



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



2022-0826

Officer-Involved Critical Incident - W. 46th Street, between Collins Blvd. and Valley View Blvd.

To: Colleen M. O'Toole, Ashtabula County Prosecutor
Cc: Dave Posten, Special Agent Supervisor, Ohio BCI
From: Jon Lieber, Special Agent, Ohio BCI
Date: August 17, 2022
Involves: David Ward Jr.
Case Title: Officer-Involved Critical Incident – W. 46th Street between Collins Blvd. and Valley View Blvd., Ashtabula, Ohio
BCI Case Numbers: Investigations: 2022-0826
BCI Laboratory: 22-33189

Investigative Request

On Wednesday, April 13, 2022, Chief Robert D. Stell of the Ashtabula Police Department (APD) requested the assistance of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation's (BCI) Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Crime Scene Unit (CSU) in conducting an independent investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding an officer-involved shooting incident. The incident reportedly occurred on April 13, 2022, in the area of West 46th Street between Collins Boulevard and Valley View Boulevard and resulted in the death of David Ward Jr. (Ward).

Preface:

This report serves as a synopsis of the investigation into the April 13, 2022, officer-involved shooting in Ashtabula County, Ohio. This report only summarizes the information that the investigative team determined to be the most useful in achieving an overall understanding of what occurred in this incident. Every fact and detail is not presented in this summary report. Therefore, it is recommended that each individual report from which this document is derived be read in order to obtain a complete understanding of this investigation. Further, audio and/or video recordings exist for the majority of the interviews conducted, revealing further details of statements given regarding the incident.

This investigation was conducted with the purpose of determining, to the extent possible, the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident. As unbiased collectors of fact, the investigative team has not and will not render any opinion of the legality of officers' actions. Instead, it is anticipated that this investigation will provide the basis of information for decisions to be rendered by the appropriate authorities.

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Incident Summary/Overview

On April 13, 2022, at approximately 0012 hours, David Ward Jr. called 911 and stated that he has a gun and is walking down the street. Ultimately, Ward provides a description of his clothing and tells police that he is on the 46th Street bridge in Ashtabula. Ward tells police that he is about to be on a bridge and he's willing to jump off. The dispatcher tells him to walk the other way. Ward says, "Because I don't fucking want to I'm tired of it." The dispatcher asks what he is tired of. Ward says, "Everything I, I lost my job, everything." The dispatcher asks what kind of job it was. Ward says, "[Unintelligible] I'm telling ya I'm gonna blow my brains out don't fuck with me." Ward says, "I didn't want to tell you I'm right next to the Ashtabula Police station and I'm telling you that if they come I will pull the gun on them, I don't fucking care." The dispatcher asks if she can get him an ambulance. Ward says no, that he just wants to die and he just wants her to tell his family goodbye. The dispatcher asks who she can call. Ward says, "There's nobody you can call, they're already in bed. I'm an alcoholic and yes, I'm drunk. But I'm tired of it. I'm only 23."

At approximately 0030 hours, Ward is connected, via telephone, with Officer (Ofc.) Sheri Allen (Allen). Allen is a certified crisis negotiator. Allen said that Ward was slurring his words a little bit. She also said that Ward admitted to her that he had drank some alcohol and that he was highly depressed. Ward said that he was sick and tired of people trying to talk him out of suicide. Allen said that the negotiation went on for about 30 to 40 minutes total.

Allen stated that Ward wanted the police to come onto the bridge with lights and sirens, so that he could point his gun at the police and they would shoot him. Allen said that this is what Ward had said to her. Allen said that throughout the negotiations, Ward would be up and down. At one point, he would be calm and the next minute he would be mad. Ward said, "You think I'm not serious? The next person I see I'm going to shoot." Allen then heard Ward rack the shotgun. Allen recalled Ward saying that it was either a 12-gauge or 20-gauge.

Allen said that she turned her police radio volume down because she didn't want Ward hearing the radio traffic. She knew that if he could hear the radio, he would have known that there were officers on both sides of the bridge. At this point in the incident, Ward believed that Allen was the only officer near the bridge. Allen said that she knew that [REDACTED] and Zukoski were near each other on the west end of the bridge so she would send text messages to Zukoski with updates. Allen said that she told Zukoski that Ward was drunk and that he wanted suicide by cop.

Allen said that at one point near the end of the negotiations, Ward said that he saw the Highway Patrol. Ward asked what they were doing there. Allen said that she didn't know because she wasn't near the Highway Patrol officer. Ward then said that he saw APD officers and he told

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Allen that APD was here. Allen said that she could then hear Ward walking with force. Allen heard officers yelling. Allen said that she couldn't understand what specifically they were yelling. Allen said that she began yelling through the phone at Ward to put the gun down. She did not receive any response from Ward.

During the incident, Lieutenant (Lt.) [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) and Ofc. Zukoski were on the west end of the bridge. Due to the distance from Ward, [REDACTED] retrieved his scoped rifle so that he could see the subject better.

[REDACTED] stated that multiple times Ward would walk toward the west and then stop and smoke a cigarette. When Ward would stop, he would generally sit down and rest the shotgun against the guardrail on the bridge. [REDACTED] said that he thought that Ward was working up the courage to go through with his threats. [REDACTED] was watching Ward through the scope on his rifle. On multiple occasions, Ward would walk toward [REDACTED] and Zukoski then stop and smoke a cigarette.

[REDACTED] said that Ward's entire silhouette was occupying the viewable area of his scope. [REDACTED] could see Ward's left hand on the barrel of the shotgun and his other arm holding the shotgun in a port arms position. As Ward got within what [REDACTED] believed was shouting distance, [REDACTED]'s body camera revealed that at 01:23:57, [REDACTED] yelled, "Drop the gun, drop the gun, drop the gun, drop it, drop the gun, drop it." At 01:24:25, Zukoski yelled, "Police stop." At 01:24:30, [REDACTED] yelled, "Put your hands up." At 01:24:39, [REDACTED] yelled, "We just want to talk to you. Put your hands up and walk away from the gun." At 01:24:55, [REDACTED] yelled, "We don't have to do anything, you just drop the gun walk away." At 01:25:11, [REDACTED] yelled, "We can talk this through I just need you to walk away from on the gun." At 01:25:22, [REDACTED] yelled, "Drop the gun." At 01:25:27, a gunshot can be heard and movement, consistent with [REDACTED] firing his rifle, can be seen on the body camera.

[REDACTED] stated that he fired at Ward after Ward started to run toward [REDACTED] and Zukoski. [REDACTED] stated that he thought Ward was going to follow through with his threat to shoot at the police. [REDACTED] also said he knew that Ward made multiple statements to dispatch and to Allen that he wants to die. [REDACTED] stated that he made his and Zukoski's presence known when they yelled to Ward to drop the gun. [REDACTED] stated that a shotgun can kill from a distance, and he didn't want Ward to get even closer with the shotgun.



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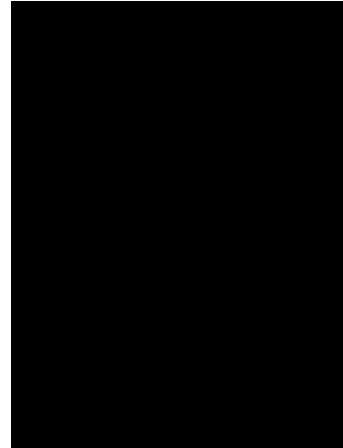
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Decedent

David Ward Jr.

