



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



2021-0584

Officer Involved Critical Incident – Interstate 270 Northbound on
Big Walnut Creek Bridge, Columbus (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Subject
Date of Activity: 03/24/2021
Activity Location: Wannemacher, Nicole E. – Business – 3360 Tremont Rd. Suite 230,
Columbus, OH 43221, Franklin County
Author: SA James A. Mulford, #39

Narrative:

On March 24, 2021, at approximately 1045 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agents Jim Mulford (SA Mulford) and Rick Ward (SA Ward) interviewed Columbus Division of Police (CPD) Officer John Kifer (Officer Kifer) regarding a fatal shooting incident between Andrew Teague (Teague) and members of the Columbus Division of Police and Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO). Also present for the interview was Officer Kifer's union attorney, Nicole Wannemacher.

This interview was audio recorded, and a copy of the recording was saved electronically within the case file. Please refer to the recording for specific quotes. The following is a summation of the interview.

On March 05, 2021, an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) occurred on Interstate 270 Northbound on Big Walnut Creek Bridge, Columbus, Ohio. Andrew Teague was wanted on a Felonious Assault warrant and fled from multiple jurisdictions in a vehicle pursuit. The pursuit culminated with Teague driving the wrong way into oncoming traffic on I-270 causing several crashes. Law enforcement officers from CPD and FCSO encountered Teague and ultimately discharged their firearms striking him. Teague died as a result of those gunshot wounds.

Prior to beginning the interview, SA Mulford provided Officer Kifer with a BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form. SA Mulford advised BCI was conducting a criminal investigation separate from any internal investigation that CPD may be conducting. Officer Kifer was told his interview was voluntary and that he could stop answering questions at any time. Officer Kifer verbally confirmed he understood the contents of the form and signed the document further acknowledging his understanding. A copy of the signed Criminal Investigation Notification (CIN) is attached to this report.

Attorney Nicole Wannemacher provided SA Mulford with a written statement from Officer

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Kifer regarding the OICI. Agent Mulford reviewed the statement upon receipt. Furthermore, SA Mulford provided a printed scene sketch of the OICI scene to reference throughout the interview. Officer Kifer signed his statement provided to BCI, and he verified the statement was a true and accurate depiction of the OICI incident. Please refer to Officer Kifer's statement for further details. A copy of the signed written statement was saved within the case file and is attached to this report.

SA Mulford asked Officer Kifer a few follow-up questions and had him confirm where he fired his weapon from based on the printed scene sketch. Officer Kifer's answers appeared to be consistent with his written statement.

Officer Kifer did confirm he was unaware of who fired the initial shots. He reported hearing gunshots as he exited his marked cruiser.

Officer Kifer wrote in his statement, " I quickly exited my cruiser, while unholstering my weapon. As soon as I exited my cruiser, I heard shots being fired. Initially I could not see the suspect and I did not know who had fired. I ran northbound on the left (west) side of the hammer lane on I-270N. I ran several yards and I just ran past a white SUV, when I saw the suspect running southbound in the berm of I-270 with a silver gun in his right hand. I saw the suspect rack the slide of the gun, as if he was clearing a jam or had just loaded another magazine. I backed up and went to the rear passenger corner of the white SUV for some concealment. I believe that there was a driver in the SUV but I do not believe there were any passengers. I peaked out with just enough of my head to see the suspect running past the passenger side of a vehicle in the far right (east) lane with his gun pointed in my direction. It is at the moment that I began firing my weapon. I believe I fired two shots and the suspect ducked back behind the vehicle that was in front of him. I edged closer to the rear edge of the white SUV I was behind and within a second or two, I saw the suspect's head peak back up from the front passenger side door of vehicle with the gun still in his hand and I immediately fired at the suspect again. I stopped firing because I saw the suspect go down.

Furthermore, Officer Kifer detailed, "At the time I fired my weapon, I was in fear for my life as well as the lives of the civilians in the area. I knew that the suspect was wanted out of a felonious assault in which he was alleged to have fired multiple rounds. Immediately before I fired my shots, the suspect had refused to stop for officers for over 90 minutes, drove the wrong way down the freeway causing a head on collision, bailed out of the car after the accident and ran down the interstate with a gun in his hand trying to flee. I also heard rounds being fired several seconds before I encountered the suspect and when the suspect saw me, he tried to take cover behind a vehicle and leveled his gun directly at me, I did not believe I had any other choice to protect my life and the lives of the other people in the area at the time I fired my weapon."

Officer Kifer had no further information.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01:2021-03-24 CPD Officer John Kifer Interview

Attachment # 02:Officer Kifer - CIN Form

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Attachment # 03:Officer Kifer – Statement
Attachment # 04:EdgeFx Scene Diagram1

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STATEMENT OF OFFICER JOHN KIFER, BADGE NO. 1401

This statement is in regard to my involvement with an incident that occurred between approximately 3:00 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. on Friday, March 5, 2021. I am making this statement voluntarily as part of the criminal investigation being conducted by the Bureau of Criminal Investigation regarding this matter.

