



**Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Prosecutor Summary**



Officer-Involved Critical Incident – 24-1755

To: Shayla Favor, Franklin County Prosecutor
Cc: SAS Kevin Barbeau, Special Agent Supervisor, Ohio BCI
From: SA Matthew Collins, Special Agent, Ohio BCI
Date: February 18, 2025
Involves: CPD; Noel Cortaza
Case Title: Officer Involved Critical Incident - 4500 Block of Sullivant Ave,
Columbus, OH (L)
BCI Case Numbers: Special Investigations (SIU): 2024-1755
BCI Laboratory: 24-15291

Investigative Request

On Tuesday, June 11, 2024, through an active MOU, Chief Elaine Bryant of the City of Columbus-Division of Police (CPD) requested the assistance of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation's (BCI) Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Crime Scene Unit (CSU) in conducting an independent investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding an officer-involved shooting incident. The incident reportedly occurred on June 11, 2024 in the 4500 block of Sullivant Ave. and resulted in the Death of Noel Cortaza.

Preface:

This report serves as a synopsis of the investigation into the June 11, 2024 officer-involved shooting in Franklin County, Ohio. This report only summarizes the information that the investigative team determined to be the most useful in achieving an overall understanding of what occurred in this incident. Every fact and detail is not presented in this summary report. Therefore, it is recommended that each individual report from which this document is derived be read in order to obtain a complete understanding of this investigation. Further, audio and/or video recordings exist for the majority of the interviews conducted, revealing further details of statements given regarding the incident.

This investigation was conducted with the purpose of determining, to the extent possible, the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident. As unbiased collectors of fact, the investigative team has not and will not render any opinion of the legality of officers' actions. Instead, it is anticipated that this investigation will provide the basis of information for decisions to be rendered by the appropriate authorities.

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Investigative Team

Lead BCI Special Agent:

- SA Matt Collins

Assisting Investigative BCI Special Agents:

- SA Kyle Douglass
- SA Carrie Ryan
- SA Chad Holcomb
- SA Ryan Emahiser

BCI Crime Scene Special Agents:

- SA Aja Chung
- CST Amy Gill

BCI Cyber Crime Personnel:

- SAS Justin Root

Summary of Process

The following is a partial list of investigative activities or methods which were employed during the course of this investigation, by the investigative team, in an effort to thoroughly and accurately locate and document all pertinent facts and circumstances regarding this incident:

- Recorded interview(s) of the five officers who discharged their weapons
- Recorded interviews of witness officers who were involved in the incident, at the scene, or otherwise deemed to potentially have relevant information
- Neighborhood canvass of the area surrounding the scene
- Interviews of civilian witnesses to the incident
- Interviews of family members or associates of the decedent
- Special agent (CSU) attendance to postmortem examination (autopsy) of the deceased
- Obtained and reviewed postmortem examination (autopsy) and toxicology reports
- Obtained and reviewed police reports of prior law enforcement contacts with the subject
- Obtained and reviewed open and closed-source biographical information on the involved subjects, to include criminal history reports, OHLEG, driving records, etc.

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- FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC) checks on any non-law enforcement weapons involved in the incident (to determine if reported stolen)
- Review of all available dash cameras involved in the incident
- Review of all available body cameras involved in the incident
- Review of all available surveillance video which captured any portion of the incident
- Processing of the scene for potential evidence (photographing, searching, measuring, documenting, and collecting)
- 3D scans / model of incident area
- Processing of involved vehicle(s) for potential evidence
- Reviewed audio communications on the radio frequencies utilized during the incident
- Review of 911/phone communications related to the incident
- Review of dispatch/CAD records pertaining to the incident
- Review of Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) communications relative to the incident
- Review of the department's reports, photographs, and investigative materials pertaining to the incident, excluding any Garrity statements or information derived from any compelled statement
- Conducted forensic laboratory examinations to include:
 1. Firearm identification testing of involved firearms, casings, and bullets
 2. Firearm operability testing
- Collected and reviewed the departmental personnel files of the officers involved in the shooting, to include training and disciplinary records (if any)
- Reviewed firearm qualification and training records for involved officers
- Verified the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) certification status of the officer(s) who discharged their weapons
- Obtained the department's policies and procedures regarding use of force for prosecutorial review
- Enhancement of audio/video recordings through the assistance of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission
- Reviewed EMS records pertaining to their response and the treatment administered
- Reviewed tips, social media posts, and pertinent statements made in the media regarding the incident

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Incident Summary/Overview

On June 10, 2024 at 2315 hours, multiple CPD officers responded to the area of Georgesville Road and Clime Road for a report of a subject with a knife. It was further reported, the subject, later identified as Noel Cortaza (Cortaza), was wearing khaki pants and a green shirt, approaching individual's vehicles and banging on their windows.