DOB: 06/22/1998

Address: 1724 E. 47th Street, Ashtabula, Ohio 44004

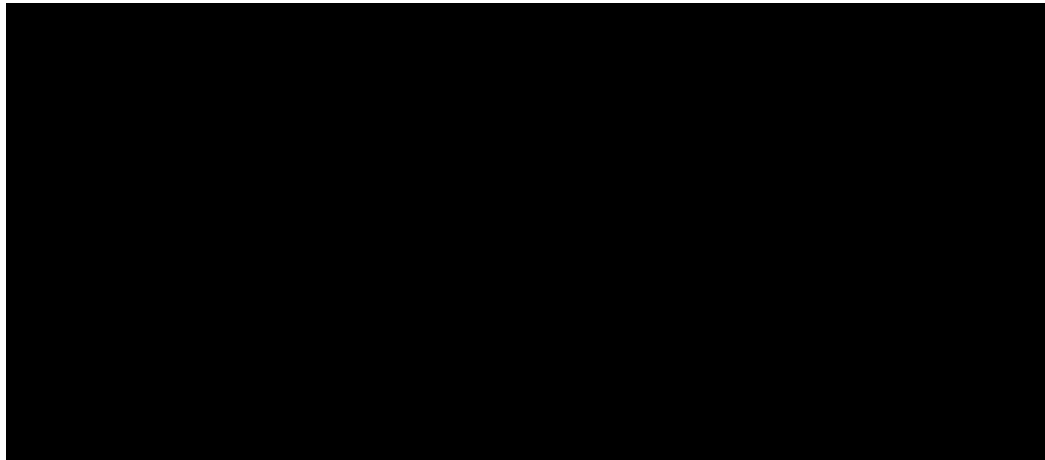


Medical Records

Ashtabula County Medical Center (ACMC)

Records were received from ACMC related to Ward's treatment on April 13, 2022. The following is a summary of the information determined to be most relevant, however, it is recommended to review the entire medical record for complete details:

Page 8 of Attachment



Page 11 of Attachment

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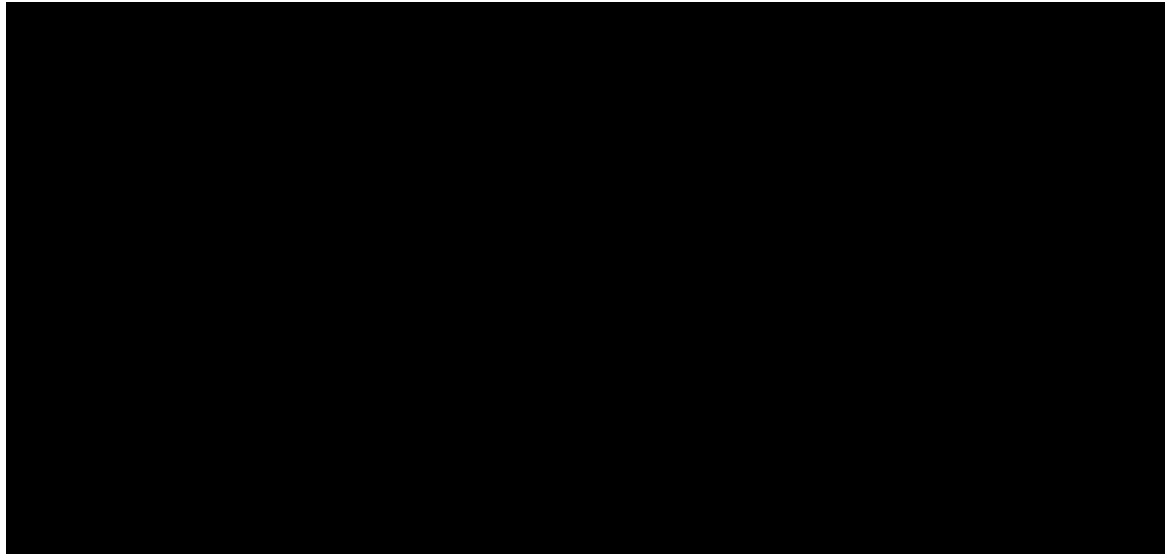


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According to the medical record from APMC, Ward was declared deceased at approximately 0159 hours, on April 13, 2022 (documented on page 11 of attachment). No toxicology reports were included in the medical record of Ward.

Autopsy Report

The autopsy report for David Ward Jr. was authored by Erica J. Armstrong, M.D. Note that the autopsy was conducted by the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office, while the Coroner's Verdict was authored by Ashtabula County Coroner Pamela L. Lancaster, D.O.





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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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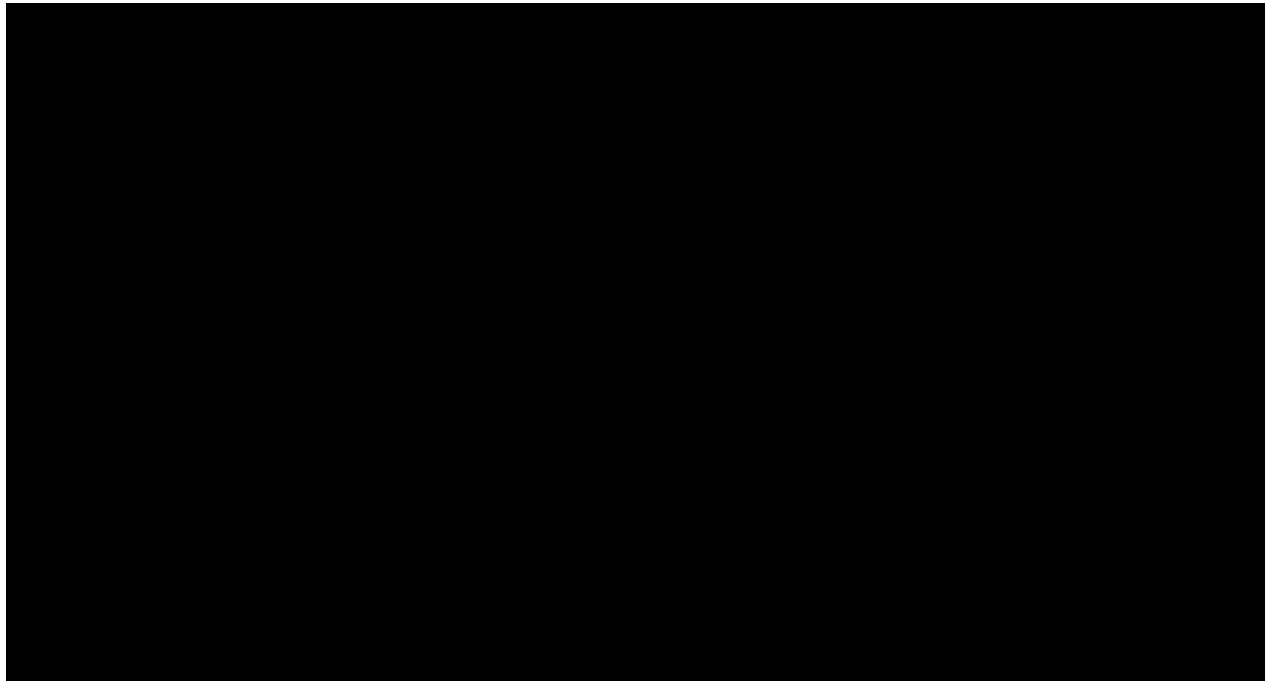
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The "TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY FINAL REPORT" contained the following pertinent information:



Physical Evidence

The BCI Crime Scene Unit was requested to respond to the scene of the shooting, in order to document and preserve any items of potential evidence. Multiple agents responded and processed the scene, to include photographing and mapping the area, as well as the search for, documentation and collection of items of possible evidence. Detailed crime scene reports were completed with the below information only summarizing some of the more significant findings.

On April 13, 2022, at approximately 0405 hours, SA Justin Soroka (Soroka) arrived at the scene, which was located on the 46th St. bridge between Valley View Blvd. and Collins Blvd. SA Soroka photographed the scene how it was found. The 46th St. bridge between Valley View Blvd. and Collins Blvd. was a three-lane bridge that ran east and west and crossed over a valley and the Ashtabula river. Sidewalks ran the length of the bridge on either side of the roadway. The bridge was approximately 1000' long and was lit with ambient light from light poles. Police were reportedly positioned in the general areas of the east and west end of the bridge, and the subject was located approximately in the middle of the bridge on the north side of the roadway.

