigate a potential critical incident at 1783 Penfield Road, Columbus, Ohio. Special Agent Supervisor Kevin Barbeau spoke to CPD Sgt. Terry McConnell, who explained CPD officers were engaged in a vehicle pursuit with a subject from a domestic complaint. While the involved party was fleeing, he was involved in a traffic crash where his vehicle went off the roadway and struck two (2) occupied homes. CPD officers located the driver, Jajuan Ball, (Ball) who was ejected and transported to Grant Medical Center. Ball died from unknown injuries.

This interview was audio recorded, and a copy of the recording was saved electronically within the case file. Please refer to the recording for specific quotes. The following is a summation of the interview.

Prior to beginning the interview, SA Poole provided Officer [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] with a BCI "Criminal Investigation Notification" form. SA Poole advised BCI was conducting a criminal investigation separate from any internal investigation that CPD may be conducting. Officer [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] was told his interview was voluntary and he could stop answering questions at any time. Officer [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] verbally confirmed he understood the contents of the form and signed the document further acknowledging his understanding. A copy of the signed Criminal Investigation Notification (CIN) is

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attached to this report.

Officer [REDACTED]–[REDACTED] wrote based on his statement, “I saw Officer [REDACTED] turn east on Roswell Drive, so I did as well, believing he was following the suspect. Officer [REDACTED] was about a quarter mile ahead of me, so I accelerated to close the distance. Around that time, Officer [REDACTED] aired that he was following a silver Ford, which matched the description given by the victim. Officer [REDACTED] was also continuously updating his location over the radio. He turned south on Courtright Road, and I continued following. Moments later, Officer [REDACTED] aired that he turned west on East Deshler Avenue. Seconds later, I turned onto that road and saw Officer [REDACTED] in the distance. Officer [REDACTED] then aired that he was stopped behind the silver car at a stop sign at E. Deshler and Barnett Road, and that he planned to pull over the car at the next stop sign once he had another cruiser. I accelerated and caught up to Officer [REDACTED]. The silver car (which I believed was being driven by the suspect out of the assault/robbery) turned south onto Barnett Road, and Officer [REDACTED] aired that at the next stop sign he would conduct a swoop (i.e., a maneuver where one cruiser pulls directly in front of the suspect and a second cruiser pulls immediately behind the suspect, boxing in the vehicle). As the suspect approached the stop sign at the Barnett Road and Bexvie Avenue intersection, Officer [REDACTED] pulled up and drove next to the suspect’s vehicle; however, the suspect did not stop at the intersection so the swoop could not be attempted. Instead, the suspect rapidly accelerated south such that he was trying to flee. Given the victim’s report as relayed by dispatch, I believed the suspect had committed one, and possibly several, violent felonies, so I initiated a pursuit: I immediately activated my lights and sirens followed by Officer [REDACTED] a moment later. At that hour, there were no other vehicles on the road that I can recall, nor did I see any civilians on foot. Officer [REDACTED] pursued the suspect down Barnett Road, and I followed immediately behind. I would estimate the suspect was driving at least 40–45 miles per hour through the residential streets (which had a 25–mph speed limit). The suspect quickly turned west on Penfield Road, and we continued pursuing. The suspect accelerated through the stop sign at the Penfield Road and Zettler Road intersection, and his vehicle appeared to lift off the ground due to his speed and elevation in the road. I lost sight of the suspect a moment later. I was not sure whether he turned off his car’s lights, but in any case, I did not see him. I continued following Officer [REDACTED] west on Penfield Road. At that time, I did not know whether Officer [REDACTED] had sights on the suspect vehicle. Officer [REDACTED] turned north onto Niagara Road a short distance later, and I continued following. It was about that time Officer [REDACTED] aired that he lost sight of the suspect. Moments later, Officer Choy aired that the run was out of a domestic violence incident and that the victim did not want to press charges against the suspect. In response, a sergeant, who I believed was Sgt. Lucci, aired that a pursuit was no longer authorized. I immediately obeyed that directive and deactivated my lights and sirens.”

