



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



2024-3294

Officer Involved Critical Incident - Portage Hike and Bike
Trail near North Freedom Street, Ravenna, Ohio 44266

Investigative Activity: Review of Body Worn Camera
Involves: Officer Matthew Meyers (S), Matthew Fries (S)
Activity Date: 12/02/2024
Activity Location: BCI - Richfield
Authoring Agent: SA Allison Fletcher

Narrative:

On Wednesday, October 23, 2024, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Allison Fletcher (Fletcher) received video footage from Ravenna Police Department (RPD) Captain Jason Smallfield (Smallfield). SA Fletcher was informed that the videos contained footage from the body camera worn by RPD Officer Matthew Meyers (Meyers).

Note that the video times referenced in this report will refer to the elapsed time of the video.

Two video files containing video footage from Officer Meyer's BWC were provided. The file names have been listed below:

- *BWC-24_62542_102224164249_1 - Matthew Meyers*
- *Redact_20241023152522648714 - Matthew Meyers REDACTED*

SA Fletcher reviewed the video recordings and noted the following:

Throughout this report the percussion sounds consistent with the sound of gunfire may be referred to as gunshots or gunfire. It should be noted those references are based on the totality of corroborating information and evidence gathered throughout this investigation. It in no way suggests that the percussion sounds referenced could not have originated from some other unknown source. Screenshots were taken of relevant moments in the video.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS FOR EVALUATING THE VIDEO RECORDINGS

There are numerous other factors that need to be considered when reviewing and evaluating the videos and audio recordings of this incident. Those factors are:

A. Video recording devices record within the video and sound capabilities available, and they record objectively. Video recordings lack the history, perspective, and interest



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of the people involved. The positions, angles, obstacles, lighting, and distance from the incident are also factors that need serious consideration.

B. Video recording devices also record more information about a particular scene or incident than the person(s) involved in the incident can process during the critical incident. Video recording devices rarely record an event from the same perspective of the officer. It captures the action but not the perception, decision making, focus, or intent of the officer. Video recordings often miss tactile cues or other actions of a subject.

C. The speed of the incident is remarkable. The speed and complexity of rapidly evolving situation(s) that occur during use of force encounters are difficult concepts to comprehend by only watching the video.

BWC-24_62542_102224164249_1 - Matthew Meyers

The video was 45 minutes and 51 seconds. The video began with Officer Meyers driving his police cruiser. The audio for the video began at 00:10 and sirens could be heard in the background.

Radio traffic could be heard in the background, including information about injuries of the stabbing victim.

At 02:33 Officer Meyers parked his vehicle and began walking down the hike and bike trail towards the location of Officer Joshua Twigg (Twigg), [REDACTED] and the stabbing victim, Larry Burghy (Burghy).

At 02:55 [REDACTED] could be heard on the radio stating "we got one walking up here."

At 03:22 Officer Meyers began running down the path towards Officers Twigg and [REDACTED] Someone could be heard yelling "put it down" (*Meyers BWC 1*).

At 03:29 Officer Meyers passed Burghy lying on the bike trail and a male wearing a bike helmet and blue shirt (witness – Jack Chandler). Meanwhile, Officer Twigg could be heard on the radio stating that the subject had a knife or sword (*Meyers BWC 2*).

At 03:47 Officer Meyers was next to [REDACTED] (on her left side). A male riding a bicycle wearing a yellow shirt could be seen passing officers on the left. It appeared as though the bicyclist passed the area where the subject was (*Meyers BWC 3*).

Officers could be heard giving multiple commands to the subject to "drop it" and "get on the ground."



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At 03:50 Officer Meyers' firearm was visible on camera. It appeared to be pointing in the direction of the subject (*Meyers BWC 4*).

At 03:54 Officer Meyers announced the subject had an axe. The subject could be observed walking towards officers on the path. Officer Meyers appeared to still have his firearm pointed in the direction of the subject (*Meyers BWC 5*).

At 03:56 Officer Meyers could be heard saying "put the axe down." The subject continued to walk towards officers.

At 04:02 the subject briefly stopped walking and appeared to get in a flexed stance. The axe was in the subject's left hand (*Meyers BWC 6*). The subject continued to walk towards officers.

Officer Meyers gave multiple commands to the subject to "drop the axe now." The subject responded by yelling "fuck off" as he continued to approach officers.