Two marked police cruisers were located at the west end of the bridge and were reportedly there during the incident. There were reportedly no visible marked cruisers at the east end of the

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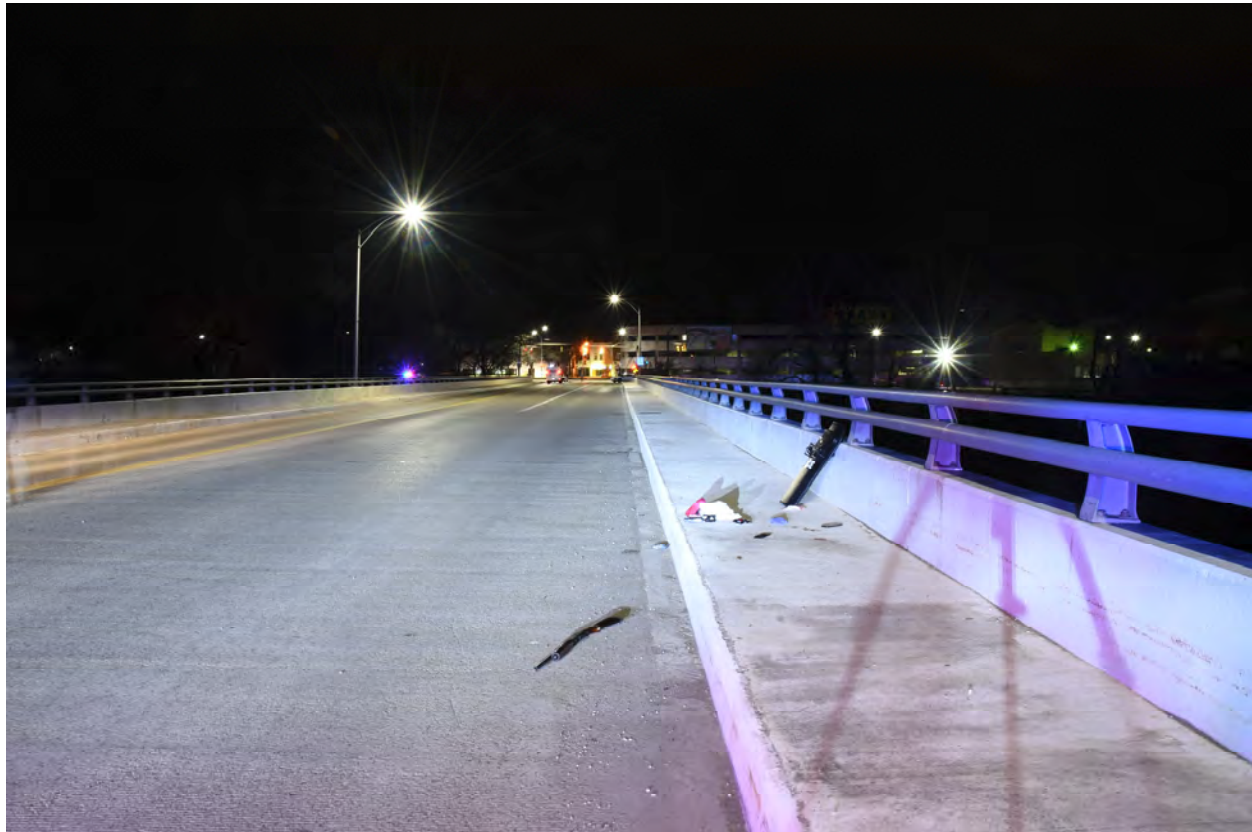
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bridge during the incident. From the approximate location where the subject was shot, the cruisers at the west end of the bridge were identifiable to SA Soroka as police vehicles. The emergency lights were not activated upon SA Soroka's arrival. In the approximate area the subject was reportedly shot, SA Soroka observed a shotgun lying in the westbound lane near the curb and two cell phones and suspected bloodstains on the sidewalk to the north of the roadway. Numerous first aid supplies and a tactical shield, which were reportedly used by police, were also observed on the sidewalk.



Appx. Position of Subject / Looking West

The shotgun was marked as item #1. The shotgun was found to be a pump action, Remington Model 870 Express Magnum, 20 gauge, bearing serial number B573172U. The safety was found to be in the "on" position. The ejection port was opened and no shotshells were found in the chamber or in the magazine tube. The Samsung cell phone was marked as item #2. SA Soroka attempted to place the phone in airplane mode but the phone would not power on. The TCL cell

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phone was marked as item #3. A representative swab of the suspected blood on the sidewalk was collected.

Lt. [REDACTED] was reportedly positioned near the intersection of W. 46th St. and Collins Blvd. and had left his rifle in the position it was at during the incident. Approximately 482' to the west of the items located on the bridge, SA Soroka observed the position Lt. [REDACTED] had reportedly taken. A scoped rifle that was equipped with a bi-pod and was resting on shooting rests was observed on the sidewalk to the north of the roadway. The bolt action of the rifle was in the "open" position and the magazine was still seated. Around the rifle were a pair of black binoculars and what appeared to be a range/distance finding optic device. A cartridge was observed on the sidewalk near the curb next to the scoped rifle, and a cartridge case was observed in the roadway to the rear of the scoped rifle. Parked in the roadway behind the scoped rifle was marked Ashtabula Cruiser L-2. The scoped rifle was marked as item #4. The rifle was found to be a Ruger Precision .308 WIN, bearing serial number [REDACTED]. A bi-pod was attached to the front of the rifle, and a Vortex Optics 4-16 x 50 Viper scope was attached to the top of the rifle. The PMAG 10 magazine was removed and found to contain eight cartridges marked with headstamp "Hornady .308 WIN." The cartridges were placed back in the magazine and the magazine was packaged with the rifle. The cartridge and cartridge case were marked as item #5 and item #6, respectively. Both were marked with the headstamp "Hornady .308 WIN."



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Position of Lt. [REDACTED] / Looking East

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Google Earth Image

Measurements for the scene and items within it were taken.

All items collected were sealed and initialed by SA Soroka. All items collected were transported to the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation in Richfield.

Various items of potential evidence were submitted to the BCI Laboratory for analysis. The actual reports should be consulted as the following synopsis does not include many of the details from the full reports.

The Ohio BCI Laboratory report (laboratory case number 22-33189) from the DNA section was received and reviewed. The report was authored by Forensic Scientist David M. Ross. The item relevant to this report, which had previously been submitted, is as follows:

1. One cardboard box containing firearm – Remington 870 Express Magnum (Serial # B573172U) (Matrix #1)

The laboratory report noted that swabs were collected from the trigger, trigger guard, grip, stock, forend, breech block and front sight area of the shotgun for possible DNA. These samples are being retained for potential future DNA analysis; however, at this time, the swabs have not been submitted for analysis.

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The BCI Firearms Section performed an analysis of the officer's firearm, as well as the firearm-related evidence collected from the scene and autopsy (casings and bullets).

The report originated from the Firearms section of the laboratory (laboratory case number 22-33189) and was authored by Forensic Scientist Dylan Matt. The items relevant to this report, which had previously been submitted, were as follows:

1. One cardboard box containing firearm (Serial # B573172U) (Matrix #1) - One (1) Remington 20 Gauge pump action shotgun, model 870 Express Magnum, serial number B573172U.
2. One cardboard box containing firearm (Serial # [REDACTED]) (Matrix #4) - One (1) Ruger 308 Winchester bolt action rifle, model Ruger Precision Rifle, serial number [REDACTED] one (1) magazine and eight (8) 308 Winchester cartridges.
3. Envelope containing cartridge case (Matrix #6) - One (1) 308 Winchester fired cartridge case.
4. Envelope containing bullet (Matrix #12) – One (1) fired bullet. This projectile was recovered from David Ward Jr. during his autopsy at the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office.

The laboratory report noted the following:

Item #1 (Remington 20-gauge pump action shotgun) was found to be operable.

Item #3 (.308 Winchester fired cartridge case) was found to have been fired from Item #2 (Ruger bolt action rifle). Item #4 (Fired bullet) was determined to be inconclusive when compared to test fires from Item #2.

