



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



2023-2080  
Officer Involved Critical Incident - 45 Great Southern Blvd., Columbus,  
OH 43207

Investigative Activity: Interview with Involved Officer

Involves: Officer [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]  
Activity Date: 9/6/2023  
Activity Location: Law Offices of Harshman, Wannemacher, Tipton & Lipperman located at:  
4683 Winterset Drive, Columbus, OH 43220  
Authoring Agent: Special Agent Chad Holcomb, #61

**Narrative:**

On Wednesday, September 06, 2023, at 1000 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Chad Holcomb (SA Holcomb) and SA Matt Collins (SA Collins) interviewed Columbus Police Department (CPD) Officer (Ofc.) [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]), who was accompanied by his attorney, Nicole Wannemacher, from the Fraternal Order of Police. The interview took place at the attorney's office located at 4683 Winterset Drive, Columbus, OH 43220. The interview was audio recorded.

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 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 and 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 from the interview.

**Narrative:**

Prior to beginning the interview, SA Holcomb provided Ofc. [REDACTED] with the BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form. SA Holcomb advised BCI was conducting a criminal investigation separate from any internal investigation that CPD may be conducting. Ofc. [REDACTED] was told his interview was voluntary and that he could stop answering questions at any time. Ofc. [REDACTED] verbally confirmed he understood the contents of the form and signed the document, acknowledging his understanding. A copy of the signed Criminal Investigation Notification (CIN) is attached to this report.

Attorney Nicole Wannemacher provided SA Holcomb with a written statement from Ofc. [REDACTED] regarding the OICI. SA Holcomb reviewed the statement upon receipt. Ofc. [REDACTED] read his statement. Ofc. [REDACTED] signed his statement provided to BCI, and he verified the statement was true and accurate depiction of the OICI incident. Please refer to Ofc. [REDACTED]'s statement for

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further details. A copy of the signed written statement is saved within the case file and is attached to this report.

Ofc. ██████ stated that he arrived at 45 Great Southern Blvd., due to a 911 call stating a male with a gun was robbing another male and attempting to take his vehicle. Ofc. ██████ stated, "As soon as he [Ofc. ██████] stopped the police wagon, I exited the passenger's side with my weapon in my right hand. As I was exiting the police wagon, the suspect opened the driver's side door and got out with a gun in his right hand. I immediately yelled at him to 'Drop it!'" Ofc. ██████ continued to state, "Suddenly, I heard rounds being fired and I saw the suspect on the ground, half sitting up with his shoulders hunched up and the gun in his hands with the barrel of it pointed towards Officer ██████ and I believed he was shooting at Officer ██████. I immediately started firing my weapon at the suspect".

Ofc. ██████ further stated, "At the time I fired my weapon at the suspect, I was in fear for the life of Officer ██████. Prior to me firing my weapons, I knew the suspect had a firearm and that he had committed an armed robbery. Immediately before I discharged my firearm, I heard rounds being fired and I saw the suspect sitting up on the ground, with his gun pointed at Officer ██████ and it was at that moment I began firing my weapon. I do not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect the life of Officer ██████ from the suspect's deadly threat at the time I fired my weapon."

SA Holcomb and SA Collins asked Ofc. ██████ multiple follow-up questions.

SA Holcomb asked Ofc. ██████ that when he first saw Huntzinger near the Lowe's, where exactly did he see him (Huntzinger). Ofc. ██████ stated that Huntzinger was walking near the service road by Lowe's. SA Holcomb asked if Ofc. ██████ ever saw the female, Xayla Schuerell. Ofc. ██████ stated he saw a female as he was leaving the scene with officer support. Ofc. ██████ does not believe, either he or Ofc. ██████ ever activated the vehicles siren and doesn't believe the light bar was activated at the time of the encounter with Huntzinger. Ofc. ██████ stated that he believed he was clearly identifiable as a police officer.

Ofc. ██████ was asked if he could locate any of Huntzinger's injuries after he was in custody. Ofc. ██████ stated that when he rolled Huntzinger over and was checking for items in his pockets, he saw some injuries to his back. Ofc. ██████ was asked if he ever feared for his life during the incident; he said yes. Ofc. ██████ stated that when he first got out of the wagon and he saw that Huntzinger was pointing a gun at him he feared for his life. Ofc. ██████ was asked if Huntzinger ever complied with any of his commands; he stated Huntzinger did not.

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Ofc. [REDACTED] was asked if he heard anyone else give commands or if Huntzinger ever said anything. Ofc. [REDACTED] stated he remembers yelling 'drop it' and believes that Ofc. [REDACTED] said 'drop it' as well. Ofc. [REDACTED] also believes someone else say "no no no" but was not sure who said it. Ofc. [REDACTED] stated that all the words heard or said was immediately as soon as they pulled up.

Ofc. [REDACTED] stated the lighting conditions was dawn and sunny. Ofc. [REDACTED] stated there was no need for alternative light. Ofc. [REDACTED] stated that he carries his firearm with 17 cartridges in the magazine and one cartridge in the chamber. During Ofc. [REDACTED]'s reload, he dropped the magazine and did not move it.