At 04:21 an officer could be heard stating the subject also had a knife in his hand. The subject was walking quickly towards officers (*Meyers BWC 7*).

The subject continued to approach officers at a quick walking pace.

At 04:25 the subject yelled something unintelligible and flexed his upper body while approaching officers. The firearm of an officer standing next to Officer Meyers was visible. This was likely [REDACTED] who approached moments before shots were fired (*Meyers BWC 8*).

At 04:28 a gunshot could be heard, and [REDACTED] firearm could be observed recoiling back due to [REDACTED] firing his weapon (*Meyers BWC 9*). Gunshots continued and the subject fell to the ground, dropping the axe (*Meyers BWC 10*). There were approximately thirteen (13) gunshots.

At 04:30 the gunshots stopped, and the subject could be observed lying on the ground. [REDACTED] could be observed pointing his firearm in the direction of the subject (*Meyers BWC 11*).

Officer Meyers stated, "shots fired." Moaning could be heard, and officers began yelling "rollover." Additional medical personnel were requested to respond to their location. The subject was lying on the ground with his head on a large axe (*Meyers BWC 12*).

Officers appeared to remove the weapons from the subject. The remainder of the video was the rendering of medical aid to the subject, who was later identified as Matthew Fries (Fries), and the management of the scene after the critical incident.



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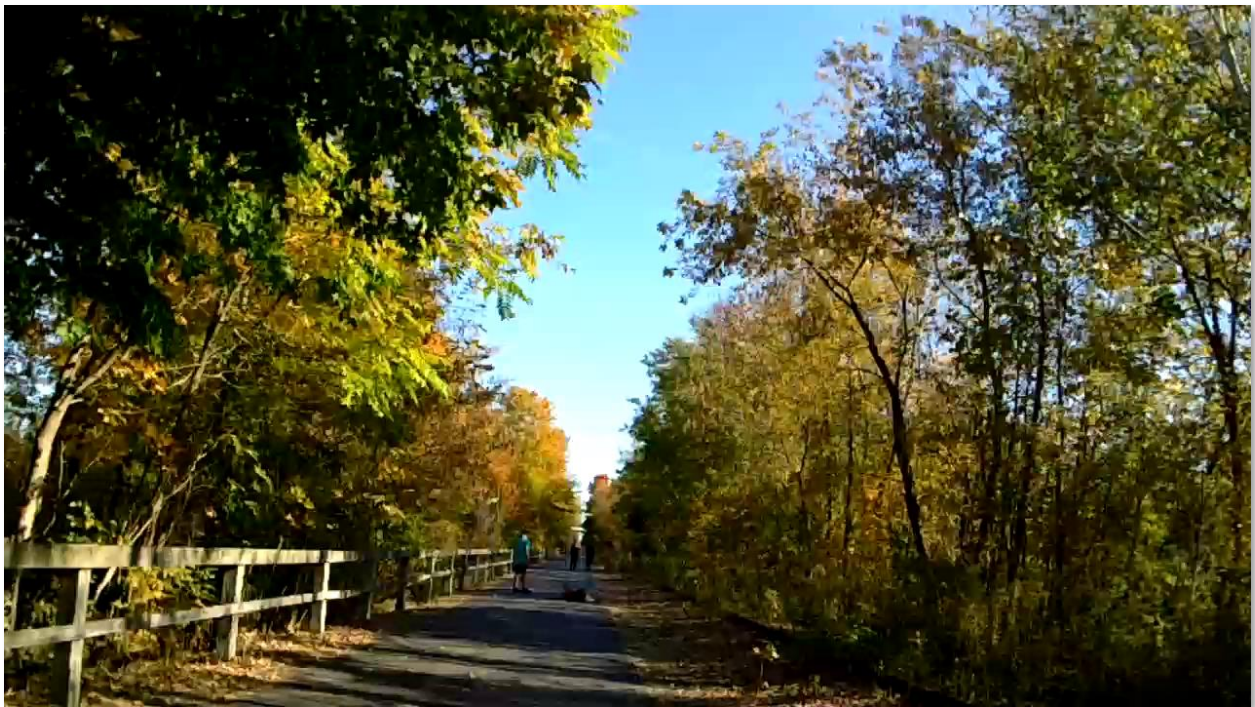


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Redact_20241023152522648714 - Matthew Meyers REDACTED

The video was 45 minutes and 51 seconds. The content of the video was the same as the video file titled *BWC-24_62542_102224164249_1 - Matthew Meyers*, however, the shooting portion of the incident had been blurred in the video. The redaction began at 04:25 and continued anytime Fries was visible on camera for the remainder of the video. No new information was obtained from this duplicate video.