Officers arrived in the area and located a green Toyota Corolla (subject Vehicle). The vehicle was sitting in the middle of the roadway. Officers Bell and Dorsey got behind the vehicle. Cortaza exited the subject vehicle briefly. Cortaza was hitting the front of the subject vehicle, while appearing to have something in his hand. Cortaza got back into the subject vehicle and continued to travel at a slow speed (as reported by officers).

Cortaza again stopped his vehicle, this time near the intersection of Sullivant Avenue and Industrial Mile Road. When Cortaza exited the subject vehicle, he was walking with what appeared to be something in his right hand. Cortaza was walking away from officers, who were yelling verbal commands (both in English and in Spanish) for Cortaza to stop and to put his hands up. [REDACTED] deployed his Taser, in the direction of Cortaza. Cortaza turned around, back towards the officers and was heard saying something in Spanish as he quickly walked into the direction of [REDACTED] and other officers.

Cortaza continued to quickly walk back in the direction of the officers, who were walking backwards. Cortaza closed the gap, and officers began firing their respective firearms. Cortaza was struck and went to the ground, falling onto his front side. Officers secured Cortaza and began rendering aid until medics arrived.

Subsequent Investigation

The following information is derived from police reports, radio traffic, BWC video, and statements.

On June 10, 2024 at approximately 1722 hours, CPD Officers Johnson and White were dispatched to a "non-violent 16B" at 1745 Pheasant Run E. Dispatch received a call from a neighbor of Cortaza, who was reporting Cortaza was not speaking coherent sentences and had locked himself inside his apartment. When officers arrived, Cortaza told them he did not want help and would not open or unlock the door, because he thought someone was in his basement playing video games. Officers were told by Cortaza's neighbors/relatives that Cortaza had

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mental health issues and had attempted to harm himself in the past (approximately one year or more ago). Cortaza was reported to be in the apartment alone and did not have any known weapons. When officers made contact with Cortaza, who was speaking out of the upstairs apartment window, Cortaza told them he was fine and he was tired. Officers attempted to get Cortaza to open his door, but he refused. Cortaza kept telling his relatives, he was tired, hot and just wanted to be left alone. Due to Cortaza not making any threats to himself or others, officers left the area and closed the call.

This information above was not learned until SA Collins accompanied CPD officers to Pheasant Run on June 11, 2024, in an attempt to notify the next of kin of Cortaza's passing. It was then, a neighbor mentioned officers being there "the day before". A search through CPD's dispatch records revealed the above information and SA Collins obtained those officer's BWC. SA Emahiser assisted with translation upon viewing the BWC.

On June 10, 2024 at 2315 hours, officers were dispatched to the area of Georgesville Road and Clime Road for a report of a subject jumping in the street and trying to get vehicles to stop. It was further reported, the subject had a knife. The subject (Cortaza) was reported to be a Hispanic male wearing a green shirt and khaki pants. At one point another caller described them to be a White male wearing black clothing. From the dispatch records, there appeared to be multiple callers. At 2323 hours, a call came in reporting Cortaza was in the Turkey Hill and threatening people. Cortaza was reported to have left the business heading southbound (corrected to northbound). Officers arrived in the area and were searching for Cortaza. At 2325 hours, Unit [REDACTED] advised Cortaza had a knife in his hand, hitting his own car. A review of their respective BWCs revealed Cortaza standing on the driver's side of the subject vehicle, walking out in front of it and swinging his arm in an up and down motion. A banging sound could be heard. During a video review, conducted by SA Emahiser, Cortaza was heard saying, "Me van a matar" which translates to "you're (plural) going to kill me". SA Emahiser indicated Cortaza was saying other things too. However, due to the distance and officers yelling commands, he could not make out what was being said by Cortaza.

Cortaza got back into the subject vehicle and continued traveling at a slow speed. While [REDACTED] (same patrol vehicle) were behind the subject vehicle, another unit passed them in order to get ahead of them. According to [REDACTED] Unit 103 was going to get in front and deploy spike strips. [REDACTED] also reported, it appeared Cortaza swerved into the direction of Unit 103 as Unit 103 was passing the subject vehicle on the driver's side.