Officer [REDACTED]–[REDACTED] also stated afterwards, “I followed Officer [REDACTED] up Niagara Road then west onto Langfield Drive. I drove about a block then turned around in a driveway near the Langfield Drive and Penfield Road intersection. After doing so, I motioned to Officer [REDACTED] that I was going to circulate the area in search of the suspect. At that time, I also saw another CPD cruiser (which I believed was Officers [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]) in the distance.”

Officer [REDACTED]–[REDACTED] stated after circulating the area, “Officer [REDACTED] aired that he had found the suspect’s car and that it was on fire. He aired for fire and medics and reported the location as 1783 Penfield Road. I immediately drove to that location and arrived within a minute. I recognized that house because I had recently responded to that same location after a drunk driver collided into the home. The suspect’s vehicle was pressed up against the southern portion of the 1783 residence.”

Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] explained, "At the time of this incident, I did not see the suspect's car collide into either residence on Penfield Road."

SA Poole asked if Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] believed his actions were consistent with his training and policy guidelines. Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] stated, "Yes."

SA Poole asked if Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] believed the officers around him during the incident took actions that were consistent with training and policy guidelines. Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] stated, "Yes."

Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] answered a few follow-up questions that were consistent with his written statement. The interview concluded at 0747 hours.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] Statement and CIN

Attachment # 02: 03-31-2022 Officer [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] Interview

STATEMENT OF OFFICER [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED], BADGE NO. [REDACTED]

This statement regards my involvement in an incident that occurred on Thursday, February 24, 2022, between approximately 1:50 a.m. and 2:10 a.m. I am providing this voluntary statement as part of the investigation concerning this incident.

I was hired by the Columbus Division of Police (CPD or the Division) on June 18, 2018. My regular assignment is 9C8, third shift (10:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m.). My regular days off are Sunday and Monday; however, at the time of this incident, my days off had been temporarily modified to Saturday and Sunday. I do not have any prior military experience.

On the day of this incident, I was wearing the winter uniform consisting of a black turtleneck, navy pants, and a navy jacket. I was also wearing an internal ballistic vest. I was carrying my Division-issued service weapon: a Smith & Wesson 2.0 9mm, loaded with Division-issued ammunition. I was not carrying a backup firearm, but I was equipped with a taser. I was operating in Cruiser [REDACTED]. I did not have a partner.

Both my vision and hearing are good; I do not need corrective lenses or hearing aids. Nor do I suffer from any disabilities. I did not consume alcohol or any prescription medication that could impair the performance of my duties in the 48 hours before this incident. Several hours before my shifted started, I worked an overtime assignment for the Teens and Police Service Academy (TAPS)—a nonprofit affiliated with the City—from about 2:45 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. I also worked an overtime assignment for TAPS on February 22 from about 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Both these overtime assignments were uneventful, however, and I arrived at my shift on February 23 well-rested.

Just before this incident, shortly before 2:00 a.m., I was parked in the lot of Berwick Elementary School. Minutes later, I was dispatched to Scottwood Road and Barnett Road:

Dispatch aired that a male had assaulted a visibly pregnant female before stealing her car, a silver sedan. Dispatch also reported that the suspect had a weapon. Officer Chris Choy was also dispatched, and Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] marked on the run. I immediately drove to the victim's location, which was only about one mile east.

I drove east on Scottwood Road, and as I neared the Barnett Road intersection, I saw two cruisers in the distance. I turned south on Barnett Road and saw Officer Choy standing on the southwest portion of the Barnett Road and Roswell Drive intersection about one block south of my location. I also saw another cruiser, who I believed was Officer [REDACTED], driving south on that street. As I approached the intersection, Officer Choy signaled with his flashlight for me to follow Officer [REDACTED].

I saw Officer [REDACTED] turn east on Roswell Drive, so I did as well, believing he was following the suspect. Officer [REDACTED] was about a quarter mile ahead of me, so I accelerated to close the distance. Around that time, Officer [REDACTED] aired that he was following a silver Ford, which matched the description given by the victim. Officer [REDACTED] was also continuously updating his location over the radio. He turned south on Courtright Road, and I continued following. Moments later, Officer [REDACTED] aired that he turned west on East Deshler Avenue. Seconds later, I turned onto that road and saw Officer [REDACTED] in the distance. Officer [REDACTED] then aired that he was stopped behind the silver car at a stop sign at E. Deshler and Barnett Road, and that he planned to pull over the car at the next stop sign once he had another cruiser.

