



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



2024-1433

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 4802 James Road, North Ridgeville, Ohio

Investigative Activity: Interview Conducted
Involves: Officer John Metzo (W)
Activity Date: 05/22/2024
Activity Location: North Ridgeville Police Department, 7070 Ranger Way, North Ridgeville, OH 44039
Authoring Agent: Special Agent Nicholas Valente #139

Narrative:

On May 22, 2024, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Nick Valente and SA John Tingley interviewed North Ridgeville Police Department (NRPD) Officer John Metzo (Officer Metzo) at NRPD, 7070 Ranger Way, North Ridgeville, Ohio. Officer Metzo was accompanied by Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (OPBA) Attorney Danniell Chaffin during the interview. The interview was audio and video recorded. The audio recording was attached to this report and the video recording was saved as Reference Item F.

Officer Metzo was identified as a NRPD officer who witnessed and/or had some level of involvement in the May 8, 2024, officer-involved shooting which occurred at 4802 James Road, North Ridgeville, Ohio. Officer Metzo did not discharge a firearm during this incident. The purpose of the interview was to obtain all relevant information of the incident known to or observed by Officer Metzo.

This report only summarizes the information deemed by the author to be of the most relevance to the investigation and does not purport to contain all the questions and answers from the interview. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview. It may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full recording be reviewed to clarify any content or contextual questions regarding the information obtained during the interview.

Throughout the interview, Officer Metzo provided the following information:

Officer Metzo has been a police officer for 21 years. On the day of the officer-involved shooting, Officer Metzo was driving a marked NRPD patrol car, and he wore a standard issue NRPD uniform that clearly identified him as a police officer. Officer Metzo was wearing a body-worn camera (BWC) during the incident, but it was not activated prior

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to the incident. Officer Metzo had not watched any BWC or other video recordings of the incident prior to the interview with agents.

Officer Metzo was advised by a NRPD Lieutenant that a vehicle and its driver were wanted in connection with a murder in Tennessee. Further, the subject vehicle was actively being picked up by FLOCK vehicle monitoring cameras within the city of North Ridgeville. Officer Metzo heard Officer [REDACTED] who was also looking for the subject vehicle, report that he had located the subject vehicle parked in a driveway on James Drive. Officer Metzo responded to James Drive and met with other officers who arrived at or near the same time.

Officer Metzo parked his patrol vehicle at the end of James Drive. Officer Metzo then removed his patrol rifle from his vehicle and began to approach the subject residence with his patrol rifle in hand. Officer Metzo walked across the front yards of the neighboring homes until he took cover behind a bush near the southwest corner of 4816 James Drive, directly west of the home where the subject vehicle was parked.

A few minutes later, Officer Metzo overheard one of the two NRPD officers who were positioned near the front of the home call out they observed the front door of the subject residence opening. Officer Metzo could not see the subject residence due to his positioning. Officer Metzo momentarily walked out from cover but returned to the southwest corner of the home at 4816 James for cover. Once able to see the subject, Officer Metzo trained his rifle on him. Officer Metzo observed the subject walking to the back of the subject vehicle parked in the driveway. Officer Metzo next observed the subject raise and direct his hand out in a motion he recognized as consistent with someone pointing a gun. Officer Metzo was unaware, at that time, that Officer [REDACTED] had moved to cover behind a telephone pole in the yard directly east of the subject residence.

Officer Metzo described the subject pointing his arm out in an easterly direction towards the telephone pole Officer [REDACTED] had taken cover behind. Officer Metzo realized at that moment an NRPD officer must be in that location based on the subject pointing his arm out that way. Officer Metzo then heard a single gunshot followed momentarily by two more gunshots. Officer Metzo realized that if the subject was firing at an officer and that officer(s) returned fire, he was directly in that same line of fire as the subject. Officer Metzo leaned his head back behind the corner of the neighboring home for cover after hearing the second gunshot. After hearing the second gunshot, Officer Metzo walked out from cover/concealment around the bush at

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the driveway of the home where he was positioned. As the subject came back into view, Officer Metzko observed the subject lying on the ground.

Officer Metzko did not hear the subject make any verbal statements as he approached the scene.

Officer Metzko reported he heard other NRPD officers yell at the subject "North Ridgeville Police Department" while the subject stood at the subject vehicle in the driveway of 4802 James Drive.

Officer Metzko believed he heard three gunshots in total. Officer Metzko believed all three shots were fired in quick succession with a minor pause between the second and third shot.

Immediately after the shooting, Officer Metzko observed Lieutenant Lee approach the subject to begin to render aid. Officer Metzko recalled Officer Macy approached the subject with a medical aid bag and also began to render aid. Officer Metzko reported he focused his attention on the home and another male who was also present in the front yard of the home. Officer Metzko then participated in conducting a protective sweep of the subject residence. Officer Metzko believed the ambulance arrived around the time he and other officers completed their protective sweep of the home.

When asked if he feared for his safety or the safety of other officers during the incident, Officer Metzko stated that he feared for the safety of officers, and he felt "disbelief" when he heard the sound of gunshots.

When asked, Officer Metzko reported he was able to differentiate the sound of the first shot from the following two as the following two shots were noticeably muffled. Officer Metzko was aware the NRPD rifles were equipped with noise dampening "cans" and believed the last two muffled sounding gunshots were fired by officers.

When asked if he felt any actions taken by any of the involved officers may have been criminal, Officer Metzko stated "no."

References:

F - Officer Interview Videos

Attachments:

1. 2024-05-22 Audio Interview John Metzko
2. John Metzko Criminal Investigation Notification

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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).

JOHN METZO

Printed Name of Interviewee

MAY 22, 2024

Date / Time

Signature of Interviewee

NICK VALENTE #139

BCI Agent (Printed)

BCI Agent (Signature)