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Ultimately Cortaza stopped the subject vehicle in the area of Sullivant Avenue and Industrial Mile. [REDACTED] gets out of the patrol car and Cortaza is seen outside of the subject vehicle, which was parked in the middle of the roadway. Cortaza was seen on the driver's side of the subject vehicle, walking in the middle of the roadway. [REDACTED] was heard saying, "Manos arriba" (hands up) and Cortaza yells back, "Matan me, Matan me," which translates to "kill me, kill me". Again, SA Emahiser noted the majority of communications were unintelligible due to officers loudly giving Cortaza verbal commands. As officers approached Cortaza, continuing to give verbal commands, Cortaza was still walking in the middle of the roadway, away from the subject vehicle. [REDACTED] deployed his Taser as Cortaza was walking away from officers. After the Taser deployment, Cortaza turned toward the officers and began walking back toward them with his arms raising and lowering quickly. Cortaza was viewed with what appeared to be an object in his right hand. Another officer is heard saying something to the effect of, "tase him again". [REDACTED] activated the Taser a second time (see *Figure 1*). The Taser could be heard making it's audible clicking sound, which indicates it was activated or otherwise sending an electrical current. Cortaza did not appear to be affected by either of the Taser deployments, as he continued moving into the direction of officers, holding something in his right hand (see *Figures 2 and 3*). It appeared Cortaza's pace of movement/s increased as he closed the gap between, him and the officers.



Figure 1 [REDACTED] BWC): F26166_ 2nd Taser deployment

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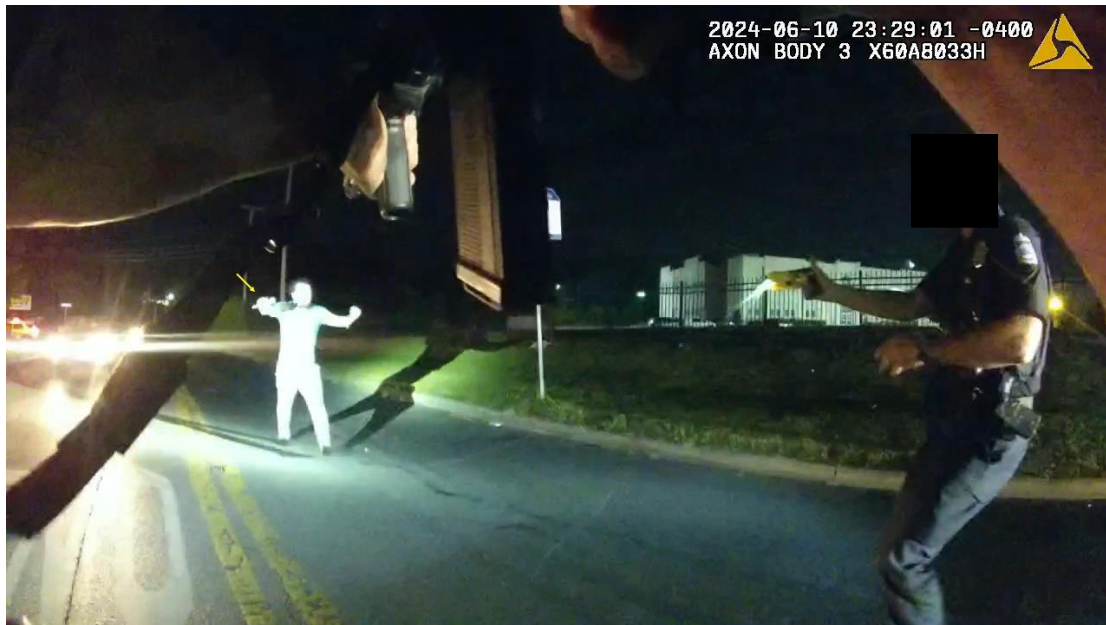


Figure 2 [REDACTED] BWC): F26225_Cortaza coming into the direction of [REDACTED] and other officers



Figure 3 [REDACTED] BWC): F9995_Cortaza continuing into direction of officers with something sticking out of both side of his right hand

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As Cortaza continued to move into the direction of officers, they could be heard issuing verbal commands to Cortaza. Ultimately, multiple officers fired multiple shots, striking Cortaza. *Figures 4 and 5* depict the approximate moment before shots began to be fired as well as during them being fired.