Witnesses

Tpr. Zackery Metz

Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Trooper (Tpr.) Zackery Metz (Metz) was identified as being a police officer who witnessed the officer-involved shooting.

Tpr. Metz stated that he was dispatched to assist the APD. Metz stated that APD was handling a call involving a suicidal male with a firearm on the W. 46th Street bridge (also known as the Spring Street bridge). Metz's role was to assist with traffic control. Metz estimated that the time of day that he was dispatched was just after midnight. When Metz arrived, he was on the west side of the bridge and was positioned about 50 to 75 yards away from two APD officers (Lt.

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██████████ and Ofc. Zukoski). Metz stated that he could see the bridge at an angle. Metz stated that at the time he arrived, he could not see the subject but he was told the male subject was on the other side of the bridge. Metz was advised by APD to make sure that no vehicles entered the area.

Metz stated that after about 30 to 45 minutes of being on scene, the male started to walk toward the side of the bridge that Metz, ██████████ and Zukoski were on. Metz heard ██████████ begin to yell at the subject. Metz then retrieved a patrol rifle from his vehicle. Metz stated that he was able to see the subject from a side angle. Metz estimated, at this time, he was at least 100 yards away from the subject, due to the angle. ██████████ again, yelled at the subject to drop the gun. Metz then heard one shot fired. Metz stated that he had the subject in his sights at the time but he did not fire. Metz was not able to tell if the subject had a weapon. In the moments before the shooting, the subject was walking toward ██████████ and Zukoski. Metz stated, at the time the shot was fired, he estimated that the subject was 30 to 50 yards away from ██████████ and Zukoski. Metz stated that there were lights on the bridge and he was able to see the subject from over 100 yards away.

SA Lieber asked Metz if in the 30 to 45 minutes that he was on scene before the situation escalated, if he recalled any other yelling or communication. Metz stated that where he was, it was quiet until the subject started walking toward them.

Metz stated that his rifle is equipped with iron sights only and does not have an optic. When the subject was walking toward the officers, Metz could not see if the subject raised a weapon or made any other movements. After the subject was shot, an ambulance arrived on scene quickly and provided care to the subject.

David L. Ward Sr.

David L. Ward Sr. (Ward Sr.) was interviewed regarding his son's background and recent activities.

Ward Sr. relayed that Ward Jr. moved back in with him approximately two months ago; and, prior to that, he was living in a shelter in the Lorain/Elyria area. When asked what led Ward Jr. being in a homeless shelter, Ward Sr. explained that his son broke up with a girlfriend, did not want to work and met another girl in the area. Ward Sr. said he convinced his son to move back home.

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Ward Jr. had been working at Northeast Box until being terminated last Friday, due to going to the vending machines too often. Ward Sr. said his son took pride in his job. Ward Sr. said that the two months Ward Jr. worked at Northeast Box was the longest period of time his son had ever worked. Ward Sr. said his son was depressed and Ward Jr. took it "really hard," in reference to being fired. Agents asked Ward Sr. if Ward Jr. generally had depression. Ward Sr. explained his son was always upset, had a "little bit of a disability" and was behind everyone else.

When asked if Ward Jr. was ever suicidal; Ward Sr. said, "He's said it many of times, yes...and I guess there was a Facebook post...step-daughter was just over...telling me about it." Ward Sr. told agents he knows his 20-gauge shotgun with a slug barrel is missing. According to Ward Sr., the shotgun could not have been loaded because Ward Sr. did not know where the ammunition was located.

In reference to the Facebook post, Ward Sr. said he thought the post was made by Ward Jr. last week and described it as a "live video." Ward Sr. and Stuper said they were not able to find the video. According to Ward Sr., the video was posted on a Facebook account with the user name David Ward, and he indicated his son has another Facebook account with the user name David Ward Junior.

Ward Sr. said he and Ward Jr. went "leek hunting" in the woods "today." According to Ward Sr., they went leek hunting around 2:00 p.m. on April 12, 2022, for approximately an hour. After leek hunting, Ward Sr. said he dropped Ward Jr. off at home and went back to his store. Ward Sr. said his son was "fine" when he dropped him off at home. According to Ward Sr., he returned home at approximately 6:00 p.m. and Ward Jr. was sleeping. Ward Jr. later woke up and started drinking alcohol. Ward Sr. said his son was drinking Vodka and he acted fine when Ward Sr. went to bed around 10:00 or 10:30 p.m.

Ward Sr. said he did not hear anything until he got a telephone call from APD at approximately 1:22 a.m. Ward Sr. showed agents a bottle of Kamchatka Vodka that was approximately half empty. According to Ward Sr., the bottle was full and he made the comment, "So that's what he drank." Ward Sr. indicated his son was intoxicated when asked.

Both Ward Sr. and Stuper said they do not think it was Ward Jr.'s intention to kill himself, and Stuper thought it was more of a cry for help. Ward Sr. also said, "I know the kid took a shotgun with him and I know the awareness of the cops...just like George Floyd...if he wouldn't of said ok I'm done, he would be alive today...didn't mean the guy had to have his knee on his neck...same thing he didn't have to have a shotgun."

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SA Fifer asked Ward Sr. if his son ever sought treatment for being suicidal or having depression. Ward Sr. thought he may have been treated for depression. Stuper added that after Ward Jr. had surgery on his appendix, he took a bottle of pills around Christmas of 2021, and ended up in the hospital. According to Ward Sr. and Stuper, the pill incident occurred in Elyria, Ohio. Ward Sr. was asked about interactions with the police; Ward Sr. said his son had two criminal charges recently. One incident occurred in Geneva, Ohio. Ward Sr. said his son was "drunk" and called the police saying, "I'm going to kick your ass." Ward Sr. said, "The goofball" was drunk again, left the house with a bottle of Vodka and was arrested approximately a month ago by APD.

Stuper told agents she never would have thought this because she talked with Ward Jr. about his goals and plans in the future. Ward Sr. said his son drank alcohol regularly and usually just went to bed. He indicated Ward Jr.'s actions were uncharacteristic. Ward Sr. was unaware of any drug use by Ward Jr., other than smoking "pot" from time to time. Stuper added that Ward Jr. took everything to heart and would always say he was stupid even though it was not true. Stuper said, "He got in his own head." Stuper stated that she works as a case worker in the health care field.

SA Lieber asked Ward Sr. if the bottle of pills incident was a suicide attempt or an attempt at getting high. Ward Sr. said he thought it was an attempt at getting high because his son had no money for drinking. When asked what she thought, Stuper said she looked at it as him asking for help. She later explained she thought Ward Jr. was "self-medicating" and whatever medicine Ward Jr. was on prior to, she did not think was suited for him. As far as a diagnosis was concerned, Stuper was unsure of any but said Ward Jr. went to counseling. Regarding medication, Stuper said Ward Jr. told her he took "Seroquel" to sleep. Stuper thought that was "kind of strong" for sleep and she did not question it with Ward Jr.

Officer Interviews

The following paragraphs are abbreviated versions of each officer's account of his or her actions pertaining to this incident. More detailed accounts can be found by reading the separate reports written by the interviewers and by reviewing the recordings of each interview.

Lt. [REDACTED]

Lt. [REDACTED] stated that he was dispatched to the call with Patrolman Brandon Zukoski. The other two officers on shift, Allen and Cody Caruso (Caruso), were currently on another service call. [REDACTED] and Zukoski were both at the APD at the time of the call. [REDACTED] stated that

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dispatch informed him that they received a call from a person stating that there was a male walking down the middle of the street with a shotgun. A second call came from the subject himself, Ward. Ward stated that he was suicidal, he wanted to die and he was going to shoot at the first police officer that he sees. Dispatch stated that the subject was on the Spring Street bridge. ██████ said that this is an old name for the bridge and that it is the 46th Street bridge that connects the east and west sides of the city. ██████ said that the bridge is less than two blocks from the police department.

When ██████ first arrived on the west side of the bridge, he could see the silhouette of a person very near to the east side of the bridge. A short time later, Allen and Caruso were sent to the east side of the bridge to block off traffic in the 1600 block area of 46th Street. ██████ stated that he didn't want to rush the situation. He was planning to let the subject have the bridge to himself, in an attempt to reach a peaceful solution.