The interview concluded at approximately 1016 hours.

The interview was audio recorded. The audio recording was attached to this report. The signed BCI Criminal Investigation Notification form is also attached to this report. Please see the attachments for further details.



BCI #2023-2080

**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).

[Redacted Name]

Printed Name of Interviewee

9/6/2023 10:00AM

Date / Time

[Redacted Signature]

Signature of Interviewee

Chad Holcomb

BCI Agent (Printed)

SA C. Hala #61

BCI Agent (Signature)

**STATEMENT OF OFFICER [REDACTED], BADGE NO. [REDACTED]**

This statement is regarding my involvement in an incident that occurred on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, from approximately 6:30 a.m. until 7:00 a.m. I am voluntarily providing this statement as part of the investigation being conducted by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI).

My date of hire with the Columbus Division of Police (“CPD” or the “Division”) is December 6, 2010. I do not have any prior law enforcement experience. I received my OPOTA certification upon my graduation from the police academy. I do not have any use of force that was determined to be outside of policy currently in my file. I was in the Army from approximately November 1994-1997 and I received an honorable discharge.

My regular assignment is 13A6. My duty hours are from 6:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., with Thursday and Friday off. I did not work any special duty or overtime in the 24-hour period prior to my shift. I arrived at the start of my shift well-rested.

I do not wear glasses or contacts and my uncorrected vision is good. I do not wear a hearing aid and my hearing is good. I do not suffer from any disabilities. I had not consumed alcohol in the 24-hour period prior to this incident. I did not consume any prescription or over-the-counter medication in the 24-hour period prior to this incident.

On the day of this incident, I was wearing the CPD patrol uniform consisting of navy pants, an internal vest, a navy short-sleeved shirt which displayed my badge on the front and stated “COLUMBUS POLICE” on the back. I was also equipped with a body worn camera (BWC) which mounted to my chest and activated during this incident. I was working with a partner: CPD Officer [REDACTED]. We were in the Columbus Police Wagon which is [REDACTED].

I was equipped with my Division-issued Smith & Wesson 2.0 9mm handgun, which was loaded with Division-issued ammunition. I was current in my range qualifications with that weapon. I was not carrying any backup firearm.

Immediately before this incident, I was at the 13-precinct substation. We had just completed roll call and were loading up for the day when radio aired that there was a gun (33) run at Diebel's Floor at 4000 S. High Street. Officer [REDACTED] and I were dispatched on it. He got into the driver's seat and I got into the passenger seat and drove towards Diebels. We were approximately 4-5 miles from the location. The information from dispatch was vague but I believe it was that someone was watching the security cameras there and that there was a male with a gun approaching the employees who were out back. The description was a male white with short dark hair dressed in a red shirt. Then I believe they changed the description to a white shirt and jeans.

Officer [REDACTED] turned from Obetz Road left (south) onto High Street. As we were passing the Lowes, I noticed a white male with short brown hair walking north but he was in a dark gray or black shirt and black pants. We turned left from High Street into Diebel's Floor and Officer [REDACTED] drove around to the back of the business where the employees park. Officer [REDACTED] parked the wagon and we exited. There were initially two employees in the back who were sitting in their trucks. They got out and came to talk to us. They told us that they were getting ready for work when this guy came towards them from High Street and that he kept giving them the thumbs up with his left hand but had a gun in his right hand that he was trying to hide behind his back. One of the employees stated that he retrieved an ax from his truck and yelled at him to get out of there. They also stated that he had a female with him and that she had black hair and was wearing very short shorts.

The employees told us that he was in a white/red shirt and jeans. Then they said he had a dress shirt, like a beach shirt. During our conversation, two additional employees arrived and came to talk to us. One of them was trying to pull up the surveillance footage on his phone to show us the suspect but he could not get it to work. Around that time, Officer Casto pulled into Diebel's backlot. He told Officer [REDACTED] that he saw a white male with a black dress shirt at Lowes and that he took off running. As soon as he said that the employee was like "yeah that was it, it was a black dress shirt." Then I realized that it was the white male that I had previously noticed. Officer Casto left and was going back to the Lowes to look for him. The employee continued to try to pull up the footage on his phone but was unsuccessful so we decided to go look for the suspect with Officer Casto.

I got back into the passenger's seat of the wagon and Officer [REDACTED] got into the driver's seat. He drove out to High Street but we were stuck behind a garbage truck that was pulling out of Deibel's and it took it a minute or so to turn. Once the garbage truck turned, we were turning right (north) onto High Street when radio aired that there was a caller who stated a white male in a black button-down shirt with a gun was having her boss get out of the car at 45 Great Southern. I aired that we would be pulling up in a second as Officer [REDACTED] was approaching the intersection with Obetz Road. He flipped on/off the lights and turned left (west) onto the service road that leads to 45 Great Southern. As we drove north up the service road, Officer [REDACTED] said he's right there or words to that effect.