Figure 4 [REDACTED] BWC); F10061_Moment before shots fired



Figure 5 [REDACTED] BWC); F26346_Approximate moment 1st shots were fired.

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After shots were fired, officers approached Cortaza. The item in his right hand was removed by [REDACTED] (see Figure 6)



Figure 6 [REDACTED] WC): F104226_Item in Cortaza's right hand_removed by [REDACTED]

Post-Mortem Examination / Autopsy Report

The autopsy report for the decedent (Noel Hernandez Cortaza) was obtained from the Franklin County Coroner's Office. A review of those documents revealed the following information:

The cause of death for Cortaza was determined to be [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Physical Evidence and Laboratory Reports

BCI Crime Scene Unit (CSU) agents processed the scene and noted the following:

When BCI CSU Special Agent Aja Chung (SA Chung) arrived, she noted the intersection was cordoned off with yellow and red tape. The green Honda Accord (OH/JFX8729) operated by Cortaza was parked, facing West, on Sullivant Avenue. at Industrial Mile Road. CPD cruisers [REDACTED] and 9191 were located behind the green Honda with their overhead lights activated. A large blood stain was observed in the eastbound left turn lane of Sullivan Avenue with evidentiary items that surrounded it. SA Chung located and collected the following items from the roadway:

Item #	Description
1	Taser probe and wires
2	Two (2) 9mm casings with Speer head stamp
3	Six (6) .223 casings with REM head stamp
4	Three (3) .223 casings with REM head stamp
5	Five (5) 9mm casings with Speer head stamp
6	Decorative metal pieces held by Cortaza (four pieces)
7	Two (2) 9mm casings with Speer head stamp
8	Five (5) 9mm casings with Speer head stamp
9	Taser probe and wires
10	Projectile
11	Projectile
12	One (1) 9mm casing with Speer head stamp (fell from officer's external vest

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ALC_8122: Facing West



ALC_8138: Facing West/Southwest

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Various items of potential evidence were submitted to the BCI Laboratory for analysis. The actual reports should be consulted as the following synopsis does not include many of the details from the full reports.

The BCI Firearms Section performed an analysis of the officers' firearms, as well as the firearm-related evidence collected from the scene, vehicles, and autopsies (casings and bullets). By comparing evidentiary cartridge casings/projectiles to known standards from each weapon, identifications were able to be made as to which casings/projectiles were fired from each firearm. Of the casings/projectiles recovered, the following identifications were made:

1. Item #10- Daniel Defense Rifle (Ser# [REDACTED])
 - a. This gun was possessed by CPD [REDACTED]
 - b. The gun was found to be operable
 - c. The gun was linked (source ident.) to Item #15 (EB9, EB12)
 - i. Two (2) fired bullets- Collected at autopsy
 - d. The gun was linked (source ident.) to Item #2 (EC4-EC6)
 - i. Six (6) fired 223 Rem cases- Collected from the scene
2. Item #11- Daniel Defense Rifle (Ser# [REDACTED])
 - a. This gun was possessed by CPD [REDACTED]
 - b. The gun was found to be operable
 - c. The gun was linked (source ident) to Item #2 (EC1-EC3)
 - i. Three (3) fired 223 Rem cases- Collected from the scene
3. Item #12- Smith and Wesson pistol (Ser# [REDACTED])
 - a. This gun was found to be operable
 - b. The gun was linked (source ident) to Item #1 (EC1-EC2); Item #4 (EC1-EC5); Item #5 (EC2), and Item #9 (EC1)
 - i. These were nine (9) fired 9mm cases- Collected from the scene
 - c. The gun was linked (source ident) to Item #7, Item #8
 - i. Two (2) fired bullets- Collected at the scene
 - d. The gun was linked (source ident) to Item #15 (EB3-EB5, EB7)
 - i. Six (6) fired bullets- Collected from Autopsy
4. Item #13- Smith and Wesson pistol (Ser# [REDACTED])
 - a. This gun was possessed by CPD [REDACTED]
 - b. The gun was linked (source ident) to Item #6 (EC1, EC3-EC5)
 - i. Four (4) fired 9mm cases- Collected from the scene

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- c. The gun was linked (source ident) to Item #15 (EB1, EB6, EB8)
 - i. Three (3) fired bullets- Collected from Autopsy
- 5. Item #14- Smith and Wesson pistol [REDACTED]
 - a. This gun was possessed by CPD [REDACTED]
 - b. The gun was linked (source ident) to Item #5 (EC1) and Item #6 (EC2)
 - i. Two (2) fired 9mm cases- Collected from the scene

Other noteworthy details were Item #15 (EB2), a fired bullet recovered at autopsy was inconclusive in source identification. However, it was consistent with being fired from a 9mm luger or likely one of the three S&W pistols. The other lead fragments collected at autopsy were unsuitable for comparison to any of the weapons mentioned above.

