



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



2022-1472
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 2793 Waterpark Drive, Mason,
OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Officer
Involves: James Schelldorf (W)
Date of Activity: 07/13/2022
Activity Location: Warren County Sheriff's Office – Business – 822 Memorial Drive ,
Lebanon, OH 45036, Warren County
Author: SA Perry K. Roeser, #114

Narrative:

On July 13, 2022, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Perry Roeser interviewed Warren County Tactical Response Team member James Schelldorf (Schelldorf) regarding his involvement with an Officer-Involved Critical incident under BCI investigation. Schelldorf, a full-time Hamilton Township Police Officer, was alerted to the SWAT call-out during the afternoon of July 11, 2022.

In the early morning of July 12, 2022, the OICI occurred at the Baymont Inn at 2793 Water Park Road, Mason, Ohio. The Tactical Response Team was contacted by the Mason Police Department when an escaped inmate took a female hostage in room #310. A Tactical Response team member shot and killed the involved individual, Thomas Cromwell, after they breached the hotel door.

The details below summarized the pertinent portions of the recorded interview with Schelldorf and were not taken verbatim unless noted by quotations. The interview began at 1321 hours.

Schelldorf explained his assignment with the Hamilton Township Police Department was in uniform patrol; his rank was a patrolman, and he has been with the department since 1995. While employed with the police department, he gained an assignment with the Warren County Response Team. Schelldorf explained he was assigned as a breacher for the team, and the team trained every other Wednesday. Schelldorf said his work hours were 0600 to 1800 hours, with rotating days off.

Schelldorf explained on July 11, at 1634 hours, the team received a page to respond to the Baymont Inn, Mason, Ohio, for a hostage situation. Schelldorf said after he received clearance to respond to the scene from his supervisor, he drove directly to the location, which took

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between 10–15 minutes.

Schelldorf said when he arrived at the site; the team staged beside the Baymont Inn, in a parking lot. Schelldorf said Jim Dottie, the team leader, told the unit a male in room 310 had a hostage. Schelldorf said the team posted outside of room 310 in the hallway. Schelldorf said during the negotiations, Cromwell contacted the team, yelling from behind the door. Schelldorf said he asked Cromwell if everybody was "OK" in the room. Cromwell responded that everyone was OK. Schelldorf said Cromwell made a demand he "wanted his people." Soon after the request was made, no other communication was made with Cromwell. Schelldorf stated the team held their post until late in the evening when they received notice they would breach the room and rescue the hostage.

Schelldorf said wall devices were set on the adjoining walls to room 310, and on a count down, he was to use a shotgun and breach the door's hinges. Schelldorf said on his count down, he initiated the action and fired seven ballistic shots into the door's latches. Schelldorf said the ballistic breach failed, so another team member used the ram to enter room 310. Schelldorf said he moved to the side of the door after it was opened, and other team members entered the room. Schelldorf said he heard one shot fired and verbal commands given to a female. Schelldorf said he saw and grabbed a female and pulled her into the hallway. Schelldorf noted the female was hysterical as he secured her and led her to the command post outside. Schelldorf said he asked the female if she was OK. He said the female told him that Cromwell tried to hurt her, but she did not specify how.

Schelldorf said after he got the female to the command post, he summoned a medic for her care. Schelldorf said before leaving the scene, he went back upstairs to gather equipment. While upstairs in room 310, a decision was made not to touch anything as it was part of the crime scene. Schelldorf said the team was released from the location and headed back to their task force office. While at the task force office, the BCI crime scene agent arrived and documented the team with photographs. The interview ended at 1345 and was audio recorded. See attachment number 1 for a copy of the audio recording.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01: 2022-07-13 / James Schelldorf Interview

Exhibit 1

Included as a separate file.