



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



2024-3257

Officer Involved Critical Incident – 200 Cline Avenue,
Mansfield, Ohio 44907

Investigative Activity: Interview with Sergeant Joseph Gladden
Involves: Sergeant Joseph Gladden (S)
Activity Date: 11/01/2024
Activity Location: Mansfield Police Department-30 N. Diamond Street,
Mansfield, Ohio
Authoring Agent: SA Cory Momchilov #64

Narrative:

On Friday, November 1, 2024, at 1035 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Cory Momchilov (Momchilov) and SA Jon Lieber (Lieber) interviewed Sergeant Joseph Gladden (Sergeant Gladden), who was accompanied by his attorneys, Robert Sauter (Attorney Sauter) and Lane Hagar (Attorney Hagar), from the Fraternal Order of Police. The interview took place at the Mansfield Police Department, located at 30 North Diamond Street, Mansfield. The interview was audio and video recorded.

Prior to the interview, agents were advised by Attorney Sauter that Sergeant Gladden had prepared a typed statement, which a copy was provided to agents. It was decided that Sergeant Gladden would read his typed statement to investigators, and afterward agents would ask any follow-up or clarification questions.

Sergeant Gladden's typed statement is attached to this Investigative Report. The reader of this Investigative Report is strongly encouraged to read the typed statement in its entirety before reading the follow-up question section of this Investigative Report.

Also, prior to the interview, Sergeant Gladden read, understood and signed the BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form.

Follow-Up Questions

SA Momchilov asked Sergeant Gladden if a specific radio channel was utilized during the incident. Sergeant Gladden advised that Channel 4 was utilized, and that channel is also referred to as "Man-Tac."

SA Momchilov stated that Sergeant Gladden mentioned in his statement that the individual (Michael Oswald) had placed or thrown items down the stairs to create an obstacle to the path upstairs. Sergeant Gladden responded, "Correct." SA Momchilov

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asked Sergeant Gladden why an individual would do that in a tactical situation. Sergeant Gladden believed the individual placed those items in that position to delay officers' response to the upstairs area, if entry was made.

SA Momchilov stated, "You said at one point the female was taking too long and he threatened to go up, to the children. Did you hear that statement?" Sergeant Gladden stated he did hear the statement and Oswald yelled it down the stairs. Sergeant Gladden stated, "It sounded like he thought she was down there talking to us, giving us information so he was trying to get her to hurry up and come back upstairs."

SA Momchilov asked, "Would it be fair to say that he was kind of like, threatening the children." Sergeant Gladden replied, "That was definitely what we all interpreted."

SA Momchilov stated, "You also said at one point, 'Mr. Oswald he tried to convince the female victim to go downstairs with him to use the children as human shields.'" Sergeant Gladden responded "correct." SA Momchilov then asked, "Have you seen anything like that before?" Sergeant Gladden explained that he had never been involved in a hostage situation where there was a human shield.

SA Momchilov stated, "You said you positioned yourself in the back of the stack. Who else was in the stack with you?" Sergeant Gladden replied, "So it was everyone else who was involved up on the porch and stairs. It would have been Officer Webb and Haines at the threshold of the door, Gess was behind them. Burt Skeen was still up on the porch at this time and Brad Henerson was still on the stairs."

SA Momchilov stated, "You said, Mr. Oswald at the bottom of the stairs, was pursuing the female victim holding two knives in the attack position. Can you demonstrate that?"

Sergeant Gladden replied, "He kind of held them, just like this (Figure 1-15:31). Maybe head level, shoulder level but he had his arms in the air and knives up like this."

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Figure 1

SA Momchilov asked Sergeant Gladden what his interpretation was of that position. Sergeant Gladden responded, "To be honest, my interpretation at that moment was that he was trying to get us to shoot him. Once the female victim was out, my initial thought was he was chasing her. That's why she got scared, ran, that was the commotion, he was trying to get to her. Maybe, that's how he was going to end it, was going to kill her and either have us kill him or whatever, but she was able to get out. So, I think, I mean there was still a moment when he was at the bottom of the stairs that I thought he would give up but then it became clear as he just continued to walk towards the officers at the doorway that he definitely was not going to allow that to happen. He was going to either stab somebody to make us shoot him or he was just going to keep coming until we shot him."

SA Momchilov stated, "I guess this is an opinion question. Do you think his intention was suicide by cop?"

Sergeant Gladden replied, "I do think that was his intention, but I also thought he would do whatever he had to do to make sure that happened."