Investigative Interviews

The following information comprises extremely abbreviated versions of the statements made by the witness and/or participants of this incident deemed by the author to be of most relevance to the overall understanding of the incident. More detailed accounts can be found by reading the separate reports written by the interviewers and by reviewing the recordings of each interview, including those not synopsized below.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] having over three years of LE experience, was on duty during the incident. [REDACTED] stated he and his partner, [REDACTED] responded to an incident involving a subject with a knife. When Cortaza exited the subject vehicle, [REDACTED] was giving Cortaza commands in Spanish, while [REDACTED] reported he too gave commands, in English. [REDACTED] said he told Cortaza to, "get on the ground."

[REDACTED] reported "The suspect moved east in an aggressive manner, toward myself and officers. He was yelling, his fist were balled, his arms were raised in an aggressive posture, and I could see that there was something metallic in at least one of his hands. Based on what I knew from the dispatch and radio traffic, I believed the object to be a knife."

[REDACTED] stated officers continued to yell commands, such as 'stop and do not move'; however, the suspect did not comply and continued to advance toward officers. [REDACTED] stated, "I fired 1-2 shots at the suspect. I heard other officers fire multiple rounds simultaneously. The suspect fell onto his stomach with his head facing east."

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██████████ provided more details about discharging his weapon, stating, *"I believe I fired one to two shots at the suspect. My shot(s) were fired from a standing position. I used my sights when I fired. My shot was fired in a west/southwest direction. I believe I was approximately 10-20 feet from the suspect at the time I fired. My target was the suspect's center mass. The backdrop for my shot was the empty roadway of Sullivant Avenue."*

██████████ continued, *"I stopped firing because the suspect was on the ground and no longer presenting a threat to officers."* ██████████ explained *"at the time I fired my weapon at the suspect, I do not believe I had any reasonable alternative to protect my life and the lives of the other officers on the scene. I did have a taser with me, however, given my distance from the suspect, the fact ██████████ had unsuccessfully tried twice to deploy his taser at the suspect, and the suspect was actively charging at officers with a weapon in his hand, I did not believe it would be appropriate to counter their force with a taser."*

██████████

██████████ having over three years of LE experience, was on duty during the incident. ██████████ stated he and his partner, ██████████ had just finished looking for a subject with a felony warrant when they learned of ██████████ responding to an incident involving a subject with a knife. ██████████ said, *"Since the run potentially involved a violent suspect with a deadly weapon, my partner and I decided to respond as well in case the other officers needed assistance."*

Upon arriving in the area of the subject vehicle and other officers, ██████████ explained ██████████ immediately parked his cruiser and he and ██████████ got out. *"Just as I was coming to a stop, the subject suddenly got out of the car. He was holding a knife or some type of edged weapon in his (I believe) right hand. I immediately got out unholstered my firearm."*

██████████ described the events after the Taser was deployed. *"The suspect immediately turned around and started advancing towards. He was still yelling incoherently and wildly swinging both of his arms up and down while hold the knife. I believed he was preparing to attack us. The other officers and I started backpedaling to create distance. But a moment later the suspect lunged forward and started running in my direction with the knife raised, quickly closing the distance between us. I believed he intended to stab me and that I would be seriously injured or killed, and it was then I fired at the suspect. Several other officers also fired at nearly the same time. I stopped firing once the suspect collapsed a moment later and was no longer moving."*

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Additionally, ██████ noted in his statement, at the time of the shooting,

"I knew that I could not keep pace with the suspect such that he would close the distance in an instant. I believed he intended to stab me and/or the officer immediately next to me and that I and possibly one or more officers would be grievously injured or killed by the suspect's attack, and it was then when I fired my weapon. At the times I fired my weapon, I did not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect my life or the lives of the officers from the deadly threat presented by the suspect's actions."