Meyers BWC 1



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Meyers BWC 2



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Meyers BWC 3



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Meyers BWC 4

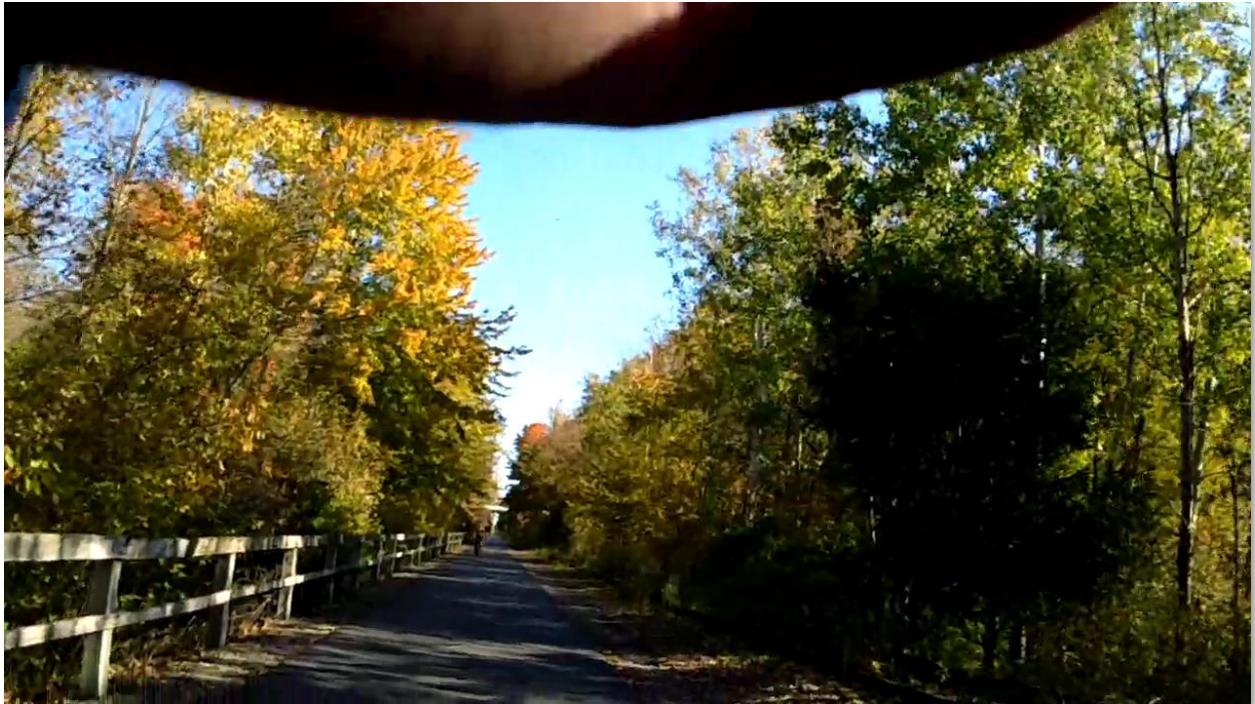


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Meyers BWC 5



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Meyers BWC 6