SA Momchilov responded, "When you mean, do what he had to do, does that mean stabbing other officers, stabbing the female victim?"

Sergeant Gladden replied, "Correct, yeah, there was no doubt in my mind that he was not above stabbing one of us to make sure that we would shoot him, if he got all the way to one of the officers at the door."

SA Momchilov asked Sergeant Gladden, "When you fired through the window, could you tell if you hit him at all?"

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Sergeant Gladden replied, "I mean, I couldn't tell just because I could tell that the other officers were firing, I mean, I wasn't that far away, it was maybe 15 or 20 feet and so I knew I had lined up my shot, I wasn't just firing blindly. I knew that I had looked, my dot was on him when I fired. He fell as soon as I fired but I also knew the other officers were firing, so, no I can't say for certain if my bullet was the one that hit him, I had no idea."

SA Momchilov stated, "You said your dot was on him. Could you tell what portion of his body it was on?"

Sergeant Gladden explained that he had a clear, unobstructed view of the individual from the waist up and was aiming at center mass. Sergeant Gladden further explained he was looking at the individual at "a side angle."

Sergeant Gladden advised that no one has asked him to lie or otherwise try to influence his statement to investigators.

Sergeant Gladden was not injured as a result form this incident.

Sergeant Gladden's typed statement, the audio recording of the interview and the Criminal Investigation Notification form are attached to this Investigative Report.

The video recording of Sergeant Gladden's interview was placed onto a portable hard drive and placed into the item section of the physical case file, labeled as Reference Item E.

References:

Reference Item E-Video recording of Sergeant Gladden's interview

Attachments:

1. Sergeant Gladden's Typed Statement
2. Audio Recording of Sergeant Gladden's Interview
3. Criminal Investigation Notification form signed by Sergeant Gladden

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Statement of Sergeant Joseph Gladden, Mansfield Police Department,
Regarding Incident on October 19, 2024

I. Background.

I began my full-time employment with the Mansfield Police Department ("Mansfield PD"), as a Police Officer, on March 16, 2015. I was promoted to my present rank of Sergeant on December 12, 2022. From September 2011 until I started my employment with Mansfield PD, I served as a Corrections Officer, Deputy and Detective for the Morrow County Sheriff's Office. I completed my Basic Police Officer Training at Delaware Area Career Center, graduating in March 2010.

I attended Rutherford B. Hayes High School in Delaware, Ohio, and graduated in 2005. I attained a Bachelor's Degree at the Ohio State University, graduating in 2009. I have no prior military service.

My current supervisor is Lt. Ryan Grimshaw. My regularly assigned work hours are from 10:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. I regularly work six (6) days on and two (2) days off, with my days off rotating forward after each week.

My current assignment is as a Patrol Sergeant. I also serve as a Field Training Officer ("FTO") Supervisor, ALICE Instructor, Impact/Chemical Munitions Instructor, MILO Instructor and as part of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team ("SWAT").

I do not wear prescription glasses, contacts or any hearing aids. I am under no physical disability. I take no prescription medications. I was not under the influence of alcohol or any drug, prescription or otherwise, on the date of the incident.

As a law enforcement officer, I have never received any discipline relative to use of force. I have never been the subject of any Internal Affairs investigation relative to use of force. In my law enforcement career, I have never before used lethal force.

JPG

I am familiar with the Mansfield PD's Use of Force Policy, as I received training on this Policy in the past year by a Certified Department Instructor.

On the date of the incident, I fired a Sig MCX rifle which was issued to me by the Mansfield PD. I last qualified for this weapon on October 18, 2024. A magazine for this rifle typically holds twenty-eight (28) rounds. I believe I fired two (2) rounds in the incident.

On my duty belt, I only carry my Sig Sauer P320 handgun, which is my duty weapon and was also issued to me by the Mansfield PD. I last qualified for this weapon on October 18, 2024, as well.

On Thursday and Friday, October 17 and 18, respectively, I was scheduled from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. for SWAT training. On Friday, October 18, I also worked a special duty assignment from 6:00 p.m. through 12:30 a.m. at the Mansfield Reformatory.

I did not feel tired at the time of the SWAT call-out on Saturday, October 19. Prior to the call-out, I had slept for approximately two (2) hours and felt rested enough to effectively perform my duties as a law enforcement officer.

On the date of the incident, I was dressed in multi-camouflage BDU tops and bottoms with MPD patches on my arms. I also wore a green vest and helmet with "Police" written on the front and back.

