



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



2022-1472
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 2793 Waterpark Drive, Mason,
OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Thomas Henry Cromwell (S)
Date of Activity: 07/13/2022
Activity Location: Warren County Sheriff's Office – Business – 822 Memorial Drive ,
Lebanon, OH 45036, Warren County
Author: SA Steven Seitzman

Narrative:

On July 12, 2022, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) was requested to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) that took place at the Baymont hotel, located at 2793 Waterpark Drive in the city of Mason. During the OICI, an operator with the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team mortally wounded a suspect and recent River City Correctional Center escapee, Thomas Cromwell (Cromwell), during a hostage rescue situation.

On July 13, 2022, at 1633 hours, BCI Special Agents Richard Ward (SA Ward) and Steven Seitzman (SA Seitzman) interviewed Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. assistant team leader Deputy Scott Williams (Deputy Williams) regarding his involvement in the OICI. The interview was conducted at the Warren County Sheriff's Office. Fraternal Order of Police attorney Stephen Lazarus was present for Deputy Williams. The interview was recorded on a handheld digital recording device.

The details below summarize the pertinent portions of the recorded interview and are not a verbatim account. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview and may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full audio recording be reviewed to clarify the content of the interview.

Deputy Williams advised he has worked for the Warren County Sheriff's Office for twenty-four years. He has been on the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team for over twenty years. He has served as the S.W.A.T. assistant team leader for over eight years.

Deputy Williams said his role as the assistant team leader is to write grants, track attendance, direct the team, and oversee S.W.A.T. missions. He said he specifically oversees the medics and operators. In the event of S.W.A.T. team commander Sergeant Nate Trout's (Sgt. Trout) absence,

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Deputy William would become the commander.

Regarding the OICI on July 12, 2022, Deputy Williams advised agents of the following:

Deputy Williams was working road patrol in Deerfield Township and listened on his police radio as the events unfolded throughout the day in Mason. He heard that S.W.A.T. was going to be requested. Deputy Williams subsequently responded to the scene in Mason. He met with Mason Police Department Assistant Chief of Police Jerome Deidesheimer and Lieutenant Jeff Burson, both of whom gave him an overview of what had transpired prior to his arrival.

Deputy Williams described how the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team is utilized. He informed BCI agents that the S.W.A.T. team does not have ultimate command over how a situation is handled. He said the requesting agency has the ultimate authority on how the S.W.A.T. team is utilized. As an example, he said he needed permission from Mason command staff to put a small hole in the wall to determine whether there was a firewall surrounding room 310.

Deputy Williams began putting together a plan. He obtained a layout of the rooms on the third floor. He also obtained keys for the rooms surrounding 310. Once operators arrived, he put an immediate action team in place. He also determined what equipment would be needed. He waited to begin negotiations until communications equipment arrived on the scene. Once communication equipment arrived, he also developed a plan to enter the room if an exigency arose. Mechanical and explosive breaching equipment were part of the emergency entry plan. Explosive breaching equipment was placed in rooms 308 and 312 on shared walls with room 310. The explosive breaching charge in room 312 was placed to create a hole in the bathroom in room 310. The explosive breaching charge in room 308 was placed toward the middle of the wall to create a hole in the middle of room 310. The mechanical breaching equipment consisted of special shotgun breaching rounds to defeat the door locking mechanism. A countdown from "eight" was established as a plan for emergency entry. At five, the mechanical breaching would be initiated. At three, the explosive breaching would be initiated.

Deputy Williams said he was in and out of the command post. As operators arrived, he assigned their tasks. He was given updates by the negotiators as needed. He stated that negotiations were brief at first but became longer as time passed. Negotiators kept Deputy Williams briefed on the conversations with Cromwell.

Deputy Williams said contact was made with Verizon to route the phone Cromwell was using to Warren County negotiators. The hotel's air conditioning was disabled, as was the cable and Wi-Fi. He said Cromwell was particularly angry that his phone calls were routed to the negotiator.

As time went on, Deputy Williams contacted the Hamilton County S.W.A.T. team to relieve the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team. He selected Hamilton County S.W.A.T. as he believed they would have operators that were trained in explosive breaching. Once Hamilton County S.W.A.T. arrived, he was notified they did not have operators who could handle explosive breaching, so the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. explosive breachers remained in place. The Hamilton County S.W.A.T. commander advised him they would not make entry unless an exigency arose. After the teams switched, he remained in the command center with Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team commander Sergeant Gregory Trout.

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Deputy Williams learned from Sgt. Trout that Cromwell requested cigarettes and a cheeseburger in exchange for a dog that was in the room. At around the same time, he learned that Cromwell had posted a Facebook Live video showing him pointing a knife at Rose. He learned about the video from a person who called into the Warren County Dispatch Center. The video was posted on Rose's Facebook account. Cromwell also made comments to the negotiators that he wanted to "die a glorious death" and would have to be killed for Rose to be released. Based on the aforementioned information, Sgt. Trout and Deputy Williams made the decision to make an emergency deliberate entry into the room. The team was briefed on the entry plan.

The Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team returned to their positions on the third floor of the Baymont hotel. The Hamilton County S.W.A.T. team exited and remained on the perimeter outside the hotel. Deputy Williams said he ensured all Hamilton County S.W.A.T. operators were out of the hotel so as to not create any confusion between the teams. Once the Warren County Regional S.W.A.T. team was in place, the countdown was initiated as planned. Deputy Williams said he heard the countdown and the mechanical and explosive breaches.

Deputy Williams said he heard "bingo" over the radio, which indicated Rose was successfully rescued. He said the Rose was subsequently brought outside of the hotel. Aside from the breaching explosions, he did not hear any shots fired. Deputy Williams responded up to the third floor, where he learned Cromwell was shot and deceased. He observed that Cromwell was handcuffed with flex cuffs.

Deputy Williams contacted Warren County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Barry Riley to notify him of the incident. Deputy Williams then instructed the S.W.A.T. team members to leave any item involved in the scene where it was. He told them to collect any uninvolved equipment. Deputy Williams obtained permission from BCI to move the team's armored trucks, which were used to transport the team. The team was transported to the Warren County Drug Task Force to await further instructions. Deputy Williams ordered the team not to discuss the events that transpired. The Hamilton County S.W.A.T. team remained outside the hotel to provide security.

The interview was concluded at 1707 hours. The audio recording is attached below.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2022-07-13/ Warren County Sheriff's Office Deputy Scott Williams Interview

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.