My date of hire as a police officer with the Columbus Division of Police ("CPD") is December 24, 1989. My regular assignment is K9-7. My regular duty hours are from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., with Wednesday and Thursday off. On the date of this incident, I was assigned cruiser K9-7, which is my take home cruiser. I was not working with a human partner but did have my police K9 (Carr) in the cruiser. I was in my black CPD K9 uniform. I was wearing my Kevlar vest under my shirt. I had my Body Worn Camera (BWC) mounted to the front of my shirt. My badge was clearly visible on the front. I was not wearing gloves. I was carrying my Division-issued, Smith & Wesson M&P 2.0 9mm caliber semi-automatic pistol. It was loaded with Division-issued ammunition. I was current in my range qualifications with this weapon. I was not carrying a backup weapon.

I do not have any law enforcement experience prior to joining CPD. I do have specialized tactical training, as I went through Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) training when I was a member of Intac, which is the tactical narcotics unit. I do not have any military experience.

I wear glasses for distance and I was wearing them at the time of this incident and my corrected vision is good. I do not wear a hearing aid. I do not take any prescription medications that interfere with my ability to perform my duties as a Columbus Police Officer. I was in good health at the time of this incident and I do not suffer from any disabilities that would impair my

ability to perform my duties. In the twenty-four hours before this incident, I had not consumed any drugs or alcohol. I had not worked any special duty in the 24 hours prior to this incident. I arrived at the start of my shift well-rested.

Around 3:00 p.m., I was on 270N on the west side of Columbus. I had just left the K9 building and I was on my way to 8157 Running Fox, as there was believed to be a suspect who had a warrant for a felony at that location. I believe that CPD Officer Coontz (K95) and members from SWAT were also on the way to this location. The suspect was Andrew Teague and he was wanted on a warrant for felonious assault for a shooting that occurred in February 2021. It is my understanding that he fired multiple rounds during that February 2021. I believe that CPD Officer Jerry Orick was watching the residence at 8157 Running Fox when he aired that the suspect had left in a gray Kia Rio and aired the direction of his travel.

I believe that the suspect initially went southbound on U.S. Route 23 and eventually onto I-270EB. Since I was coming from the west side of Columbus, I was not initially close enough to pursue the suspect. I listened to the radio traffic detailing the suspect's direction of travel and headed in that general direction. He was driving all over the city but I believe that I eventually got behind a line of cruisers following him when he was westbound on E. Broad St. around N. Champion Ave. The suspect continued to drive all over for approximately an hour. During this time, I was one of many cruisers who had tried to box him in when he was backing down an exit ramp and several officers had attempted to utilize stop sticks at various times but nothing was effective. CPD was ordered to fall back and let SWAT, K9, and the CPD Helicopter follow him, so I backed off but remained in the general area. I recall at some point during this, radio aired that per the County (meaning a Franklin County Sheriff's Deputy) the suspect had a gun in his hand. I believe that may have been relayed over the radio several times.

At approximately 4:15 p.m., the suspect was on the east side of Columbus driving on I-70 when radio aired that suspect exited onto I-270N from the I-70 W/B ramp. I believe radio aired that he was getting close to Broad St. (still on I-270N) but getting caught up in traffic. Radio or the helicopter then aired that he did a U-turn on I-270 N/B and was now going the wrong way, as he was driving southbound in the northbound lanes of I-270, directly into oncoming traffic. I heard radio air that he was passing the Main St. exit and still driving the wrong way on I-270 and not making any attempts to avoid oncoming traffic. I was driving northbound on I-270 on the southeast side of Columbus and I cut across the median of I-270N, somewhere in the area of the Broad St. exits, to get into the southbound lanes of I-270. My plan was to drive parallel with the suspect (since he was going the wrong way on I-270) and that I would be able to get ahead of him and eventually stop him. However, as I was driving southbound on I-270 in the area of Noe Bixby Road, I saw the suspect hit a vehicle on I-270 northbound and I aired 10-5 which is the code for auto accident with injuries. I then heard radio air that the suspect had bailed from the vehicle and he was running southbound in the berm of I-270 northbound lane. I continued southbound on I-270 and as soon as I crossed the bridge that goes over Big Walnut Creek, I pulled my cruiser southeast into the median. I knew the suspect should be running in my direction.