I was not wearing a body camera during the incident, as we do not carry them during SWAT callouts. I carried no personal recording device.

The cruiser we used, Unit S2, did have in-dash video but it was not activated at the time of the incident. My badge number and radio designation is 278.

II. Incident Narrative.

On October 19, 2024, at 2:46 a.m., I received a SWAT call-out in reference to an armed barricaded subject, later identified as Michael Oswald, with hostages, including a female and two (2) children, at 200 Cline Ave. I responded to the Mansfield PD and was one of the first operators ready to go. As one of the first people ready, I became part of the Quick Reaction Force ("QRF"), as is standard in these situations. Ofc. Paul Webb, Sgt. Michael Haines, Sgt. Shane Gess, and I responded to the scene in the S2 cruiser as the QRF, prior to the rest of the team arriving.

Upon arrival, we were briefed by the SWAT Commander, Sgt. Jered Kingsborough, and given additional information. The situation started as a domestic incident between Mr. Oswald and the female victim, who was now being held hostage with her two (2) children, ages 6 and 8. We were told Mr. Oswald had a knife and was threatening suicide by cop. I also learned he was recently involved in a standoff with Columbus SWAT approximately one (1) month prior, during which he injured CPD officers. I also learned MPD third-shift patrol officers were positioned at the open back door and I was directed to relieve those units with the other QRF members and take over their position.

Upon arriving at the back door, we relieved the MPD third-shift patrol officers. There were two (2) members of the Hostage Negotiation Team ("HNT") present with the officers, Richland County Sheriff's Office Dep. Burt Skeen and Sgt. Brad Henderson, who remained with us. Sgt. Haines and Ofc. Webb took a position side by side at the threshold of the open back door. Sgt. Gess was directly behind them. Dep. Skeen was beside them on the porch and Sgt. Henderson was behind them on the stairs.

We learned Mr. Oswald and his hostages were all upstairs. Mr. Oswald specifically was at the top of the stairs and had been intermittently communicating with officers by yelling back and forth. He had thrown/placed items at the bottom of the stairwell to barricade it and create an obstruction to the path up the stairs. Officers were unable to look up the stairs from the vantage point of the back door as it was perpendicular to the doorway. Due to the confined space, I took a position in the yard just to the left of the back porch, outside of a kitchen window, so I had a better vantage

point of the situation. I advised Sgt. Haines to unscrew the light bulb to the porch light to conceal my position.

For the entirety of the incident, we all maintained these positions. Once the rest of the SWAT team arrived on scene, Tactical Emergency Medical Services ("TEMS") medic Zach Smith, of the Mansfield Fire Department ("MFD"), joined us with a 40 mm launcher with foam baton rounds to provide us with a less lethal option. Firefighter Smith joined me near the window and handed me the 40 mm launcher. I then handed it to Sgt. Gess as he was in the best position for its use. I eventually requested that Firefighter Smith take a position at the detached garage behind us and to relay any activity he observed from the second story windows above us.

Communication between officers and Mr. Oswalt was primarily done by Sgt. Haines; however, Dep. Skeen was also involved. I primarily maintained radio communication with the Command Post ("CP"). I could overhear some of what Mr. Oswalt was saying when he was yelling down to the officers. At multiple points, he stated that he did not want the situation to end peacefully, he was going to die today, and we were going to have to kill him. He stated he knew our vests would not stop a knife and that he was going to stab us in the ribs and if that did not work, he would stab us in the neck and head where we were not protected. Throughout the incident, I heard Mr. Oswalt asking "Siri" to play songs on his phone such as "Fuck the Police" and "Fuck It." When Dep. Skeen asked him if he could call him on his phone so they did not have to yell back and forth, the suspect told "Siri" to put his phone on "Do Not Disturb."

At several points, it became clear Mr. Oswalt was familiar with our tactics and was anticipating what we would do. He knew we would not make entry with the hostages present, unless we believed they were in imminent danger. He asked for cigarettes on multiple occasions and would allow the female victim to come downstairs to retrieve them. However, each time she came down he would yell at her to hurry up and not speak with officers. He also demanded more cigarettes each time, stating he knew we had more and were "rationing" them. Sgt. Haines and Ofc. Webb attempted to obtain information quickly and covertly from the female victim when she retrieved the cigarettes, but were limited due to Mr. Oswalt yelling at her. She did manage to inform officers that the children were located in the bedroom with windows directly above our position.

