



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



2024-3954

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 3487 Belmont Avenue,
Youngstown, Ohio, 44505

Investigative Activity: Witness Officer Interview – Detective Robert Altier
Involves: Jason A. Cain (S)
Activity Date: 12/16/2024
Activity Location: Liberty Township Police Department – 1315 Churchill Hubbard Road, Liberty Township, Ohio
Authoring Agent: SA Joseph Goudy

Narrative:

On Monday, December 16, 2024, at 1915 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Joseph Goudy (Goudy) interviewed Liberty Township Police Department (LTPD) Detective Robert Altier (Altier). The interview took place at the Liberty Township Police Department, located at 1315 Churchill Hubbard Road, Liberty Township, Ohio. The interview was video recorded.

Detective Altier was identified as being a police officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the December 16, 2024 officer-involved shooting which occurred in the area of 3487 Belmont Avenue, Liberty Township, Ohio. Reportedly, Detective Altier did not discharge a firearm during the course of the incident. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information about the incident known or observed by this officer.

Detective Altier has been employed by the LTPD for about 19 years. He has been a police officer for a total of 25 years. During the incident, Detective Altier was wearing plain clothes due to his position as a task force officer with the Mahoning County Drug Task Force (MCDTF). He also wore an external ballistic vest with law enforcement markings attached. He drove a black Dodge Ram truck, which is his assigned unmarked vehicle for the MCDTF. The vehicle had undercover emergency lights and siren which were used during the incident. He considered himself to be well-represented as a police officer during the incident.

Detective Altier stated that, while he was out conducting an operation with the MCDTF, he received information regarding a FLOCK alert for a stolen vehicle in the area. The FLOCK alert indicated that there was a white Jeep Cherokee with a stolen license plate in the area and to be on the lookout. During that time, Detective Altier responded to the area where the alert came from. Detective Altier stated that Officer Brandon Rice

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stated over the radio that he had located the vehicle parked in the parking lot of Harbor Freight. At this point, Detective Altier made his way there.

Upon arrival in the parking lot, Detective Altier stated that as he drove by the vehicle, he confirmed the license plate with dispatch and indicated that the vehicle was tinted with two occupants. At this point Detective Altier stated that Captain Buhala asked, "you got a vest on, I said, I'm getting one on now." (05:59 mark) Detective Altier stated that after he drove by the Jeep, he drove further down the parking lot to put his ballistic vest on. Detective Altier described his vest as to having law enforcement identifiers, such as the word "police" in large white letters. Detective Altier also stated that he had his badge hanging from around his neck.

After Detective Altier put his vest on, he stated that Captain Buhala was asking where the other marked units were. Detective Altier then stated that Captain Buhala said, "let's just, let's just pin him in right here. We do that so we don't get into a pursuit, um, one of the things we've been talking about was to try to amp back down on the pursuits because everybody runs nowadays." (06:32 mark)

Detective Altier stated that Captain Buhala said when all of the marked vehicles are in the area, they would all move in to pin the vehicle in and conduct a vehicle take down. As they began to move in, Detective Altier stated that he positioned his vehicle near the front of the Jeep and bumped into the vehicle to know he was close to the vehicle, while Captain Buhala pulled directly behind with his emergency lights and sirens activated. At this point, Detective Altier stated that he also had his emergency lights activated on his vehicle. Shortly thereafter, additional marked units arrived to assist.

Detective Altier stated,

"I bailed out, we do the vehicle CQB training, I bailed out, started to go behind my vehicle, Officer Ryan had pulled in parallel to me, he had already bailed out, he was positioned up behind his vehicle, I yell, coming to you, I ran up, I said behind you. I got behind him on, like, his back right shoulder. We were looking up and I said, well, we're in a real bad spot. I said we're not, we gotta get out of here. Right about that time, I heard the suspect gunning his motor, (made sound of a revving engine), I said Nick, we gotta get the hell out of here, we're in, were in a fucking bad spot, I said, I said let's go." (07:55 mark)

At this point, Detective Altier described how he moved from his previous position towards the back of his truck. During this time, he stated that he heard the Jeep striking another one of their vehicles. When Detective Altier was in view, he observed the Jeep crashing into Captain Buhala's vehicle and pushing his vehicle backwards.