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Meyers BWC 7

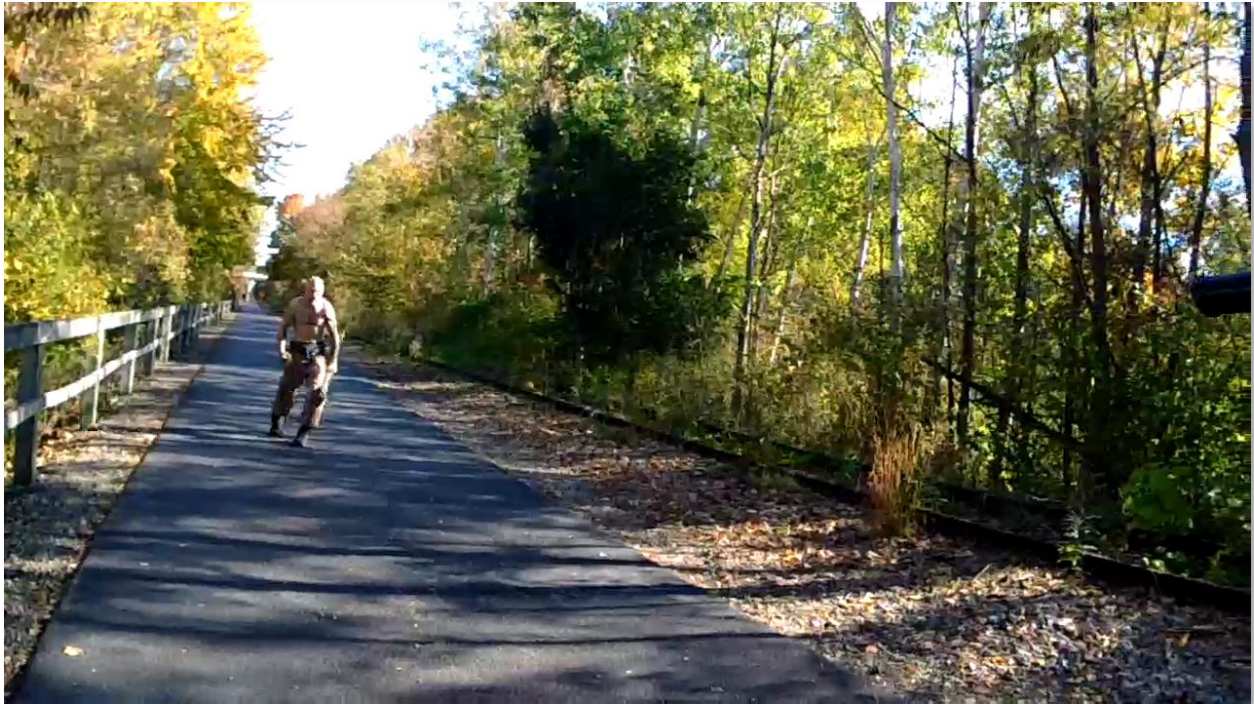


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Meyers BWC 8

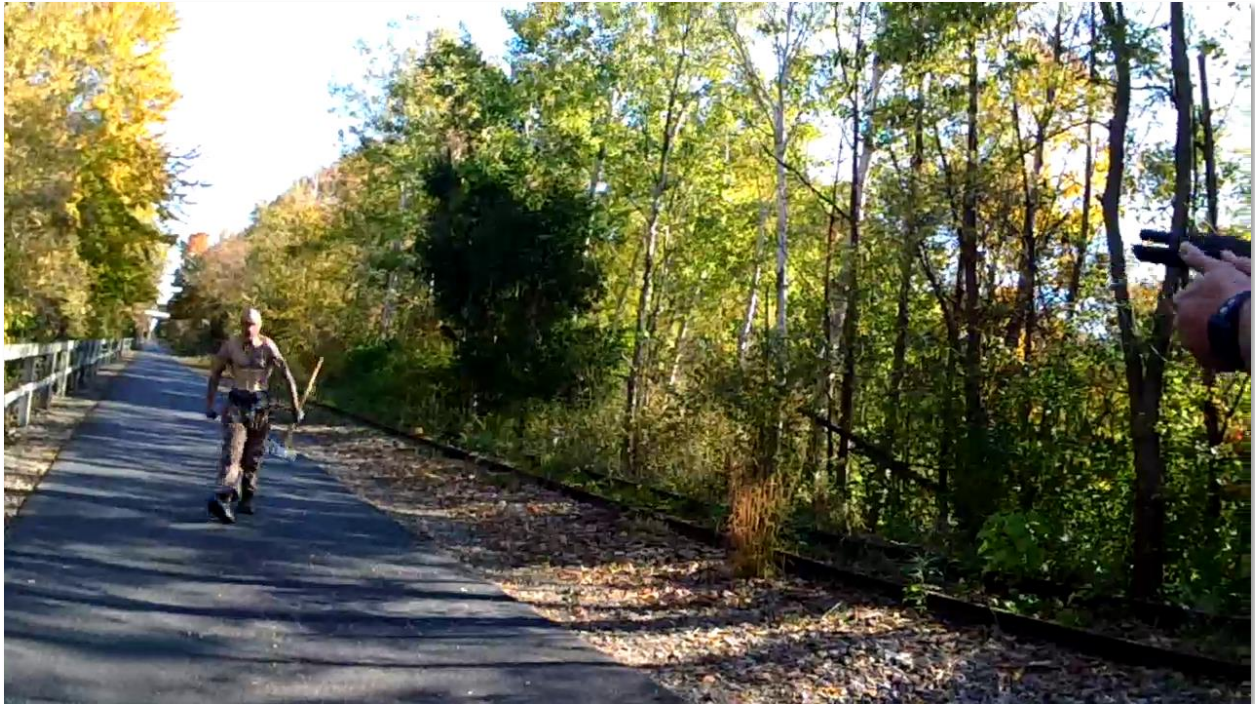


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Meyers BWC 9



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Meyers BWC 10

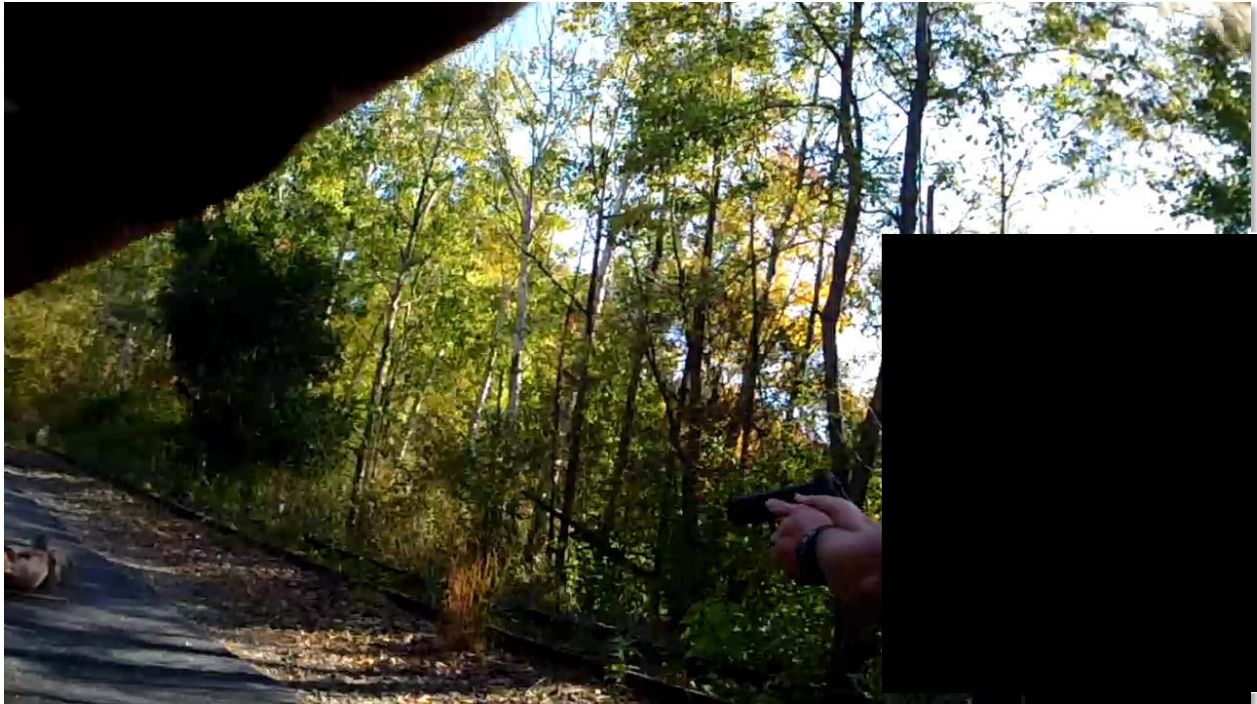


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Meyers BWC 11



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Meyers BWC 12

The thumb drive containing the video footage was submitted to the physical BCI case file as item E for reference only.

References:

REF ITEM E - USB flash drive containing Ravenna PD BWC videos

Attachments:

1. Meyers BWC 1-12