Due to the distance from Ward, ██████ retrieved his scoped rifle so that he could see the subject better. ██████ and Zukoski positioned their vehicles to block traffic on the west end of the bridge. They also called for EMS to stage nearby. About 5 to 10 minutes into the incident, Allen asked dispatch to redirect the call with Ward to her. ██████ stated that Allen is a certified crisis negotiator. ██████ contacted Lt. William Parkomaki (Parkomaki) to see about calling out the SWAT team and getting assistance from the sheriff's office, since the entire APD shift was now on the current service call.

As time passed, Ward would hang up on Allen and then they would have to reestablish communication. ██████ stated that he could tell that things were not going well. Allen was relaying information to Zukoski that Ward was saying that this is his wish and he wants to die. Allen also stated that Ward was getting upset because he thought that APD only sent one officer, Allen, to the incident involving Ward. ██████ said, at that time, Ward didn't know that the other officers were on scene. ██████ stated that after about one hour, Ward told Allen that he saw the trooper and the other officers, and that he is going to do this. ██████ stated that multiple times Ward would walk toward the west and then stop and smoke a cigarette. When Ward would stop, he would generally sit down and rest the shotgun against the guardrail on the bridge. ██████ said that he thought that Ward was working up the courage to go through with his threats. ██████ was watching Ward through the scope on his rifle. Eventually, ██████ felt that Ward was within shouting distance. ██████ yelled, "Drop the gun." Zukoski then yelled, "Police don't move." ██████ continued to yell, "Drop the gun."

Ward walked closer and then set the shotgun down for a moment and adjusted himself. Ward then picked the gun up again. ██████ said that Ward's entire silhouette was occupying the viewable area of his scope. ██████ could see Ward's left hand on the barrel of the shotgun and

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his other arm holding the shotgun in a port arms position. ██████ stated that his Apple watch was sending him alerts that his pulse was at 124 and the watch could tell that he wasn't moving. The watch was sending an alert to see if it should call 911.

Ward then started to run toward ██████ and Zukoski. ██████ stated that he fired one round at Ward. ██████ stated that he didn't know the exact distance that Ward was away from them. ██████ stated that he thought Ward was going to follow through with his threat to shoot at the police. ██████ also said that he knew that Ward made multiple statements to dispatch and to Allen that he wants to die. ██████ stated that he made his and Zukoski's presence known when they yelled to Ward to drop the gun. ██████ stated that a shotgun can kill from a distance, and he didn't want Ward to get even closer with the shotgun.

SA Lieber asked if ██████'s rifle scope is variable power. ██████ stated that it is 4x-16x variable power (Vortex PST scope). At the time of the shooting, ██████ believes the scope was at 16x because he didn't get a chance to power down the scope as Ward got closer to them.

██████ stated that he has not had any prior dealings with Ward. ██████ stated that the Ashtabula Fire Department provided medical care to Ward immediately after the shooting. ██████ stated that it was dark outside but there was adequate street light to allow ██████ to see what Ward was doing. ██████ did not know what the distance to Ward was at the time of the shooting. ██████ stated that he was in a prone position when he fired at Ward.

Ofc. Brandon Zukoski

Ofc. Zukoski stated that he and ██████ were at the APD when they received a service call for a suicidal male on the 46th Street bridge. Zukoski said that as they responded, they did not activate their lights or siren because they wanted to keep their location unknown to the suicidal subject.

Upon arriving at the west end of the bridge, Zukoski saw a person in the distance. Zukoski then retrieved his rifle from his vehicle and used the optic, which is able to magnify at 4x power, to observe the subject. Zukoski stated that he believed the subject to be approximately 80 yards away from him. Zukoski later learned that the subject was farther away than 80 yards. Zukoski said that he learned the subject's name, David Ward, from hearing it on radio traffic. Zukoski could not recall having any prior contact with Ward. SA Lieber asked about the lighting conditions on the bridge. Zukoski said that the bridge is partially lit, so there are both illuminated as well as dark sections.

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Zukoski observed the subject on the north side of the bridge in a darker area. Zukoski recalled hearing radio traffic that Ward told dispatch that he would shoot the first officer that he sees. As other officers began arriving, they were told to block off the east side of the bridge. Zukoski said that Ward was smoking cigarettes while he was talking to APD Ofc. Allen on the phone. As time passed, Ward would walk westbound toward Zukoski and [REDACTED] and then stop. Ward did this several times.

Zukoski recalled one point where Ward put the shotgun down and smoked a cigarette. Ward then picked up the shotgun and began to move toward Zukoski and [REDACTED]. Zukoski yelled to the subject to stop. At this time, Ward slowed down. Ward then saw the Ohio State Highway Patrol trooper who was blocking off a nearby street. Zukoski stated that the trooper was parked under a street light at West 45th Street and Collins Boulevard. Ward then moved toward Zukoski and [REDACTED] at a speed faster than walking but not a full run. Zukoski said that he was positioned on the ground next to his cruiser. Zukoski stated that he took his rifle off of safe and began to press the trigger. Zukoski then heard [REDACTED]'s shot and Ward fell.

Zukoski confirmed that he was using his 4x magnifier at the time [REDACTED] fired at Ward. Zukoski estimated the distance to Ward to be between 60 and 80 yards at the time the shot was fired. Zukoski stated that Ward had the shotgun in his hands at the time he was shot. Zukoski said that Ward did not have the shotgun shouldered and pointed at them at the time, but he couldn't remember in exactly what position Ward had the shotgun. SA Lieber asked what prompted Zukoski to begin to press his trigger to take a shot. Zukoski said that Ward had a shotgun; and, the closer Ward got to them, the more dangerous the situation was. Zukoski knew that they couldn't let Ward continue to walk into the city. Zukoski also said that the closer Ward is with the shotgun, the more effective the shotgun would be. Zukoski stated that he believed that Ward was going to do harm to the officers.

Zukoski also said that Ward told dispatch that he would shoot the police. Zukoski said that if a person is willing to shoot the police, the person would be willing to shoot anyone. Zukoski said that during the incident, Allen texted him that she turned her radio down because she was trying to negotiate with Ward and also block traffic. Zukoski said that Allen also texted him the following:

12:37 AM – Allen messages that she is on the phone with Ward and she doesn't want him to hear the radio traffic. Allen also says that Ward is drunk.

12:44 AM – Zukoski messages Allen asking for an update.

12:52 AM – Allen messages that Ward is wanting suicide by cop.

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12:55 AM – Allen messages that Ward will calm down and then flip out again.

12:58 AM – Allen asks for an additional officer because she is talking to Ward and also stopping traffic.

1:12 AM – Allen messages that Ward is talking about walking to Zukoski and [REDACTED] and forcing them to shoot him.

1:19 AM – Allen messages that Ward stated that he sees Zukoski and [REDACTED] as well as the trooper.

1:20 AM – Allen messages that Ward says that he has a 12-gauge.

1:22 AM – Zukoski messages Allen asking if she still needs someone to assist her with traffic.

Zukoski said that as he was receiving the text messages from Allen, he would pass that information along verbally to [REDACTED]. Zukoski said that he was approximately 15 feet away from [REDACTED] during the incident.

Ofc. Sheri Allen

Ofc. Allen stated that she has been a certified hostage negotiator since the mid to late 1990's. She received her training through the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA).

Allen stated that she and Ofc. Caruso were on a call on West 12th Street. She heard radio traffic that dispatched Lt. [REDACTED] and Ofc. Zukoski to a call of a male walking down the street with a shotgun. As Allen and Caruso responded to the area of the call, which was on the 46th Street bridge, they turned off their emergency lights and sirens so that the subject would not know that the officers were in the area. Allen said that the dispatcher relayed to officers that the subject said that he had a gun. Allen said that [REDACTED] told them to respond to the east side of the bridge because [REDACTED] and Zukoski were already on the west side of the bridge. Allen said that Caruso went to East 46th Street, while she went to East 45th Street and Valley View Boulevard.

