



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



2024-1584
Officer Involved Critical Incident, 27695 Tracy Road, Walbridge,
OH 43465, (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: James D Brazeau (W)
Date of Activity: 05/23/2024
Activity Location: Perrysburg Township Police Department – 26711 Lime City Road,
Perrysburg, OH 43551
Author: SA Tiffany Najmulski, #49

Narrative:

On June 7th, 2024, at approximately 1115 hours, Special Agents Tiffany Najmulski (Najmulski) and Chris Hamberg (Hamberg) went to the Perrysburg Township Police Department, located at 26711 Lime City Road, Perrysburg, Ohio to meet with and interview Officer James Brazeau (Officer Brazeau). The meeting was in regards to the incident that occurred with Beau Purtee (Purtee) on May 23, 2024. Also present for the interview was attorney for the Ohio Patrolman's Benevolent Association (OPBA), Yvonne Trevino (Trevino). The following is a summary of the interview which was digitally recorded and attached to this report and the case file.

SA Najmulski asked Officer Brazeau if he was willing to speak with agents, that he read and sign the Criminal Investigation Notification form, which he did. Officer Brazeau advised he has been with the Perrysburg Township Police Department for approximately 1 year. Before that, Officer Brazeau worked at the Swanton Police Department for 6 years and the Genoa Police Department and Clay Township. Officer Brazeau said he obtained his Ohio Peace Officer's Certificate in the year 2014. He has training in CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) and is also a firearms instructor.

On the incident date, Officer Brazeau said he was working the night shift which was 1800 hours to 0600 hours. Officer Brazeau said his supervisor for the shift was Sgt. Ross Wheatley. He said he was driving unit 414 and his call number to dispatch was 125. Officer Brazeau said he was driving a fully marked Dodge Durango and wearing a Perrysburg Township uniform with an outside carrier with patches. On his belt he carried his Glock 9mm, taser, flashlight, 2 pairs of handcuffs, radio, and body cam. Officer Brazeau said he had the camera during the incident.

Officer Brazeau said he was on a call for service at Kohl's department store when the call for an armed man with a gun, at Tracy Road Lot 327, was dispatched. Dispatch radioed that the

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Approved By SAS Scott A. Stranahan on
06/28/2024

man said someone was trying to kill him. Officer Brazeau's recollection was that it seemed the dispatcher was having trouble getting information from the caller. Officer Brazeau said he went lights and sirens all the way to the location. When the units arrived, they all went to lot 327 because that was the lot number given to them by dispatch. Officer Brazeau said he could hear yelling coming from the ditch area, in a northern direction from Tracy Road so officers began walking that direction.

SA Hamberg handed Officer Brazeau a picture (attached) of the incident area to refer to. Officer Brazeau stated officers made it past the corner of a trailer close to the ditch (indicated by marking the number 1) as he heard 3–5 gunshots and saw muzzle flashes. Officer Brazeau said he could not see a person, but he could hear yelling and as shots were fired, he and Officer Gearig took cover at the nearest trailer (#1 on map).

Officer Johnson and Sgt. Wheatley retrieved their rifles from their patrol cars. Officer Gearig wanted to shut the roadway down because gun shots continued as cars were driving by and officers feared a passerby would get shot.

Officer Brazeau said Officer Johnson took a position behind a large tree. Sgt. Wheatley took a position back with Officer Brazeau and Officer Gearig behind the trailer and aimed his rifle towards the ditch. Officer Brazeau said he saw what looked like a flashlight moving around at the bottom of the ditch. Officer Brazeau said they were having trouble seeing in the ditch, even when using their own lights because of how deep, steep and dark the ditch was.

SA Najmulski asked Officer Brazeau what the subject was doing while officers took cover. Officer Brazeau said the subject was yelling and the subject's flashlight was panning around. Officer Brazeau said he was concerned to use his own flashlight because he would be giving his position up.

SA Najmulski asked Officer Brazeau if he ever gave verbal commands or announced he was the police and he said no. Officer Brazeau explained that since officers were fired upon when they first approached in his opinion they were "beyond that scope".

Officer Brazeau told agents the subject began firing approximately 5 shots and the rounds were going past the officers. Officer Brazeau went on to say, he could hear the rounds hitting the tree that Officer Johnson was behind. Officer Brazeau advised Sgt. Wheatley then returned fire, shooting 3–5 rounds.

SA Najmulski asked Officer Brazeau if he heard anything else from the subject after Sgt. Wheatley shot. Officer Brazeau said after Sgt. Wheatley shot his rounds, Officer Brazeau thought he heard a round go off that was different from Sgt. Wheatley's gun and believed it was from the subject's gun. Officer Brazeau said Sgt. Wheatley fired his gun approximately 2 more times and that time the flashlight the subject had stopped moving.

Officers wanted to get closer to make contact with the subject, so according to Officer Brazeau's understanding, Sgt. Wheatley got in his patrol car to get closer to the subject and he still could not see anything. Officer Brazeau said officers were unsure where the subject was and thought maybe the subject left the ditch and doubled back to sneak up behind them.

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The subject's flashlight was still in in the ditch, so the officers started from that point to see if the subject was there. Officers located the subject in the ditch still holding a firearm in his hand and there was no movement. Officer Brazeau saw that the subject's flashlight he kept seeing was a tail mounted light on the subject's handgun. Officer Brazeau said every time he looked down in the ditch and saw the bright light it was actually the muzzle of a gun pointed right at him.

SA Najmulski asked Officer Brazeau if he ever heard a second person or saw a second person in the subject's area. Officer Brazeau said no, and he had wondered about the subject saying someone was trying to kill him. Officer Brazeau then added, "But no, there was no one else, just him".