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Detective Altier stated that he did not know where Captain Buhala was at that moment. Detective Altier continued to describe the smashing and grinding sounds he heard caused by the Jeep crashing into the LTPD vehicles. At this point, Detective Altier stated that while he was looking for a safer place to be, he looked back to see if Officer Nick Ryan was still behind him. It was at this moment that Detective Altier became concerned about Officer Ryan's safety because he was no longer behind him. Detective Altier was concerned about Officer Ryan because he observed the Jeep crashing into and pushing Officer Ryan's vehicle. Detective Altier stated the last known position of Officer Ryan was behind the right rear side of the LTPD-marked vehicle that was being crashed into and pushed by the Jeep.

At this point, Detective Altier described when he first noticed [REDACTED]

Detective Altier stated,

"I saw [REDACTED] I saw him up and I heard pow, and I'm like, oh fuck, whose, where's that coming from. And then I saw GT, [REDACTED] I can actually see him shooting. And when he was shooting, the other vehicle, the suspect's vehicle was just plowing into what appeared to me, plowing into uh, another officer, Nick Ryan's vehicle. And then he, after he makes that contact and pushes that vehicle out of the way, the suspect vehicle continues to go forward, uh, smashes into the building, goes into the building." (10:10 mark)

After the vehicle smashed into the building, Detective Altier stated that the officers on scene took cover and began giving commands to the occupants of the Jeep. During this time, a female exited the front passenger seat and was ordered to walk back towards the officers. As the female approached Detective Altier, he stated that he immediately detained her and patted her down just before handing her over to another officer, so he could continue clearing the subject's vehicle. It was at this time that Detective Altier, upon the request from other officers, retrieved his task force issued ballistic shield to use as officers decided to advance on the Jeep.

Detective Altier stated that once a plan was made to advance on the Jeep, he maintained the shield as they made their approach. Detective Altier stated that when they approached the passenger side of the Jeep, he observed the subject, Cain, sitting in the driver's seat with a "large black object on his leg." Detective Altier stated that he thought it might have been a gun. He described it as to being black with tubes coming out of the front of it. After seeing the object Detective Altier believed it to be a gun, he reached in to grab the object. After retrieving the object, he moved it over to the

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passenger side floor area. In addition, he removed a folding knife that was clipped to Cain's belt or pocket area and moved that to the side away from him. (12:40 mark)

Detective Altier stated that they then moved over to the driver's side where they eventually began administering emergency aid to Cain. Detective Altier stated that due to the damage to the vehicle, they were not able to open the door and remove him from the vehicle. During this time, Detective Altier stated that he noticed a wound to Cain's head, at which time they began treating the wound until EMS arrived.

The interview concluded at approximately 2030 hours.

The interview was video recorded. The video recording can be found in evidence.com as reference item B. A diagram of the incident created by Detective Altier was attached to this report. Please see the video interview and attachment and for further details.

References:

Ref Item B – Officer Interviews

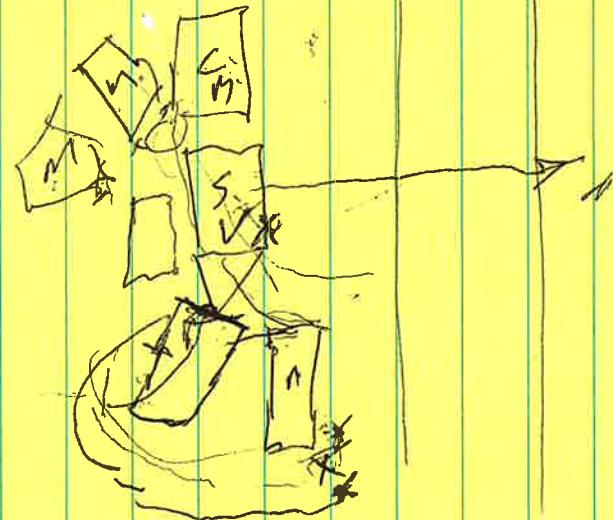
Attachments:

1. Diagram of incident by Detective Robert Altier

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~~Robert Valet~~ 12-16-24
Robert Valet