



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



2023-0408

Officer-Involved Critical Incident- 1680 Stringtown Rd, Grove City

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer

Involves: CPD SWAT; Ofc. Steven Shope #1458

Activity Date: 2/12/2023

Activity Location: City of Columbus Police SWAT Substation

Authoring Agent: SA Matt Collins, #151

Narrative:

On Sunday, February 12, 2023 at 0041 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Matt Collins (SA Collins) interviewed City of Columbus-Division of Police (CPD) Officer (Ofc.) Steven Shope (Shope), who was accompanied by his attorney, Kate Harshman, from the Law Offices of Harshman and Wannemacher consulted by the Fraternal Order of Police. The interview took place at a City of Columbus Police SWAT Substation. The interview was audio recorded.

Shope was identified as being a police officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the February 11, 2023, officer-involved shooting which occurred in the area of 1680 Stringtown Rd, Grove City, Ohio. Reportedly, Shope did not discharge a firearm during the course of the incident. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known or observed by this officer.

Shope stated his radio call sign on February 11, 2023, was #531. He has been employed by the CPD for about 23 years. He has been a police officer for a total of 23 years. Shope was assigned to CPD SWAT (full-time), Gold team. He started in that role in September 2022. Shope said he drove an unmarked, white, 2010 Honda Accord which was equipped with emergency lights and a siren. He said the vehicle does not have a dash camera. Shope stated he was wearing a body worn camera (BWC) and he believed it was activated during the incident.

Shope was asked what information he'd known prior to getting to the Home Depot. Shope said he believe it was in mid-December 2022 where they were contacted by an Athens County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) detective. They were told Bret Andrews (Andrews) had a warrant for rape and they had information he was in the Columbus area. Shope said his team had been out on several other occasions prior, where they were looking for Andrews.

On the night of the incident, they received information Andrews was supposed to be meeting with a female at a hotel on Stringtown Road. Shope said before they'd got set up at the hotel, they received information Andrews was at the Home Depot, which was nearby. Shope said it



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was shortly after they got into the area of the Home Depot, one of his fellow officers had stated (on the radio) he believed he'd located the subject, standing outside of a white car, "messaging on a cellphone." Shope stated he too had seen the same male, while looking through his binoculars. However, he could not see the subject's face. Shope stated he was approximately 35-40 yards away with the subject vehicle facing toward him. Shope further commented, the "lighting wasn't good." Shope said another officer (Cibulskas), who he described as being much closer than he, had driven by and positively identified it was Andrews. Shope said there was also a male subject in the driver's seat of the subject vehicle.

Shope said Ofc. Cutshall instructed them to "collapse on the car." Shope stated, in order to prevent the vehicle from driving away, they pinned it in. Shope stated, due to his distance away, Shope ended up being the last officer to approach the car. Shope stated he ended up pulling in behind Cutshall's vehicle, which was on the driver's side of the subject vehicle, while Cibulskas was pulled up to the rear of the subject vehicle.

Shope said he took cover behind Cutshall's SUV, while Cutshall was positioned at the front, driver's side windshield area of the subject vehicle. He said Ofc. Ashenurst was positioned at the right front of the subject vehicle while Ofc. Liford was on the passenger side of the subject vehicle.

Shope heard them yelling for him, "show his hands. That he was reaching. Then shots were fired." Shope said he could not tell who was shooting, other than Ofc. Cutshall because of where he was positioned, he could actually see Ofc. Cutshall shooting; from Shope's peripheral view. Shope stated he was also focused on there being another subject in the car. Shope ultimately removed the driver, Shawn Griffey. He was asked if Griffey made any statements. Shope described Griffey as being very cooperative and listened to what they told him to do. Shope said Griffey made the comment, "I knew it was—I'm no dummy, I knew that was the police and everything and I asked him what are you doin'--." Shope said Griffey indicated he'd asked Andrews what he was reaching for.

Shope stated, as he was dealing with Griffey, he did in fact see a black handgun lying in Andrews lap area. He later saw the gun on top of the subject vehicle.

SA Collins asked Shope if he was aware of there being any records indicating Andrews should be approached with caution and he stated, not that he was aware of.

The interview concluded at approximately 0103 hours.



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The interview was audio recorded. The audio recording was attached to this report. Please see the attachments for further details.