██████

██████ having over nine years of LE experience, was on duty during the incident. ██████ stated he and his partner, ██████ responded to an incident involving a subject with a knife. ██████ described Cortaza stopping his vehicle in the middle of the roadway and getting out. He said Cortaza was standing toward the front of the subject vehicle, *"...stabbing the hood or windshield of his car with what I thought at the time was a knife due to dispatch airing that he had a 33A (knife)."*

██████ described Cortaza being tased by ██████ *"██████ yelled: Taser! Taser! Taser! He fired the taser. It did not appear to be effective as the suspect turned around and seemed agitated. He was yelling (I do not know what he said or if it was in English). I yelled at ██████ to tase him again. He tased him again but it did not have any effect. The suspect continued to yell and was pumping his arms up and down with some type of object/weapon in his right hand. I do not know what it was but it looked like it was metal, skinny, maybe 6 inches long. The suspect was advancing towards us. He got about 20-25 feet in front of me when suddenly he leaned forward and charged directly at me with the object in his hand. It was at that moment that I fired my rifle. I heard other rounds being fired. The suspect went to the ground and someone aired "shots fired!"*

██████ described firing his rifle in detail. *"I fired one burst from my rifle. I do not know exactly how many rounds I fired but I would believe I fired 3-5 rounds. I would estimate I fired all my rounds in 1-2 seconds. I believe I was 10-12 feet from the suspect at the time I fired my rifle. I fired from a standing position with a two-handed grip and may have taken a step back as I fired. I believe I used my red dot sight. I did not have any cover or concealment. The direction of my shots were northwest. I fired at a slight downward angle and my backdrop was the woods to the west of the Mosque. My target was center mass. I stopped firing because the suspect went down and did not appear to be moving."*

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██████████ said, *"At the time I fired my weapon, I was in immediate fear for my life, as well as the lives of the other officers and civilians in the area. Prior to firing at the suspect, he had been given multiple opportunities to comply, commands in English and Spanish, and ██████████ had attempted to utilize less lethal force. Instead of complying, the suspect charged at me with a metal weapon in his hand and I believed he was going to stab and seriously injure or kill me. I do not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect my life and the lives of other officers at the time I fired my weapon. I believe my actions were consistent with my training as a police officer."*

██████████

██████████ having over thirteen years of LE experience, was on duty during the incident. ██████████ stated he and his partner, ██████████ responded to an incident involving a subject with a knife.

██████████ described his contact with Cortaza. In highlighting ██████████ specific interactions with Cortaza in the moments before the shooting, ██████████ said, *"As I was closing the distance on the suspect and getting within Taser range, I yelled Taser Taser Taser! So that everyone would know I was about to deploy the Taser and not mistake it for a gunshot. I deployed the Taser but I do not believe that it was effective as there was no neuromuscular incapacitation (NMI) and the suspect was still on his feet and walking towards us. Someone yelled for me to tase him again (our new tasers have two sets of darts) and I again deployed the taser. It was not effective and did not appear to have any impact on the suspect. The suspect was yelling something (I think in Spanish) and waving his arms frantically, he would waive them over his head and up and down while advancing towards us. He had some type of metal object in his right hand, I could not tell if it was a knife or scissors or what exactly it was, I just knew it was a pointed metallic object. I believe it was the same object he had previously used to stab his car. I pulled my firearm from its holster and leveled my weapon at the suspect. The suspect was about 20 feet West of me (directly in front of ██████████ who was to my left/South) when suddenly he increased his speed and went directly toward ██████████ with the metal object still in his hand. It was at that moment that I fired my weapon. I heard other rounds being fired. The suspect went to the ground. I heard someone air 'shots fired.'"*

██████████ further stated, *"at the time I fired my weapon I was in immediate fear for the life of ██████████ as well as my own life and the other officers in the area. Prior to firing at the suspect, dispatch had advised that he had a 33A (knife) and was running at cars."*

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██████████

██████████ having over nine years of LE experience, was on duty during the incident. ██████████ stated he was on station, typing reports and understood ██████████ was on a call near the substation ██████████ was at. ██████████ heard ██████████ request more units and then heard a "10-3" (officer in trouble) code on the radio. ██████████ responded and arrived behind the above officer's vehicles. ██████████ heard someone yelling "manos arriba" ("hands up" in Spanish). ██████████ described Cortaza as acting erratic and yelling (but ██████████ could not understand what Cortaza was saying). ██████████ stated he saw something black in Cortaza's hand. He said he did not believe it to be a gun but the way Cortaza was holding it, ██████████ said he was thinking it was a knife.