I accelerated and caught up to Officer [REDACTED]. The silver car (which I believed was being driven by the suspect out of the assault/robbery) turned south onto Barnett Road, and Officer [REDACTED] aired that at the next stop sign he would conduct a swoop (i.e., a maneuver where one cruiser pulls directly in front of the suspect and a second cruiser pulls immediately behind the

suspect, boxing in the vehicle). As the suspect approached the stop sign at the Barnett Road and Bexvie Avenue intersection, Officer [REDACTED] pulled up and drove next to the suspect's vehicle; however, the suspect did not stop at the intersection so the swoop could not be attempted.

Instead, the suspect rapidly accelerated south such that he was trying to flee. Given the victim's report as relayed by dispatch, I believed the suspect had committed one, and possibly several, violent felonies, so I initiated a pursuit: I immediately activated my lights and sirens followed by Officer [REDACTED] a moment later. At that hour, there were no other vehicles on the road that I can recall, nor did I see any civilians on foot.

Officer [REDACTED] pursued the suspect down Barnett Road, and I followed immediately behind. I would estimate the suspect was driving at least 40-45 miles per hour through the residential streets (which had a 25-mph speed limit). The suspect quickly turned west on Penfield Road, and we continued pursuing. The suspect accelerated through the stop sign at the Penfield Road and Zettler Road intersection, and his vehicle appeared to lift off the ground due to his speed and elevation in the road.

I lost sight of the suspect a moment later. I was not sure whether he turned off his car's lights, but in any case, I did not see him. I continued following Officer [REDACTED] west on Penfield Road. At that time, I did not know whether Officer [REDACTED] had sights on the suspect vehicle. Officer [REDACTED] turned north onto Niagara Road a short distance later, and I continued following. It was about that time Officer [REDACTED] aired that he lost sight of the suspect. Moments later, Officer Choy aired that the run was out of a domestic violence incident and that the victim did not want to press charges against the suspect. In response, a sergeant, who I believed was Sgt. Lucci, aired that a pursuit was no longer authorized. I immediately obeyed that directive and deactivated my lights and sirens.

I followed Officer [REDACTED] up Niagara Road then west onto Langfield Drive. I drove about a block then turned around in a driveway near the Langfield Drive and Penfield Road intersection. After doing so, I motioned to Officer [REDACTED] that I was going to circulate the area in search of the suspect. At that time, I also saw another CPD cruiser (which I believed was Officers [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the distance. Around that time, an officer aired and asked for the suspect-car's description, and Officer [REDACTED] replied it was a silver Ford Taurus with front end damage.

I split off from the other cruisers and circulated the immediate area, but I did not see any vehicle matching the description. But after searching for a few minutes, Officer [REDACTED] aired that he had found the suspect's car and that it was on fire. He aired for fire and medics and reported the location as 1783 Penfield Road. I immediately drove to that location and arrived within a minute. I approached driving west on Penfield Road and saw the suspect's vehicle had collided into the 1783 residence. Officers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I believe CPD Officer Robert Martin were already on scene. I quickly turned around and parked on the southern side of Penfield Road, a few houses west of the wreck. By the time I got out of my cruiser, Officer [REDACTED] had also arrived.

After exiting my cruiser, I approached the residence. I recognized that house because I had recently responded to that same location after a drunk driver collided into the home. The suspect's vehicle was pressed up against the southern portion of the 1783 residence. That part of the house was visibly damaged, as was the northern portion of the house next door. An SUV, a car, and a motorcycle were parked in the house's driveway, and the suspect's car was next to (south of) the SUV. A retaining wall running along the southern part of the driveway had also been heavily damaged from the collision.

