



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



2024-2718

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 248 E. 11th Avenue,
Columbus, OH 43201 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Witness

Involves: Messaoud Mezrar (W), Lamine Mahmoudi (S), Columbus Police Department (O)

Date of Activity: 09/12/2024

Author: SA James H Gore, #168

Narrative:

On the afternoon of September 12, 2024, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) James Gore spoke with Messaoud Mezrar by phone. Mr. Mezrar was identified from his phone number, as it appeared on the police dispatch notes on one of the events which preceded an Officer-Involved Critical Incident from September 10, 2024, involving Columbus Police and a subject identified as Lamine Mahmoudi. The purpose of the contact was to obtain relevant information regarding Mr. Mahmoudi, who died as a result of injuries sustained from the confrontation. The incident occurred in the rear parking lot of the Columbus Division of Police (CPD) Precinct 4 Substation, which was a short distance from Lamine Mahmoudi's residence (235 Chittenden Ave., Columbus). The following is a summary of the conversation.

Mr. Mezrar stated that he was a friend of Mahmoudi's, and they were both from Algeria. According to Mezrar, Mahmoudi spoke and understood English, and he had been in the United States since 2012 or 2013. Prior to living in Ohio, Mahmoudi resided in New York for a short time. Mezrar stated that Mahmoudi did not have any children or family members in the U.S., though he was once married to an American woman. Mahmoudi's ex-wife, Mezrar believed, lived somewhere in Florida.

Mr. Mezrar explained that prior to the incident, Mahmoudi had been making preparations to return to Algeria to visit his family. Mahmoudi reportedly borrowed some money from Mezrar so that he could pay off his cell phone bill, because he did not want to have bad credit when he returned to the U.S. On the morning of September 09, 2024, Mezrar recalled, Mahmoudi told him to come over so that he could pay him back his money. Mezrar claimed that Mahmoudi was making delusional, paranoid statements, and he was reluctant to travel back to Algeria. According to Mezrar, Mahmoudi believed the Algerian government would harm him if he returned.

Mr. Mezrar said he later returned to Mahmoudi's home to check on him (see Columbus Police Dispatch run [REDACTED], 1859 hours). Mezrar stated he saw Mahmoudi in the doorway

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Approved By SAS James A. Mulford on
10/14/2024

with a small knife in his hand, with blood on his wrist. Mezrar said he tried to grab the knife from Mahmoudi, but Mahmoudi shut the door on him and told him to leave. Mr. Mezrar called police, and this led to the first of two engagements Columbus Police had with Lamine Mahmoudi on September 09, 2024, prior to the fatal encounter on September 10, 2024.

Mezrar explained that Mahmoudi worked as a food delivery driver (Door Dash or Uber Eats), and he previously worked at a pizza restaurant, which Mezrar believed was called "Sicily's." Mezrar said he believed Mahmoudi had roommates, but he did not know any of them, and he said he did not think they were present when Mahmoudi had interactions with the police. Mezrar said he has been in contact with Mahmoudi's family in Algeria, and also with the Algerian Embassy in New York.

Upon later reviewing body-worn camera (BWC) footage of responders to the first dispatch run involving Lamine Mahmoudi, SA Gore observed that CPD Sergeant Matthew Weber briefly spoke with Messaoud Mezrar on scene, in front of Mahmoudi's residence. It was noted that Mezrar's statement to Sgt. Weber was substantially consistent with what he reported to SA Gore, with the following additional information. Mahmoudi's family purchased a plane ticket for him to travel back to Algeria. Earlier that morning (September 09, 2024), Mezrar received a call from Mahmoudi's sister and father, and they relayed that Mahmoudi said he was not coming back. Mezrar said he called Mahmoudi, then traveled to his home to try to convince him to go. Mezrar said Mahmoudi made statements to the effect that the government was going to get him. Mahmoudi called him later to come get his money, which is when Mezrar observed Mahmoudi bleeding from his wrist. (For additional context, see Sgt. Weber's BWC footage, Axon™ case ID [REDACTED])

SA Gore's phone conversation with Messaoud Mezrar was recorded, but due to a technical error, the first thirty seconds or so of the call were not captured. The recording is available for further review as an attachment to this report.

References:

1. Columbus Police Dispatch Notes, call run [REDACTED] 9/09/2024
2. CPD Sgt. Matthew Weber BWC footage, Axon™ case ID # [REDACTED]

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 20240912-133437- Massaoud Mezrar phone interview – Gore