I quickly exited my cruiser, while unholstering my weapon. As soon as I exited my cruiser, I heard shots being fired. Initially I could not see the suspect and I did not know who had fired. I ran northbound on the left (west) side of the hammer lane on I-270N. I ran several yards and I just ran past a white SUV, when I saw the suspect running southbound in the berm of I-270 with a silver gun in his right hand. I saw the suspect rack the slide of the gun, as if he was clearing a jam or had just loaded another magazine. I backed up and went to the rear passenger

corner of the white SUV for some concealment. I believe that there was a driver in the SUV but I do not believe there were any passengers. I peaked out with just enough of my head to see the suspect running past the passenger side of a vehicle in the far right (east) lane with his gun pointed in my direction. It is at the moment that I began firing my weapon. I believe I fired two shots and the suspect ducked back behind the vehicle that was in front of him. I edged closer to the rear edge of the white SUV I was behind and within a second or two, I saw the suspect's head peak back up from the front passenger side door of vehicle with the gun still in his hand and I immediately fired at the suspect again. I stopped firing because I saw the suspect go down.

I believed that I struck the suspect but I was not certain. I strategically crossed the freeway to approach the rear of the vehicle that the suspect was behind and took cover and observed the suspect lying on the ground with a gun in his hand. As I did so, I saw that there were several other officers approaching from the north. I secured the suspect and Franklin County Sheriff's Deputy Severance kicked the suspect's gun away that was still in his hand. He then began performing CPR on the suspect. I yelled to CPD Sergeant Redding to call for a medic.

I now know that I fired five rounds at the suspect. I fired from the rear passenger corner of a white SUV that was in the fast lane of I-270. I fired my first four shots just a couple inches from the rear passenger corner of the white SUV when the suspect was past the back of the vehicle, and then I stepped right (east) a foot or two for my last shot. The suspect was behind the front corner of a vehicle by the (A) pillar/front passenger door that was northeast and diagonal from me. I believe that I was approximately 25-30 feet from the suspect when I fired. I fired from a standing position, utilizing a strong two-handed grip and I believe I used the white SUV that I was behind to stabilize my shots. I utilized my sights for a precision shot and I have an

expert qualification on firearms, which means that I shoot a 285/300 on my firearms qualification. I lined my shots up to go behind and above the driver and passenger seats to minimize any potential harm to civilians. I fired my shots in succession but there was a brief pause between them to ensure they were controlled and stable and to minimize any potential harm to civilians. I would estimate that I fired all of my shots in less than 8 seconds. The direction of my shots was north/northeast. My backdrop was the cement guardrail and some moderate to thick trees behind it. My target was the middle of the suspect's shoulders and head. I had some concealment from the vehicle I was standing behind. I stopped firing because the suspect went down to the ground.

I did have a taser on my belt. However, use of a taser would not have been appropriate in this situation as the suspect had a gun and was too far away to deploy the taser. In addition, there were vehicles between myself and the suspect, so deploying a taser would not have been an option as the path was obstructed and per our training you do not counter lethal force with less-lethal force.

At the time I fired my weapon, I was in fear for my life as well as the lives of the civilians in the area. I knew that the suspect was wanted out of a felonious assault in which he was alleged to have fired multiple rounds. Immediately before I fired my shots, the suspect had refused to stop for officers for over 90 minutes, drove the wrong way down the freeway causing a head on collision, bailed out of the car after the accident and ran down the interstate with a gun in his hand trying to flee. I also heard rounds being fired several seconds before I encountered the suspect and when the suspect saw me, he tried to take cover behind a vehicle and leveled his gun directly at me, I did not believe I had any other choice to protect my life and the lives of the other people in the area at the time I fired my weapon.

I have now had an opportunity to watch the Body Worn Camera and cruiser video footage of this incident. After reviewing this footage, it appears that I yelled to the civilians in the car to "get down" as soon as I saw the suspect with his gun and several seconds before I fired at the suspect. I do not recall doing this.

I know that the suspect's name is Andrew Teague. I do not believe I have ever had any prior encounters, professional or personal, with this suspect.

This concludes my statement and I am now prepared to answer any additional questions you may have.

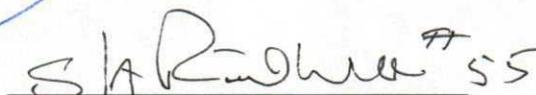
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Officer John Kifer, Badge #1401

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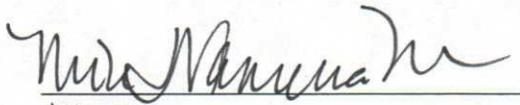
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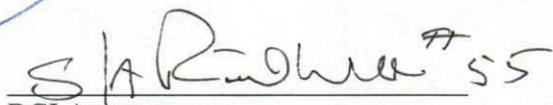
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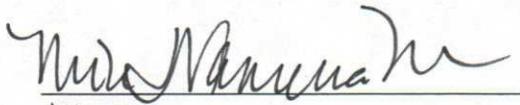
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Officer represented by:



Attorney

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Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation
SA Aja Chung

NB I-270 on Big Walnut Creek Bridge
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To near scale