Allen said that dispatch advised that they were trying to talk to the male but he kept hanging up. Allen then called dispatch and told them to put the male through to her so that he could negotiate with the male. Allen said that it was 12:30 AM when she first started negotiating with the male. Allen learned that the name of the male was David Ward Jr. Allen said that Ward was slurring his words a little bit. She also said that Ward admitted to her that he had drank some alcohol and

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that he was highly depressed. Ward said that he was sick and tired of people trying to talk him out of suicide. Allen said that the negotiation went on for about 30 to 40 minutes total.

Allen told Ward that alcohol is a depressant and that it would make him more depressed. Allen said that she thought that the more time she could talk to Ward the more he would sober up and become more reasonable. Allen said that the opposite happened. The more she spoke to Ward the angrier he became. Ward was angry that the police did not respond with lights and sirens. Ward kept asking where everybody was. Allen would tell Ward that she didn't know. Ward thought that Allen was the only officer on the call. Allen stated that Ward wanted the police to come onto the bridge with lights and sirens so that he could point his gun at the police and they would shoot him. Allen said that this is what Ward had said to her. Ward kept asking where Allen was located. Allen said that once she began building a rapport with Ward, he said that he didn't want her to have to shoot him. Allen said that Ward wanted to know what side of the bridge she was on so that he could walk to the opposite. Allen never told Ward of her location.

Allen said that throughout the negotiations, Ward would be up and down. At one point, he would be calm and the next minute he would be mad. Ward said, "You think I'm not serious? The next person I see I'm going to shoot." Allen then heard Ward rack the shotgun. Allen recalled Ward saying that it was either a 12-gauge or 20-gauge. Allen said that while she was negotiating with Ward, vehicular traffic would approach, and she would have to stop cars to keep them away from the bridge. Allen said that in the trunk of her vehicle, she had night vision and binoculars. She used those to try to see where Ward was on the bridge. Due to trees located between her and Ward, she was unable to see him.

Allen said, at one point during the negotiations, the call disconnected. This occurred around 1:06 AM. When the call disconnected, Allen called APD dispatch and told them to try to reconnect her and Ward. Ultimately, she was able to get back on the phone with Ward.

Allen said that she turned her police radio volume down because she didn't want Ward hearing the radio traffic. She knew that if he could hear the radio, he would have known that there were officers on both sides of the bridge. Allen said that she knew that [REDACTED] and Zukoksi were near each other, so she would send text messages to Zukoski with updates. Allen said that she told Zukoski that Ward was drunk and that he wanted suicide by cop.

Allen said she told Ward that there was help available. She said that everyone in life goes through things and Ward was only 23 years old. Allen said that Ward would say that he has already been in for help and he named several mental health facilities that he has been to, including in southern Ohio. Ward said that nothing was working. Allen told him that sometimes



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you have to find the healthcare worker that you click with. Ward said that he has tried it and he is done.

Allen said, at one point near the end of the negotiations, Ward said that he saw the Highway Patrol. Ward asked what they were doing there. Allen said that she didn't know because she wasn't near the Highway Patrol officer. Ward then said that he saw APD officers and he told Allen that APD was here. Allen said that she could then hear Ward walking with force. Allen heard officers yelling. Allen said that she couldn't understand what specifically they were yelling. Allen said that she began yelling at Ward to put the gun down. She did not receive any response from Ward; all of a sudden, Allen heard silence. Allen said that she did not hear the gunshot. SA Lieber asked Allen to describe Ward walking with force. Allen said that she could hear his clothes moving and that is what she interpreted as moving with force.

Allen said that after the incident, Ward's father and girlfriend arrived on scene and they told Allen that in the last week they tried to get Ashtabula County Medical Center (ACMC) to admit Ward but they wouldn't. Allen said that Ward's father said that the gun Ward had belonged to his father (Ward's grandfather). Allen asked Ward's father if the gun was loaded. Ward's father said that he didn't know but there could be one or two shells in it.

SA Lieber asked if the calls she had with Ward were audio recorded. Allen said that she doesn't believe that they were. Allen said that if the call is on an open line then the call is recorded. However, when dispatch patches the call through to Allen, the connection with dispatch ends and therefore the recording ends.

Allen said that after the shooting, Lt. Parkomaki had Allen drive his cruiser, while Parkomaki was in the front passenger seat. Caruso got into the back seat and they drove down the bridge and administered medical aid to Ward. Shortly after, medics arrived on scene and provided additional medical care. Allen said that when officers first approached Ward, there was a shotgun lying next to him. Lt. Parkomaki moved the shotgun away from Ward.



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Dispatch-Related Information

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Records

The CAD report from APD incident 22-00999 states the following information:

04/13/2022 00:12:21 - AMISIAK - MALE IS WALKING DOWN THE ROAD WITH A SHOTGUN. PASSERBY CALLED IN. SO4 IS ON WITH THE SUSPECT
04/13/2022 00:12:38 - AMISIAK - APPROACHING TOPPER AVE
04/13/2022 00:13:42 - CSTEWARD - DAVID WARD THREATENING SUICIDE
04/13/2022 00:13:46 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE HAS A GUN
04/13/2022 00:14:10 - CSTEWARD - MALE STATES HE WALKING IN THE STREET
04/13/2022 00:14:25 - CSTEWARD - WEARING A GREY COAT AND BLUE JEANS
04/13/2022 00:14:31 - DGOODALE - PERSON BY SSN [REDACTED] OH)
04/13/2022 00:14:31 - CSTEWARD - CALLER STATES THE GUN IS IN HIS HAND
04/13/2022 00:15:07 - CSTEWARD - STATING HE IS GOING TOWARDS A BRIDGE AND HE WILL JUMP OFF
04/13/2022 00:15:18 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE LOST HIS JOB
04/13/2022 00:15:32 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE IS TIRED OF EVERYTHING
04/13/2022 00:15:50 - CSTEWARD - STATES HES ON E 46TH
04/13/2022 00:16:04 - CSTEWARD - STATING IF POLICE COME HE WILL PULL THE GUN ON THEM
04/13/2022 00:16:29 - CSTEWARD - CALLER STATES HE DOESNT WANT HELP JUST WANTS HIS FAMILY TO KNOW
04/13/2022 00:16:33 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE IS DRUNK
04/13/2022 00:16:40 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE IS 23 AND TIRED OF IT
04/13/2022 00:16:49 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE WILL SHOOT IF HE SEES POLICE
04/13/2022 00:17:23 - CSTEWARD - CALLER STATES HE HAS PTSD AND ADHD
04/13/2022 00:17:54 - KVENCILL - 4-9 ADVISED REF CALL // ADVISED ENR
04/13/2022 00:18:08 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE IS ON THE BRIDGE NOW
04/13/2022 00:18:35 - CSTEWARD - CALLER REFUSING TO PUT THE GUN DOWN
04/13/2022 00:18:42 - CSTEWARD - STATING HE JUST WANTS TO DIE
04/13/2022 00:19:34 - AMISIAK - [REDACTED] ADVISING P-8 TO BLOCK TRAFFIC AT 46TH
04/13/2022 00:19:45 - CSTEWARD - CALLER STILL REFUSING TO PUT GUN DOWN
04/13/2022 00:19:57 - CSTEWARD - STATES IT IS A 12 OR 20 GAGE
04/13/2022 00:20:01 - CSTEWARD - UNKNOWNN WHAT IT IS
04/13/2022 00:20:21 - AMISIAK - CCAN STAGGING
04/13/2022 00:20:32 - DLANSBURY - OTHER UNITS SHUTTING DOWN SIRENS
04/13/2022 00:20:59 - AMISIAK - [REDACTED] TO SO4 BLOCK TRAFFIC AT VALLEYVIEW
04/13/2022 00:21:14 - CSTEWARD - MALE DISCONNECTEXD
04/13/2022 00:21:32 - CSTEWARD - ATTEMPTING CALL BACK
04/13/2022 00:21:47 - CSTEWARD - STATES HE COCKED THE GUN
04/13/2022 00:21:49 - DGOODALE - HAVE SO4 UNITS BLOCK OFF TRAFFIC AT 47TH/VALLEYVIEW
04/13/2022 00:22:03 - CSTEWARD - STATES IT IS LOADED
04/13/2022 00:22:07 - DLANSBURY - UNITS HAVE EYES ON HIM/ACSO UNITS WILL BLOCK TRAFFIC 47TH AND VALLYVIEW
04/13/2022 00:22:12 - CSTEWARD - STATES TO TELL THE OFFICERS HES SORRY
04/13/2022 00:22:26 - CSTEWARD - STATES HES OVERDOSED SO MANY TIMES AND HE JUST WANTS IT TO BE OVER
04/13/2022 00:22:30 - AMISIAK - CCAN TO STAGE IN APD PARKING LOT