I approached the suspect's vehicle, which was on fire, and peered inside, but I did not see anyone in the vehicle. Moments before, though, an officer had already aired that the suspect was not inside. I then helped other officers move back civilians gathered near the scene. I asked some of the civilians whether that was their house, and a man and woman replied yes. The man told me that he had been inside the house when he heard sirens followed by a loud boom. Moments later, the man said, he saw flames coming from his house.

Around that time, Officer [REDACTED] signaled for me to follow him to the backyard to search for the suspect. We walked around the northern side of 1783 through a gate leading to the backyard. We quickly searched the yard, but neither of us found anyone. However, at that time, an officer aired "He's right here! He's right under the car!" Officer [REDACTED] and I ran to the front of the house toward the suspect's vehicle. Officer [REDACTED] was standing in the driveway on the passenger side of the suspect's car. I approached with Officer [REDACTED] and saw a male black (who I believed was the suspect) lying unconscious next to the passenger side of the suspect's vehicle. Officer [REDACTED] was saying, "Wake up! Wake up!" but the suspect was unresponsive. I grabbed one of the suspect's legs while Officer [REDACTED] grabbed the other leg and Officer [REDACTED] grabbed the suspect's torso. We quickly lifted the suspect past the parked vehicles and over the retaining wall. Several other officers then lifted him onto the sidewalk. By that time, medics had arrived: They quickly approached and began placing the suspect on a stretcher. Once they had done so, they transported him to the hospital.

Around that time, Sergeants Lucci, Dilly, and Wells arrived. I and the other officers were instructed to secure the scene with tape. A brief time later, I was informed that the suspect did not survive his injuries, and I was told by a supervisor to wait in a cruiser until Officer Support arrived. Sometime later, CPD Officer Alderman from Officer Support arrived and transported me

to the 11/12 Precinct Substation. I waited there until investigators with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation arrived and collected evidence. This ended my involvement in this incident.

At the time Officer [REDACTED] and I attempted to detain the suspect, we had been informed by dispatch that he had a weapon and assaulted a visibly pregnant female before stealing her vehicle, a silver car. Those acts would constitute at least one, if not several, violent felony crimes. After following and catching up to Officer [REDACTED]—who had been tailing a vehicle that matched the description given by the victim—we attempted to stop the suspect; however, he fled before the swoop maneuver could be completed. Believing he had committed one or several violent felonies, and fearing he could be a danger to others, Officer [REDACTED] and I pursued the suspect. Though we lost sight of him a brief time later, I terminated the pursuit the moment Sgt. Lucci gave the order following the victim's unwillingness to press charges. At no time do I recall seeing another vehicle driving or any civilian on foot during the pursuit.

At the time of this incident, I did not see the suspect's car collide into either residence on Penfield Road. And though I cannot say for certain when that collision happened, I believe the suspect likely wrecked just after he escaped following the intersection at Penfield Road and Zettler Road. As he was rapidly accelerating west on Penfield Road at that time, and the 1783 residence sits near a curve in that street, such a wreck could result under those conditions. And though I did not see the suspect's vehicle at the time I passed the 1783 home, I was focused on the road in front of me, searching for signs of the silver car.

Following this incident, I learned the suspect's name is Jajuan Ball. I do not know Mr. Ball, nor do I believe I have ever had any prior encounters with him. I do not recall the suspect saying anything during this incident.

After this event, I had the opportunity to review the body worn camera (BWC) and cruiser footage of the incident. From my review of that footage, it appears that the suspect did in fact wreck seconds after accelerating through the Penfield Road and Zettler Road intersection; however, because I was focused on searching for signs of the suspect's vehicle on the street, and in any case I believed Officer [REDACTED] could have sights on the vehicle, I did not see the collision or the suspect's vehicle when I initially passed the scene.

This concludes my statement.

[REDACTED]
Officer [REDACTED], Badge [REDACTED]



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



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).

[Redacted Name]

Printed Name of Interviewee

3/31/22

Date / Time

[Redacted Signature]

Signature of Interviewee

SA James Cook

BCI Agent (Printed)

SA Cook

BCI Agent (Signature)

[Handwritten Signature]