



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



2023-0052
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 1785 Rt. 28, Lot 419, Goshen
Township, OH 45122 (L)

Involves: Goshen Twp. (Goshen) Police Department (O), Thomas Dewald, Jr.
(S)
Date of Activity: 01/27/2023
Author: SA Douglas Eveslage, #66

To: Clermont County Prosecutor – Mark Tekulve

CC: SAS William Jones

From: SA Douglas Eveslage

Date: January 27, 2023

Case Title: Officer-Involved Critical Incident – 1785 State Route 28, Lot 419, Goshen
Township, Ohio

Case Number: 2023-0052

Investigative Request:

The following prosecutor summary serves as an overview of the criminal investigation of an Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) that occurred on Friday, January 6, 2023. Captain Don Hampton with the Goshen Township Police Department, requested the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) conduct an independent investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the OICI. The incident occurred at Lakeshore Estates Mobile Home Park, 1785 State Route 28, Lot 419, which is located in Goshen Township, Clermont County, Ohio. The incident stemmed from a call for service of a subject, identified as Thomas Dewald Jr., with an active felony warrant for domestic violence currently at this residence.

Preface: This report only summarizes the investigative activity and information gathered by BCI. Not all facts and details are presented in this report. Therefore, it is recommended that each individual report from which this document is derived be reviewed in order to obtain a complete understanding of this investigation. Audio and/or video recordings exist for some of the interviews conducted, revealing further details of the statements made regarding the incident.

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Investigative Team:

BCI Special Agent Douglas Eveslage was assigned as the lead Special Investigations Unit (SIU) case agent. BCI Special Agents Lauren Frazier, Steve Seitzman, and Sean Zint were assigned as assisting agents. BCI Special Agents Chad Holcomb and Kevin Wagner from the BCI Crime Scene Unit processed the scene of the incident and the involved officers, documenting, preserving, and collecting possible evidence. The investigation was supervised by Special Agent Supervisor William Jones.

Synopsis of Incident:

The following information is based on the statements of the involved law enforcement officers, a witness, body-worn and cruiser camera footage, and dispatch/CAD information.

On January 6, 2023, the Goshen Township Police Department were dispatched at 1234 hours to Lakeshore Estates Mobile Home Park, 1785 State Route 28, Lot 419 for a male, identified as Thomas Dewald Jr., inside the residence. Thomas Dewald Jr. (Dewald) had open felony warrants and a temporary protection order in place from his wife, Donna Dewald, due to a domestic violence situation that occurred on January 5, 2023, in which the Goshen Township Police Department filed warrants for Dewald's arrest. Officer Matt Richwine, Officer Tyler Smith, Sergeant Dillon West, Detective Chris McMillan, and Detective ██████████ responded to the residence. Detectives ██████████ and McMillan were the first two officers inside the residence and encountered witness, Brian Hendrighsman, who advised Detectives that Dewald was in the bedroom. Detectives ██████████ and McMillan encountered Dewald holding a large knife and a box cutter in his hands while inside the bedroom. Det. ██████████ gave multiple verbal commands for Dewald to "drop the knives" but Dewald did not comply with the commands and stated "you're going to have to kill me." Det. ██████████ deployed the taser which hit Dewald. Dewald then began cutting his own neck with the box cutter multiple times and eventually fell to the ground in the bedroom. Detectives and officers administered first aid on Dewald until the medics arrived. The medics transported Dewald to Bethesda North Hospital where Dewald was pronounced deceased.

Summary of Investigative Process:

The following is a partial list of investigative activities or methods that were employed during the course of this investigation by the investigative team.

- Processing of the scene by the BCI Crime Scene Unit.
- Autopsy completed by the Hamilton County Coroner's Office, attended by BCI SA Eveslage and SA Frazier.
- Obtained a written letter of request for assistance from Goshen Township Police Department Captain Don Hampton.
- Recorded interview with Detective ██████████ who discharged his taser.
- Recorded interviews of other Goshen Township Police Department members who were present during the OICI.
- Recorded interviews of Fire Department personnel.
- Interview of witnesses Donna Dewald and Brian Hendrighsman.
- Obtained and reviewed witness statement from Brittany Krauk.