At one point, Mr. Oswald said the female victim was taking too long and he threatened to go to the children. We heard footsteps that sounded like he was going to them, which caused her to scramble back up the steps, screaming in fear for him to stop and that she was coming. It was obvious she was truly being held against her will and was in genuine fear of what he would do if she disobeyed him. I discussed options with the CP via the radio in reference to the possibility of positioning a sniper on the second floor in the adjacent building to get a line of sight on what was occurring upstairs or using a ladder to evacuate the children from a window.

At one point, I heard Mr. Oswald trying to convince the female victim to go downstairs with him and use the children as human shields. However, after approximately two (2) hours, he decided to allow the children to go free. They were released and directed to go out the front door to the team waiting for them there. Once the children were released, Mr. Oswald would not allow the female victim to come downstairs anymore to get cigarettes because he stated he knew with them gone, we would grab her and not allow her to return upstairs.

Several minutes passed without much communication from Mr. Oswald. Then suddenly there was a commotion and the female victim could be heard yelling, "Help me! He's going to kill me! Get me the fuck out of here!" At that point, believing we were going to make entry, I repositioned myself to the back of the stack. The female victim then appeared from the stairs running away from Mr. Oswald toward officers. She was moved between officers to the doorway and I pushed her behind me to someone. I saw Mr. Oswald at the bottom of the stairs and he was in pursuit of the female victim, holding two knives above his head in an "attack" position.

I was again unable to be useful or have a clear shot at the back of the stack, so I returned to my position outside of the window. I heard Sgt. Haines and Ofc. Webb yelling orders for Mr. Oswald to "stop" and "drop the knife," but he continued walking directly toward them. I waited until he was close enough to them that I not only would have lost my line of sight from the window, but until he was within a few feet from them and I was concerned he would follow through with his threats to stab officers. At the last possible moment, when he was just outside of striking distance with the knives and still continuing to move toward them with the knives held above his head, I

fired two (2) shots through the window toward him with my assigned duty rifle. Sgt. Haines and Ofc. Webb also fired their rifles, all three (3) of us did so simultaneously.

Mr. Oswalt immediately dropped to the floor and I could no longer see him. I then rejoined at the back of the stack and we all made entry. I was aware that someone placed Mr. Oswalt in handcuffs. Ofc. Webb called for Firefighter Smith to enter and begin life saving measures on Mr. Oswalt. I advised via the radio that shots had been fired, Mr. Oswalt was down, secured and receiving medical aid, and that all officers were fine. The other team from the front of the house who had been positioned in the bearcat had moved in by this time and we were advised to return to the CP and that that team would clear the residence. We immediately did so and waited in the CP for further instructions.

The weather on the date of the incident was clear and mild and there was no significant change in the weather during the time of the incident. At the time of the incident, it was nighttime and dark outside. There was a light on the porch before Sgt. Haines unscrewed the light bulb as described herein. The interior of the house was lit.

The backdrop when I fired my weapon was the interior wall / ceiling of the house.

I had no prior contact with Mr. Oswalt before the incident.

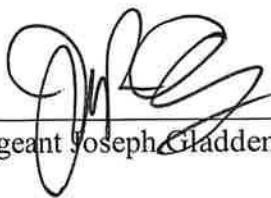
I used lethal force in this incident by discharging my firearm because I do not believe that there was any less lethal force that I could have used that would have been as effective in stopping the immediate and direct threat that Mr. Oswalt posed to the other officers by continuing towards them with his knives raised in an attack position.

My action in firing my firearm, as described above, was consistent with my training and experience as a law enforcement officer.

My statement is made from the best of my recollection as to the incident on October 19, 2024.

I wish to cooperate with this investigation and am prepared to answer any questions which you might have.

Respectfully submitted,



Sergeant Joseph Gladden

11-1-24

Date



Criminal Investigation Notification

1. This investigation is being conducted in order to determine whether any criminal laws have been violated on the part of those involved in this incident. Specifically, to collect facts and information to be provided to the prosecutor and/or grand jury in order for them to determine whether the conduct involved is authorized or prohibited by criminal statutes.
2. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may decline to answer or cease the interview at any time. You are entitled to have an attorney present if you wish.
3. The criminal investigation is separate from any internal, administrative investigation which your employer may or may not be independently conducting. You are not being compelled to give any statement or answer any questions. This is not a "Garrity" interview (where you could be required to answer).

JOSEPH P. GLADDEN

Printed Name of Interviewee

11-24 1034

Date / Time

[Signature]

Signature of Interviewee

CORY Mamchik

BCI Agent (Printed)

[Signature] #164

BCI Agent (Signature)