



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



2022-1354

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 135 Old National Rd, Lore City
(L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Witness
Involves: Officer Jacob Mills (W)
Date of Activity: 06/25/2022
Author: SA James H Gore, #168

Narrative:

On the morning of June 25, 2022 at approximately 0300 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) James Gore interviewed Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Parks and Watercraft Officer Jacob Mills. The purpose of the interview was to obtain an account of what Ofc. Mills witnessed regarding an Officer-Involved Critical Incident which took place in Old Washington, Guernsey County, Ohio, earlier on the previous evening. The interview took place on scene, near the site of the incident.

Ofc. Mills explained that on the night of the incident (appx. 9:45 – 10:00 p.m.), he was at Salt Fork State Park with his training officer, ODNR Ofc. Jacob Rettenberger, when their dispatcher asked if they had 'spike strips' to assist with a vehicle pursuit. Ofc. Mills said they did not have spike strips, since it was ODNR's policy to not engage in vehicle pursuits. Ofc. Mills said he and Ofc. Rettenberger instead opted to position their vehicle near the entrance to the park on U.S. Route 22 to prevent traffic from the park from entering the roadway while the pursuit was taking place.

Ofc. Mills said he recalled seeing a vehicle from Ohio State Patrol (OSP) pass their location with lights and sirens activated, and he overheard on the radio (MARCS S.O. 30 and/or OSP Cambridge Post) that officers were attempting to set up a spike strip location at Lake Ridge Road, which was adjacent to the park. Ofc. Mills said they believed the OSP vehicle they observed was possibly at the tail-end of the pursuit, so he and Ofc. Rettenberger pulled onto U.S. 22 and trailed behind at a distance. Ofc. Mills said their vehicle lights were activated to prevent other traffic from encroaching on the pursuit. Neither Ofc. Mills nor Ofc. Rettenberger were equipped with body-worn cameras, and their vehicle did not have a dash camera.

Ofc. Mills said the radio traffic indicated that the pursuit was turning south onto Beeham Run Road, but he believed the vehicles were traveling slowly. Ofc. Mills said on a few occasions, he and Ofc. Rettenberger stopped to move vehicle debris out of the roadway because the lead vehicle had apparently been damaged by spike strips. Ofc. Mills stated the pursuit ended in the vicinity of Beeham Run Rd. and Old National Rd. (U.S. 40).

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Ofc. Mills said they observed numerous police units conducting a felony stop of the pursued vehicle, so he and Ofc. Rettenberger exited their vehicle and approached to assist. Ofc. Mills said he positioned himself on the right side of one of the Barnesville police vehicles on the roadway.



Ofc. Mills recalled hearing an officer yelling commands to the occupant of the pursued vehicle. He said he was initially unsure if it was a Barnesville officer, but he later heard the officer identify himself as Sheriff Paden. The sheriff, Ofc. Mills recalled, continuously yelled for the occupant to show her hands and other words to that effect. Mills he heard muffled dialogue coming from the driver's window of the pursued vehicle. There was a prolonged verbal exchange between the occupant, Sheriff Paden and other officers, according to Ofc. Mills.

Ofc. Mills said he later observed a K-9 handler from Cambridge Police approach the disabled vehicle with his dog. Ofc. Mills said the K-9 officer soon retreated with the dog after yelling, 'She's got a gun! She's got a gun!' It was Ofc. Mill's understanding that the female occupant pointed the gun at the dog as it was at her driver's window. Ofc. Mills stated that a standoff then ensued.

Ofc. Mills explained that verbal exchanges between Sheriff Paden and the female subject

continued. He said he could only make out bits and pieces of what she said, but he recalled her mention something about her warrants being cleared up, as she claimed she was viewing information about the warrants on her phone. Sheriff Paden, Mills said, repeatedly asked the subject to put the gun down, and she reportedly responded that she had a right to have a gun. The woman sat in the driver's seat the entire time until officers later forced her out, Ofc. Mills reported.

Ofc. Mills said he later heard over the radio that the SWAT Team (Special Weapons and Tactics) was going to approach the vehicle and deploy a flash-bang (distraction device) to get the occupant out of her vehicle. Mills reported that the SWAT Team members approached the woman's vehicle from the rear, traveling past his location between the right side of one of the Barnesville vehicles and a blue Ford Ranger (parked off roadway).

Ofc. Mills stated that SWAT Team members broke a passenger side window of the subject's vehicle and deployed the flash-bang. Ofc. Mills said the team members reported that shots were fired, and shots were exchanged between the subject and officers. Mills said he did not see the exchange of fire from his position behind cover, but he believed he heard five shots. He recalled hearing team members yelling at the woman to drop the gun before shots were fired. After the shooting, the officers removed the woman from her vehicle and rendered first aid, Ofc. Mills reported.

Ofc. Mills described the female subject as a middle-aged woman with dirty blonde or darker blonde hair. Ofc. Mills recalled hearing Sheriff Paden call the woman by her first name, "Joy," as he tried to negotiate with her. Mills said he did not personally know the subject, nor has he had any prior dealings with her.

Ofc. Mills stated that he would complete an ODNR report regarding his and Ofc. Rettenberger's involvement under case #22NR0003776. SA Gore's receipt of that document will be the subject of a separate report.

An audio recording of Ofc. Mills' interview is available for further review as an attachment to this report.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: ODNR Ofc. Jacob Mills Interview 6-25-2022 – Gore