



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



2021-0957
Officer Involved Critical Incident – 3171 Legion Lane, Columbus,
OH (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Witness
Involves: Ja'niah Bryant (W)
Date of Activity: 04/20/2021
Author: SA Perry K. Roeser, #114

Narrative:

On April 20, 2021, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Perry Roeser was contacted at approximately 1730 hours, and asked to assist with the Officer-Involved Critical Incident (OICI) at 3171 Legion Lane, Columbus, Ohio. SA Roeser was told the Columbus Police Department discharged a firearm at the location. SA Roeser advised he would assist and respond to the scene.

SA Roeser arrived on the scene at approximately 1830 hours and met with members of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) from BCI in the Columbus Police Command bus parked on the roadway just north of the crime scene on Legion Lane.

SA Roeser was told the Columbus Police encountered a female brandishing a knife at another individual. After the OICI, the female, later identified as Ma'Khia Bryant, did not survive the sustained gunfire injuries. SA Roeser was told several witnesses to the OICI were in the police cruisers parked on Legion Lane that needed to be interviewed. SA Roeser was told a female witness (unknown name) was inside Columbus Police Cruiser #9141 needed to be interviewed.

The investigator recorded the interview. The details listed below summarized the portions of the recorded interview with Ja'niah Bryant and were not taken verbatim unless noted in quotations.

At approximately 1930 hours, SA Roeser located cruiser #9141 and found a female in the backseat named Ja'niah Bryant. SA Roeser correctly identified himself to Bryant and asked if she would speak to him about what she saw. As SA Roeser gathered initial information, SA Roeser learned Bryant was fifteen years old. SA Roeser contacted BCI Special Agent Supervisor Kevin Barbeau in the Columbus Police Command bus and advised him of Bryant's age and asked if he wanted me to continue with the witness interview. He said yes.

Bryant was asked what her relationship was with Ma'Khia Bryant. She said Ma'Khia was her

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blood sister and they both lived in foster care at 3171 Legion Ln, Columbus, Ohio. Bryant said her foster mother is Angela Moore, who resides at the Legion Lane residence. Bryant said one other foster sister named Beautiful Stranton (13YOA) also stayed in the foster home. Bryant said she attends Eastmoor Academy on Wyatt Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

Bryant was asked what happened at the foster home on this date. Bryant said it all started yesterday, Monday, April 19th, when a former foster child arrived from Cleveland, Ohio, for Angela's birthday party. Bryant said on Monday, during the birthday party, the former foster child (Tionna Bonner), who was now an adult went for a walk with her and Beautiful. When they returned, Ma'Khia's bedroom door was found open. The door was closed when the walk began. Bryant said she had previous knowledge from Angela that Bonner took things that didn't belong to her. Bryant said she questioned Angela about the open door; but did not get a reason why the door was open.

On Tuesday, April 20th, Bryant said while at school, she received a text message from Beautiful. Beautiful told Bryant that Bonner was at the house calling the girls the "B" word. Bryant said she texted her sister, Ma'Khia, who was at school, and informed her that Bonner was causing trouble at the house. Bryant said Ma'Khia left her school; she thought around 1300 hours. Bryant said she also left school and walked home when Ma'Khia picked her up.

While at the house, Bryant said she and Ma'Khia had some lunch and then gathered belongings to leave the house and head to their grandmother's, Jeanena Hammonds, house. Bryant said she called her grandmother for help. Bryant said while in the home and awaiting Hammonds' arrival, Bonner told the girls to clean up the house and their bedrooms and they weren't going anywhere. It should be noted Beautiful was not home. Bryant said an argument started between all three girls. Bryant said during the altercation, Bonner called Shai, later identified as Shai Craig, a former foster home sister to Bonner, who lives down the street from the foster home. Bryant said at some point, Ma'Khia put a knife in her back pocket for protection. Soon after Bonner called Shai, she arrived at the foster home in her vehicle with other occupants. Bryant also explained that the grandmother also arrived at the house during the argument.

Bryant said when Shai arrived; she threatened the girls and the grandmother. During the arguments, Bryant said she called Angela and told her what was going on in the house and Bryant said Angela disconnected her phone.

Bryant said while in the house, Shai came upstairs and wanted to fight Ma'Khia. Bryant said at some point, Hammonds noticed that Bonner gained control of a knife. Bonner told Hammonds and Bryant she now had a knife for her protection.

Bryant said before everyone was heading outside, she contacted her father, Myron Hammonds, and asked him to come over to the foster home. Bryant said once outside Bryant observed Shai spit on her dad. Bryant explained Ma'Khia saw what Shai did to her dad and that's when Ma'Khia went after Shai with a knife in the front yard. Bryant said she saw Bonner run toward Ma'Khia that's when Ma'Khia turned her attention away from Shai and now toward Bonner with a knife in hand near the car in the driveway. Bryant said that is when the police shot.

During the interview, a Franklin County Children Services worker, Tamella Fair, entered the police cruiser as a representative for Bryant, as they are the legal custodian for Bryant.

Bryant said after the shooting occurred, an ambulance was called to the scene. Bryant said she notified her foster mother and her biological mother, Paula Bryant, of the shooting through a Wi-Fi-face-time app.

Bryant was asked to describe the knife Ma'Khia had. She said it was like a steak-style knife.

Bryant was asked several times if she thought Ma'Khia would have harmed Bonner if they police weren't called. She ultimately said, "yeah, she would have stabbed her."

Bryant was asked if she spoke with Bonner or Shai after the shooting had occurred; she said no. SA Roeser asked who called 911 for help. Bryant said she called for help along with others. The interview concluded at 2018 hours.

For further details of the interview between SA Roeser and Bryant, see attachment #1 for an audio recording copy.

Attachments:

Attachment # 01:803_0106 Ja'niah Bryant