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- Obtained and reviewed open and closed–source biographical information on Dewald, to include criminal history reports, OHLEG, driving records, and more.
- Collected and reviewed the departmental personnel file of Detective ██████████ which included training, disciplinary records, and qualification records.
- Collected and reviewed Goshen Township Police Department’s Use of Force Policy.
- Collected and reviewed audio communications from the police radio channel utilized during the OICI.
- Collected and reviewed dispatch/CAD records pertaining to the OICI.
- Obtained and reviewed body worn camera (BWC) from involved officers.
- Collected and Reviewed the Autopsy Report from the Clermont County Coroner's Office.
- Obtained all other known and pertinent records or recordings.

Investigative Interviews:

On January 6, 2023, SA Eveslage and SA Frazier interviewed Donna Dewald. The following is a portion of Donna's statement: Brian, Brittany, and Donna went to Donna's residence to get additional clothing. When they entered the residence, Brittany saw that the tv and guide was on, as if someone was home. Brian went to the bedroom to check the residence and observed the blackout curtains pulled, making it dark, and saw Tom hiding behind the bedroom door. Brian told Tom that there was a protection order and warrant for his arrest and that he would not let Tom leave. Donna described that Tom "looked wild and distraught." Donna was told that Brian noticed that Tom had his hand behind his back, and he believed he could possibly have a weapon. Goshen Township police officers arrived on scene and Brian and Brittany had Donna go outside to a neighbor's house. Donna was told by Brian that "six officers begged him at least 30 times to put the knife down." Donna said that she knew the officers had tased Tom because she heard him scream. Donna said that she was told that right as Tom was tased, he "began the process of slitting his throat." Donna said that it seemed like medics worked on Tom for a long time before he was brought out to an ambulance and transported to the hospital. Donna received a call from a nurse and her pastor at the hospital, whom made notification to Donna that Tom was deceased.

On January 6, 2023, SA Eveslage and SA Frazier interviewed Brian Hendrigsman. The following is a portion of Brian's statement: Around 1000 hours, Donna went to the courthouse to get a temporary protection order (TPO). He said Donna wanted to go home to get clothes and her work laptop because she works from home. Brian, Brittany, and Donna went to the residence and Brittany noticed the tv was on. Brian went to check the house and saw Tom hiding behind the bedroom door. Brian stated that he told Donna to call the cops and would not let Tom leave. Brian noticed that Tom had something behind his back, believed to be a weapon. Shortly after, police officers arrived and entered the room. Brian stated that he moved to the kitchen area, where he could still hear what was happening. Brian said he heard officers say "drop the knife" approximately 20–25 times. Brian heard Tom respond by saying "you'll have to fucking shoot me." Brian heard a taser go off but was not sure when Tom had cut himself. Brian heard officers ask for medics to respond and to hold pressure on the wound. Brian said that he went outside to console his mother and never went back in to the residence. Brian stated that Tom was hiding in a dark bedroom with a knife. Brian believed that Tom thought that Donna was coming home alone and that he was planning on killing her.

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Witnessing Officer Interviews:

On January 6, 2023, SA Seitzman interviewed Detective McMillan. The following is a portion of Det. McMillan's statement: Det. ██████ and he entered the residence. Det. ██████ announced, "Police Department!" They eventually entered the residence and turned to the left. They went through the family room and the kitchen. As the officers got to a hallway near the kitchen, Det. McMillan saw a male subject, who he thought may have been Dewald's brother-in-law. The male subject told the officers that Dewald was in the back bedroom. Det. ██████ proceeded down the hallway, at which point Det. McMillan heard Det. ██████ yell, "Drop it! Drop it!" Det. McMillan then pulled his taser out. He got into a position to see inside the room and saw that Dewald was holding a boxcutter in his right hand and a large white butcher knife in the other. He joined Det. ██████ in commanding Dewald to "drop the knife," to no avail. Within seconds, he saw Dewald bring the boxcutter to the right side of his neck and cut himself. He said Dewald continued to cut his neck, alternating between the right and left sides. Around the same time, Det. ██████ deployed his taser, which Det. McMillan described as "having some effect," but Dewald was able to continue cutting his neck. Det. McMillan said that the events unfolded rapidly, so he was unsure whether Det. ██████ deployed the taser before or after Dewald initiated self-harm.

Involved Officer Interview:

On January 17, 2023, SA Eveslage and SA Frazier interviewed Detective ██████. The following is a portion of Det. ██████'s statement: ██████ advised that during the "shift pass along" he read that Dewald had active felony warrants due to threatening to burn his wife and also for a physical altercation that occurred. ██████ said that he was "familiar with Thomas" (Dewald) from previous calls for service and that Dewald "presented" as if he had mental health issues and was "prone to violence." ██████ was the first officer to arrive at 1785 State Route 28, Lot 419 and asked Dewald's wife, Donna Dewald, if he had any "firearms" and Donna advised that he did not and that Dewald was in the back bedroom. ██████ made entry into the residence and talked to Brian Hendrighsman in the kitchen, who advised ██████ that Dewald was currently located in the bedroom closest to the kitchen. ██████ enters the bedroom with his taser already in hand and locates Dewald standing by the bed with a "box cutter in his right hand and a butcher knife in his left hand." ██████ draws a diagram of the bedroom where Dewald was located to include furniture. ██████ said that Dewald was standing by the shoe rack facing ██████ and ██████ told Dewald to "drop the knives." Dewald answered, "No." ██████ again told Dewald to drop the knives and Dewald answered, "No, you are going to have to kill me." ██████ responded, "No, I'm not going to shoot you. Drop the knives." ██████ further explains that he had "red dot compliance" but Dewald was telling him to shoot him," and when Dewald starting walking around the bed closing the distance between them, while not complying with ██████'s orders, ██████ deployed the taser only one time. As Dewald was being tasered with the knives still in his hands, Dewald reached across his neck with his right hand and made a "large" cut the left side of his own neck with the box cutter. ██████ described seeing blood "squirt" from his neck so he knew that Dewald had "hit something." The taser only made Dewald "brace" against the bed with his knees, while Dewald continued to cut both sides of his neck and was making loud grunting noises. ██████ said that he transitioned from the taser to his firearm after the taser only put Dewald on his knees for a few seconds. Dewald started to stand up again, but fell to the ground

before gaining his balance on his feet and [REDACTED] approached him around the foot of the bed and kicks the knives out of his hands. [REDACTED] explained that Sergeant West moved the knives as [REDACTED] was getting medic gloves on and started applying pressure to both sides of Dewald's neck with a shirt in an attempt to stop the bleeding. [REDACTED] said that Dewald was breathing for approximately two or three minutes, but when he stopped they placed the automated external defibrillator (AED) on Dewald until medical personnel arrived to assist.

Post-Mortem Examination/ Autopsy:

On February 6, 2023, SA Eveslage received and reviewed a copy of the Autopsy report from the Hamilton County Coroner's Office. [REDACTED]

Summary:

All persons known to have relevant information regarding this investigation have been interviewed, and all known records have been obtained and reviewed. BCI has striven to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into this OICI. BCI will continue to offer investigative assistance to any newly identified witnesses or information relative to this criminal investigation. It appears that BCI's investigation into this OICI shall be concluded, unless such new information or witnesses are identified through the Grand Jury or other processes. As always, we remain available for consultation and look forward to your assessment of this investigation and your decision as to any additional efforts, processes, or further assistance or involvement you might determine to be necessary.

End of Summary.