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04/13/2022 00:22:43 - CSTEWARD - REFUSING TO PUT THE GUN DOWN
 04/13/2022 00:23:33 - CSTEWARD - TRANSFERRING TO APD
 04/13/2022 00:23:55 - KVENCILL - 418 IN AREA
 04/13/2022 00:24:16 - AMISIAK - DAVID IS JUST STANDING ON THE BRIDGE CURRENTLY
 04/13/2022 00:24:50 - AMISIAK - WONT PUT THE GUN DOWN. STATING HE HAS PTSD
 04/13/2022 00:25:09 - KVENCILL - ACSO PATCHED WITH 875
 04/13/2022 00:27:23 - KVENCILL - 4-9 REQ 422 BLOCK 46/STATE
 04/13/2022 00:28:40 - AMISIAK - TRANSFERED PC TO P-8 PER HER REQUEST
 04/13/2022 00:31:54 - CSTEWARD - 430 IS CERTIFIED NEGOTIATOR. WILLING TO SPEAK WITH MALE
 04/13/2022 00:46:30 - AMISIAK - P-6 ADVISING THAT IS 430 IS AVAILABLE TO ALSO SPEAK WITH THE MALE, P-8 TO REMAIN THE PRIMARY
 04/13/2022 00:47:57 - AMISIAK - 1 OSP OFFICER EN ROUTE TO ASSIST WITH TRAFFIC
 04/13/2022 00:57:50 - KVENCILL - 4-9 REQ IF APD STILL HAS MALE ON S19
 04/13/2022 00:57:53 - AMISIAK - P-8 HAS HIM ON THE LINE. SHE IN ON SCENE.
 04/13/2022 00:58:29 - AMISIAK - [REDACTED] ADVISING SO4 TO BE REMOVED FROM 875 FREQUENCY
 04/13/2022 01:00:22 - KVENCILL - ACSO REMOVED FROM PATCH
 04/13/2022 01:00:29 - AMISIAK - SKUFKA EN ROUTE TO ASSIST TRAFFIC CONTROL AT 45TH. P8 IS AT THAT LOCATION.
 04/13/2022 01:04:53 - AMISIAK - P8 LOST CONTACT
 04/13/2022 01:05:12 - AMISIAK - ATTEMPTING CALLBACK X2
 04/13/2022 01:07:46 - DLANSBURY - MALE SUBJECT IS YELLING AT POLICE UNITS/UNABLE TO COPY WHAT HE IS SAYING
 04/13/2022 01:08:02 - AMISIAK - NOT ANSWERING
 04/13/2022 01:08:23 - AMISIAK - CONTINUING TO TRY
 04/13/2022 01:09:33 - AMISIAK - GOT HIM ON THE LINE. TRANSFERED BACK TO P-8
 04/13/2022 01:14:35 - KVENCILL - 418 ADVISED MOVING WB ON BRIDGE
 04/13/2022 01:16:09 - DLANSBURY - KIT MCDONOUGH IS LISTED AS HIS EMERGENCY CONTACT/440-789-6765
 04/13/2022 01:16:58 - DLANSBURY - GPD ADVISES HES LISTED AS HOMELESS/THEY DEALT WITH HIM IN JANUARY/NO FAMILY MEMBERS IN THEIR CAD
 04/13/2022 01:17:43 - KVENCILL - 418 ADVISED MALE STOPPED WALKING // ONLY MADE IT ABOUT 15 FEET
 04/13/2022 01:18:29 - KVENCILL - 422 46TH AND STATE
 04/13/2022 01:20:51 - AMISIAK - ON THE PHONE WITH GENEVIERE 252-670-4935 SHE IS ADVISING THAT SHE GOT A MESSAGE FROM THE SUSPECT STATING THAT HE MESSAGED HER EARLIER IN THE NIGHT. SHE ADVISED THAT THIS HAPPENS WHEN A GIRL BREAKS UP WITH HIM. SHE GAVE THE ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF DAVID'S FATHER. ATTEMPTING TO CALL
 04/13/2022 01:21:17 - AMISIAK - FATHER IS DAVID A. WARD 1724 E. 47TH ST. 440-381-1839
 04/13/2022 01:23:40 - AMISIAK - ON WITH THE FATHER. ADVISING THAT HIS SON LIVES WITH HIM AND HE WAS LAID OFF FROM HIS JOB. THIS IS THE LONGEST JOB THAT HE HAS HAD. HE WAS DOING WELL
 04/13/2022 01:23:45 - DLANSBURY - MALE SUBJECT PUT THE GUN DOWN AND IS WALKING TOWARDS THEM NOW
 04/13/2022 01:24:08 - DLANSBURY - SUBJECT NOW STOPPED WALKING
 04/13/2022 01:24:27 - AMISIAK - PERSON BY SSN [REDACTED] (OH)
 04/13/2022 01:25:52 - KVENCILL - 418 ADVISED SHOTS FIRED
 04/13/2022 01:25:56 - AMISIAK - [REDACTED] SHOTS FIRED. SUBJECT IS DOWN
 04/13/2022 01:26:20 - AMISIAK - [REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT HE STILL HAS THE GUN

 04/13/2022 01:27:03 - KVENCILL - 4-9 ADVISED SHOTS FIRED // SUBJECT DOWN
 04/13/2022 01:29:20 - AMISIAK - CCAN MOVE ALL THE WAY IN
 04/13/2022 01:31:06 - KVENCILL - 4-9 ADVISED 422 HE CAN CLEAR
 04/13/2022 01:37:38 - DLANSBURY - SUBJECT WITH M1 ENRT TO ACME

Radio Traffic Recordings

It should be noted that only a very limited summary of the available radio traffic recordings has been summarized below. Please refer to the case file for a detailed report covering all of the recordings.

ward413.01 – APD incoming

This audio recording is 8 minutes and 38 seconds in duration. The call begins with a female stating that this is 911 and asking the address of the emergency. A male, sounding upset and crying, says, “There’s been a suicide.” The caller will not provide his address but he tells the dispatcher that he wants his family to know that he is sorry. Ward says that everything is wrong

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and that he has a gun. The dispatcher asks where the gun is at and Ward replies, "In my hand." The male identifies himself as "David Ward."

Upon questioning by the dispatcher, Ward states that he is alone, walking the street. When the dispatcher asks what he is wearing, Ward replies, "Why should I tell you you're just going to get me arrested." The dispatcher says that she just wants to get him some help. Ward then says that he is wearing a gray coat, blue jeans and camo shoes. Ward says that he is about to be on a bridge and he's willing to jump off. The dispatcher tells him to walk the other way. Ward says, "Because I don't fucking want to I'm tired of it." The dispatcher asks what he is tired of. Ward says, "Everything I, I lost my job, everything." The dispatcher asks what kind of job it was. Ward says, "[Unintelligible] I'm telling ya I'm gonna blow my brains out don't fuck with me." Ward tells the dispatcher that he is in Ashtabula. Ultimately, Ward tells the dispatcher that he is on East 46th Street. Ward says, "I didn't want to tell you I'm right next to the Ashtabula Police station and I'm telling you that if they come I will pull the gun on them, I don't fucking care." The dispatcher asks if she can get him an ambulance. Ward says no, that he just wants to die and he just wants her to tell his family goodbye. The dispatcher asks who she can call. Ward says, "There's nobody you can call, they're already in bed. I'm an alcoholic and yes, I'm drunk. But I'm tired of it. I'm only 23."