The suspect was in the driver's seat of a gray Honda Civic that was parked facing the Auto Title (southwest). His head was down and he appeared to be trying to start the car. Officer [REDACTED] quickly accelerated through the parking lot and he pulled the police wagon up to the southeast side of the Civic, so that the front of the wagon was angled towards the front driver's

side corner of the Civic. He stopped the police wagon approximately 10-15 feet from the Civic. As soon as he stopped the police wagon, I exited the passenger's side with my weapon in my right hand. As I was exiting the police wagon, the suspect opened the driver's side door and got out with a gun in his right hand. I immediately yelled at him to "Drop it!" The suspect ran backwards (still facing us) with the gun in his hand. I ran north and slightly east to flank him but lost sight of him for a few seconds. Suddenly, I heard rounds being fired and I saw the suspect on the ground, half sitting up with his shoulders hunched up and the gun in his hands with the barrel of it pointed towards Officer [REDACTED] and I believed he was shooting at Officer [REDACTED]. I immediately started firing my weapon at the suspect. The suspect was trying to run north/northwest but he would fall, get back up, do a roll/somersault, etc. as he was trying to flee.

I heard additional rounds being fired while I was firing. I ran out of bullets and dropped my magazine and re-loaded it. Once I had re-loaded, I saw that the suspect was on the ground and not moving much. I aired shots fired and that it was officer involved. I saw Officer Casto to my right (west). He approached the suspect who was laying on his back with his head towards the north/northwest. He started to secure the suspect in handcuffs and then asked me if I had him. I responded yes and I took over securing the suspect. Once he was secured, I aired the suspect was down and in custody. I tried to locate his injuries and asked him where he was hit. I had my hand on his sternum and could tell he was breathing but he was not responsive to my question. I put on gloves because the suspect was bleeding. He was still breathing so I encouraged him to stay with me. I saw Officer Casto running to his cruiser and asked if Officer [REDACTED] was hit and he confirmed he had been. The suspect appeared to have stopped breathing so I did chest compressions and then he was breathing again and seemed to be trying to talk to me (he did not actually say anything) and then stopped. I checked for a pulse to make



sure he was still breathing and he was but several seconds later he stopped and I began chest compressions again. A Franklin County Sheriff's Deputy arrived and took over chest compressions on the suspect until medics arrived and I went to check on my partner. Officer Support arrived on scene and I went to the 11/12 substation to wait for BCI agents. This ended my involvement in this incident.

I fired 18 shots during this incident. I fired in rapid succession and I would estimate that I fired all my rounds in approximately 10 seconds. I fired using a two-handed grip and I believe I utilized my sights. I fired from a standing position several feet east of the driver's side rear corner of the black Equinox that was parked behind (one sport north and east of the suspect vehicle). My target was the suspect's center mass. The direction of my shots was north/northwest. My backdrop was an empty parking lot. I would estimate that I was approximately 10-20 feet from the suspect when I fired. I believe I was initially about 10 feet from the suspect when I started firing; however, as I fired the suspect moved northwest in the parking lot while I remained stationary. I did not have any cover or concealment when I fired.

At the time I fired my weapon at the suspect, I was in fear for the life of Officer [REDACTED]. Prior to me firing my weapon, I knew the suspect had a firearm and that he had committed an armed robbery. Immediately before I discharged my firearm, I heard rounds being fired and I saw the suspect sitting up on the ground, with his gun pointed at Officer [REDACTED] and it was at that moment I began firing my weapon. I do not believe I had any other reasonable alternative to protect the life of Officer [REDACTED] from the suspect's deadly threat at the time I fired my weapon.

I did have a taser at the time of this incident. However, I did not deploy my taser as it did not meet the taser test: time, distance, barrier, lethal force backup and reasonableness. There was

a vehicle in between the suspect and I and it would not have been reasonable to use a taser when the suspect had a gun, was pointing it at Officer [REDACTED] and I heard gunshots being fired.

I now know that the suspect is Austin Huntzinger. I do not recognize this person as anyone I have ever had any prior encounters with, neither professionally nor personally. However, he did look somewhat familiar so I may have previously encountered him at some point in my career.

I had the opportunity to review the footage of this incident after this event. After doing so, I realized that when the suspect moved north, I lost sight of him for a couple seconds because he was on the west side of the black Equinox. I do not specifically recall the black Equinox during the incident but I knew there was something there that caused me to lose sight of him for a couple seconds. It was during that time that gunfire erupted. During the incident, I did not know exactly who was firing or that Officer [REDACTED] had been struck. I did not hear him yell that he had been hit during the incident. However, once I was securing the suspect and Officer [REDACTED] did not come to assist, I knew something had happened as he would typically come to provide cover and assist when securing an armed suspect. In reviewing the footage, it also appears that the suspect dropped his gun when he was attempting to flee, I did not see this during the incident. The suspect's gun was black and the parking lot was blacktop so I did not notice it on the ground until the incident was over.

This concludes my statement and I will now answer any follow-up questions you may have at this time.

Off [REDACTED]