



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



2023-2008
Officer Involved Critical Incident – Terminal Road By Dayton
Airport, OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: Sgt. Erik Lofland (W)
Date of Activity: 08/21/2023
Activity Location: Ohio State Highway Patrol Special Response Team – Business –
1583 Alum Creek Drive, Columbus, OH 43224, Franklin County
Author: SA Perry K. Roeser, #114

Narrative:

On August 2, 2023, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) was requested by the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP) to investigate an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI), which occurred on the morning of August 2, 2023. The incident between the involved subjects, Rodney and Elaine Helman, and law enforcement started in Madison County, Ohio. It ended on Airport Access Road in Montgomery County, Ohio, with OSP's Special Response Team (SRT) shooting the involved individuals while rescuing a hostage.

On August 21, 2023, Special Agents Richard Ward and Perry Roeser interviewed Sergeant Trooper Erik Lofland (Lofland) at 1583 Alum Creek Drive, Columbus, Ohio. Lofland was assigned to the Ohio State Highway Patrol Special Response Team (SRT) that ended the hostage situation on Airport Access Road, Vandalia, Ohio. Lofland played an active role but did not discharge his firearm.

The details below summarized the pertinent portions of the recorded interview with Lofland and were not taken verbatim unless noted by quotations.

The interview with Lofland began at 0944 hours, and was audio recorded. Lofland stated he has been with OSP for 20 years, SRT for 18 years, and a sergeant for eight years. Lofland said he was the Team Leader for the Red Squad and was an explosives/breacher for the team.

Lofland was asked how he became involved with the August 2, 2023 incident. Lofland said Lieutenant Bryan Mangin (Mangin) called and told him about a pursuit involving a stolen semi-truck and a hostage. Lofland stated he responded to Montgomery County, Ohio, from his residence. Lofland said once he arrived on the scene, he waited for the negotiators to come and was in a holding pattern until other members of the SRT team arrived from across the state. Lofland said while in the SRT Bear, he observed a handgun displayed from the semi's pulled

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curtains that covered the windows. Lofland said when the negotiations broke down and they had enough SRT team members on the scene, the decision was made to attempt to rescue the hostage, [REDACTED]

Lofland explained after the decision was made to assault the truck, he made up the assignments. Two teams would move on both sides of the semi, simultaneously break out the windows, and remove the curtains covering the windows. Lofland said his role was a breacher on the passenger side with Mangin, who provided shield cover, and Trooper Hector Burgos (Burgos) was to provide lethal cover. Once the order was given to move on the truck, Lofland said he hit the passenger's side window three times before it broke. After the window was removed, he supported Burgos, who was on the step looking into the cab of the truck. Lofland said while Burgos was positioned on the truck's step, looking into the cab, he shouted, "Gun!"

Lofland was then shown the OSP helicopter video footage. Lofland said when you see Burgos "squirm," he shouted gun. Soon after, Lofland said he began hearing gunfire and was unsure who was firing. Lofland said he repositioned toward the rear of the semi for cover. Shortly after the gunfire ended, Lofland handed Mangin a gas canister. After Lofland pulled the pin, Mangin tossed the device into the truck's cab. Lofland said the hostage, [REDACTED] exited the passenger's side door with his hands raised. [REDACTED] was ordered to the rear of the truck for safety.

Lofland said the SRT team regrouped behind the Bear, and it was now a barricade situation. Orders were then given to the hostage takers regarding compliance. After it was safe, the male, Rodney Helman, was removed first from the truck, and then Elaine Helman was removed. Lofland said both Helmans had gunshot wounds, and SRT members rendered aid to both before the medics arrived and took over care. Lofland said he never entered the truck, but when Mangin was inside the cab after the Helmans were removed, Mangin indicated he saw a handgun between the driver's and passenger's seats.

Lofland said all the equipment was gathered after the incident, and the SRT team headed to the Dayton, Ohio, OSP post for a debrief and awaited instruction.

The interview between the BCI agents and Lofland concluded at 0957 hours and was audio recorded. See attachment #1 for a copy of the recorded audio.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2023-08-21 / Sgt. Erik Lofland OSHP

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.