██████████ suggested a taser and ██████████ drew his. ██████████ said, "...██████████ drew his Taser, announced "Taser, Taser, Taser" pursuant to training and deployed his Taser. It appeared to me that ██████████ got a good connection, however the suspect turned and began walking quickly towards us the Taser appeared to have no effect. The suspect continued towards us moving adding faster speed than before. He was waving his arms in a very aggressive manner and yelling. He still had something black ripped in his right hand. It appeared to be sharper edged. Officers, including myself, yelled commands. I remember hearing "stop" and "do not move." We began to back up towards our cruisers (east). The suspect kept coming forward towards officers to my left waving his arms as we continued to back up. He got very close, probably 5 to 10 feet from one of the officers (I was unsure at the time who it was) and appeared as if he might lunge at the officers. I opened fire, as did several other officers. At the time, I believe that I had fired 4 to 5 times."

██████████ continued, further describing the reason he fired; "When I fired, I did not believe that I had any other reasonable alternative other than to fire to protect my fellow CPD officers and myself from imminent danger of death or severe bodily harm as the suspect had a weapon in his hand, refuse to follow commands, less-than-lethal force had been unsuccessful, and the suspect was within striking distance of officers."



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Ali Dahir Hassan-

Hassan is the owner of the Hadhwanag restaurant in the area of 4500 Sullivant Ave. Hassan confirmed he was present at the restaurant during the incident. Hassan recalled seeing an individual exit a vehicle which was stopped in the middle of Sullivant Avenue. Hassan said Cortaza was too far away to observe whether he had a weapon in his hands. Hassan estimated hearing 15 to 20 gunshots but said he was too far away to tell who was shooting.

Demonte Gordon-

Gordon is an employee of the Turkey Hill gas station on Georgesville Road. Gordon said a female customer came in and told Gordon he should call the police because there was a man peeing on a semi-truck and banging on cars. At first Gordon did not see Cortaza but then he saw Cortaza attempting to open people's vehicle doors and was banging on them. When Cortaza started to approach the store, Gordon locked doors and called 911. Gordon said it looked like Cortaza had a, "little black dagger." Gordon was asked if Cortaza was yelling or saying anything. Gordon stated he was quiet, but his body was aggressive. Gordon said CPD officers showed up but Cortaza had already left. Gordon said it was about 10-15 minutes later, he believed he heard three to five gunshots.

Abdikafi Ali-

Ali stated he was in the 4500 block of Sullivant Avenue. When he witnessed the vehicle stop close to the railroad tracks on Sullivant Avenue. Ali stated he could hear police sirens and CPD officers giving verbal commands to the subject. He recalled hearing police saying, "stop stop stop," as well as giving him numerous other commands to stop and surrender to police. Ali stated, "he did not cooperate." Ali remembered at one point Cortaza tried to walk or run in the opposite direction, away from police. However, he then observed Cortaza turn around and move towards CPD officers, who continued to give Cortaza commands to stop. Ali stated police were telling Cortaza "loud and clear" to stop and Ali believed there was no question of what CPD was telling Cortaza to do. Ali stated he could not tell if Cortaza had a weapon in his hand/s. Ali heard multiple gunshots.

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Summary

All persons known to have relevant information regarding this investigation have been interviewed (or attempted), and all known pertinent records and evidence have been obtained and reviewed. BCI will continue to offer investigative assistance into any newly identified witnesses or information relative to this criminal investigation. BCI's investigation into this officer-involved critical incident is concluded unless such new information/witnesses is/are identified through grand jury or other means.

Agents remain available for consultation and/or to perform any additional investigation, analysis, processing and/or other assistance/involvement you might deem to be necessary.

Contact Information

The preceding information comprises only a portion of facts and circumstances collected during the investigation of the officer-involved shooting incident. For further review of specific information or documentation collected during the investigation, please refer to the individual reports and documents from which this summary was derived. Any questions regarding the content or context of the information contained in this document can be directed to the attention of Senior Special Agent Matt Collins. SA Collins can be reached via email at Matthew.Collins@OhioAGO.gov or by telephone, at (216) 218-2380.

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