SA Hamberg asked if any of the officers performed life saving measures and Officer Brazeau said Sgt. Wheatley checked for a pulse and there was no sign of life.

Officer Brazeau said he never fired his gun. There was nothing more Officer Brazeau had to add, and the interview concluded at 1139 hours.

This report only summarizes the information deemed by the author to be of the most relevance to the investigation and does not purport to contain all questions and answers from the audio recording. 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 or responses. It is suggested that the full audio recording be reviewed to clarify any content or contextual questions regarding the information from the audio recording.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: Officer James Brazeau

Attachment # 02: Officer Brazeau criminal notification form and map

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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).

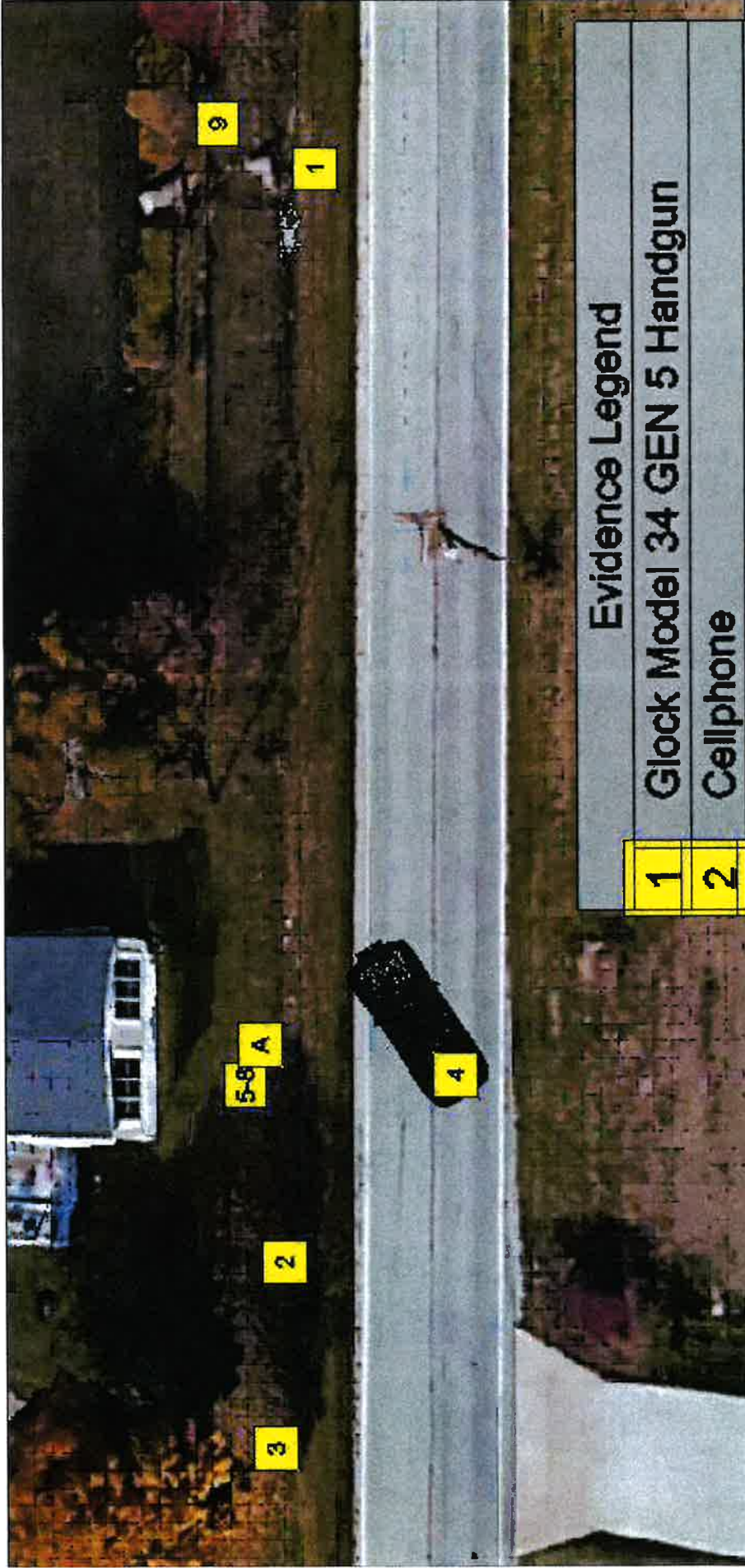
James D. Brazier #
Printed Name of Interviewee

6/7/24 1117
Date / Time

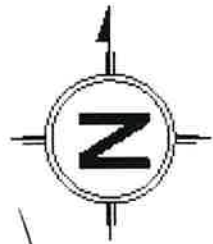
James D. Brazier #
Signature of Interviewee

Tiffany Najmulski
BCI Agent (Printed)

Tiffany Najmulski 6/7/24
BCI Agent (Signature)



James P. Bryan #
 6/7/24
 1139 HRS



Evidence Legend	
1	Glock Model 34 GEN 5 Handgun
2	Cellphone
3	Flashlight
4	AR Rifle 556
5-8	Fired Cartridge Casing (556 Hornady)
9	Fired Cartridge Casing (SIG 9mm Luger)
A	Fired Cartridge Casing (556 Hornady)

Location
 Roadway - 27695 Tracy Rd., Walbridge, OH

2024-1584

Perrysburg Township Police Department
 Date Drawn
 05/31/2024

Drawn By
 Emily Miller
 Section / Unit
 BCI-Crime Scene - North
 Not to Scale