The dispatcher says that she wants to get him some help. Ward says that he had help and it didn't work. The dispatcher asks what kind of help he received. Ward says, "I have PTSD and ADHD and everything else and I'm tired of it. I can't live no more. I'm tired of it. You don't see the things I see." The dispatcher asks if there is anyone she can call for him. Ward replies, "No there is not. If you want to take me out call the cops. That's about it." The dispatcher asks Ward if he is still walking. Ward says that he is on the bridge right now. The dispatcher tells Ward to stay on the line with her. Ward says, "Why so the cops can show up and shoot me?" The dispatcher tells Ward that they are not going to shoot him. Ward says, "They're going to I have a fucking gun." The dispatcher says that she needs him to put the gun down. Ward says, "I'm not going to." The dispatcher again says that she needs him to put the gun down. Ward says, "No. I can't. I want to die, I want to be out of here, I'm tired of it."

The dispatcher asks if Ward is still on East 46th Street. Ward says, "Yes ma'am. I know it's not your fault but I've been through a lot and I'm tired of it." The dispatcher asks if there is anything that she can do for him. Ward says, "No there's not, just kill me please." The dispatcher says that that is not going to happen and that she is here to help him. Ward says, "I'm pretty sure I have a 12 gauge, I don't know if it's a 12 or 20 but I have it and it's in my hands right now." The dispatcher says that she wants to get him some help so she needs him to put the gun down. Ward says that he is not going to put the gun down. The dispatcher asks what kind of gun he has. Ward

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says that he has a 12 or a 20 gauge. Ward says, "I don't want to hurt an officer, I respect them but you know what, if I got to it means they take me down, they take me down." The dispatcher again asks Ward to put the gun down and Ward refuses. The dispatcher asks if he has a mom, dad or sister or anyone. Ward says, "No, I don't."

1389510 2022.04.13_00.24.12hrs

This audio recording is 4 minutes and 33 seconds in duration. David Ward is transferred from the sheriff's office to Ashtabula City police. Ward says, "I have a gun to my head and I'm not afraid to die." Ward says that he is on East 46th Street on the bridge. Ward says, "Please don't stall because I want to die." The dispatcher says that there are people that want to talk to him. Ward indicates that he does not want to talk to anybody. Ward states, "I do have a 12 gauge or a 20 gauge so if the cops come I guarantee you I will pull it." Ward confirms that he is on the bridge. The dispatcher asks Ward to sit down to get his thoughts together. Ward says that he will not sit down and he is tired of it. Ward says that he is tired of it all. The dispatcher says, "But you're only 23." Ward replies, "I don't care."

The dispatcher tells Ward that he needs to put the gun down. Ward says, "I'm not going to put it down, I'm sorry sir. I don't want to hurt no officer but if I got to I got to. I'm tired of life you don't understand." The dispatcher asks what happened today. Ward says, "Everything. I have PTSD ok and it fucks me up." The dispatcher asks if he takes any medication for that. Ward says, "No." The dispatcher asks if he has seen anybody about it. Ward says that he has and he denied them. The dispatcher tells Ward that there is stuff he can take to help him. Ward says, "I'm just scared cause I don't want to hurt an officer. I respect them." The dispatcher says that nobody wants to hurt him either. Ward says that when they [police] show up, they will shoot him dead and he is ok with it. Ward says, "I'm ready to go son. I'm sorry to say but I'm ready to go." The dispatcher asks where his family is. Ward says that they are asleep and he doesn't want to give their number or name. Ward says, "Leave them be. Let me do what I need to do and let me blow my brains out."

The dispatcher asks Ward to calm down a little bit. Ward says that he is not going to calm down and that he is tired of life. Ward says, "I'm on the bridge at East 46th you want to find me come fucking find me." The dispatcher says that they know where he is but somebody would like to speak to him. Ward says, "You want to know what the shotgun sounds like (the sound of a shotgun action cycling can be heard)? That's what it sounds like."

1389520 2022.04.13_00.28.45hrs

This audio recording is 1 minute and 32 seconds in duration. A dispatcher tells Ward that they just want to talk to him. Ward says, "There's nothing to talk about. I want you to end my life

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God dammit. That's why I called." The dispatcher says that they are not going to do that, they want to help him. Ward says, "You will. You're telling me if I pull a gun on an officer, they won't shoot me." The dispatcher says, "No, we want to help you David. We just want you to put it down so we can talk." Ward replies, "Well I'm not going to put it down so fucking deal with it." The dispatcher says that they are not going to do that. Ward says, "I'm waiting so where's your fucking cops." The dispatcher again says that they just want to talk to him. Ward says, "There's nothing to talk about. I'm ready to go some bitch." The dispatcher says that they are not going to do that and to hang on. Ward says, "I can hang on all you want, but it don't mean I won't either blow my brains out or go with, or go out by cop."

1389579 2022.04.13_01.08.33hrs

This audio recording is 40 seconds in duration. Ward answers the phone. The dispatcher asks what's up. Ward says, "Nothing. What do you want?" The dispatcher says that they just want to talk to him. Ward says, "There ain't nothing to fucking talk about unless you're going to take me out or anything else there ain't nothing to fucking talk about." The dispatcher says they want to chat. Ward asks if he jumps off the bridge are they going to care. The dispatcher replies, "Yeah, absolutely."

ward413.05 – APD incoming

This audio recording is 2 minutes and 52 seconds in duration. The call begins with the sound of a phone ringing. Ward answers the phone and the dispatcher asks, "David what happened?" Ward says, "I don't know. I cocked, I cocked my gun and I called it even." The dispatcher says that she doesn't want him to do that. Ward says, "It is loaded so tell your officers I'm sorry." The dispatcher tells Ward to put the gun down and that they can get him some help. Ward says that there is no help for him and that he had overdosed 15 times and there is still no help. Ward says that he is on East 46th Street on a bridge. Ward says, "I'm tired of it. I'm tired of life." The dispatcher says that if he puts the gun down, they can get him some help. Ward says that he is not going to put it down. Ward says, "A sheriff just passed and he didn't even stop me that's how I know you guys don't care." The dispatcher says that she does care and that's why she called him back. She says that she wants him to put the gun down and get some help. Ward says that he is not putting the gun down. The dispatcher tells Ward to stay on the phone and not to hang up. Ward says that he will not hang up. Ward then says, "What if I do, what if I do and I blow my brains out what's you guys gonna do?" The dispatcher says that she does not want that to happen. Ward says that he is sick and tired of life. The dispatcher again tells Ward to stay on the line and not to hang up.

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Video Recordings

Lt. ██████████ Body Camera

The video is 1 hour, 12 minutes and 20 seconds in duration. The date stamp at the beginning of the video is 04/13/2022, at 00:16:15 hours.

The video begins showing ██████████ exiting his patrol vehicle. ██████████ appears to have a shotgun slung over his chest. ██████████ begins to walk toward the 46th Street bridge (also known as the Spring Street bridge). Note that no audio can be heard until 00:16:46. At 00:18:15, radio traffic can be heard stating that the subject is on the bridge and if he sees the police, he will shoot. At 00:19:41, ██████████ radios dispatch and asks the name of the subject. Dispatch responds that the name of the subject is David Ward. At 00:19:49, ██████████ yells, "David it's the police department, can I talk to you?" It should be noted that nothing can be seen on the body-camera video. The image appears black, and it is possible that something is obstructing the camera lens.

At 00:20:57, ██████████ yells, "David it's the police department. I just want to talk to you." At 00:22:03, ██████████ tells Officer Zukoski that he is going to grab his 308 (.308 caliber scoped rifle) so that he can see what Ward is doing. ██████████ then walks back to his patrol vehicle and drives it to the bridge. ██████████ retrieves his rifle from the trunk of his patrol vehicle and walks toward the sidewalk area of the bridge.



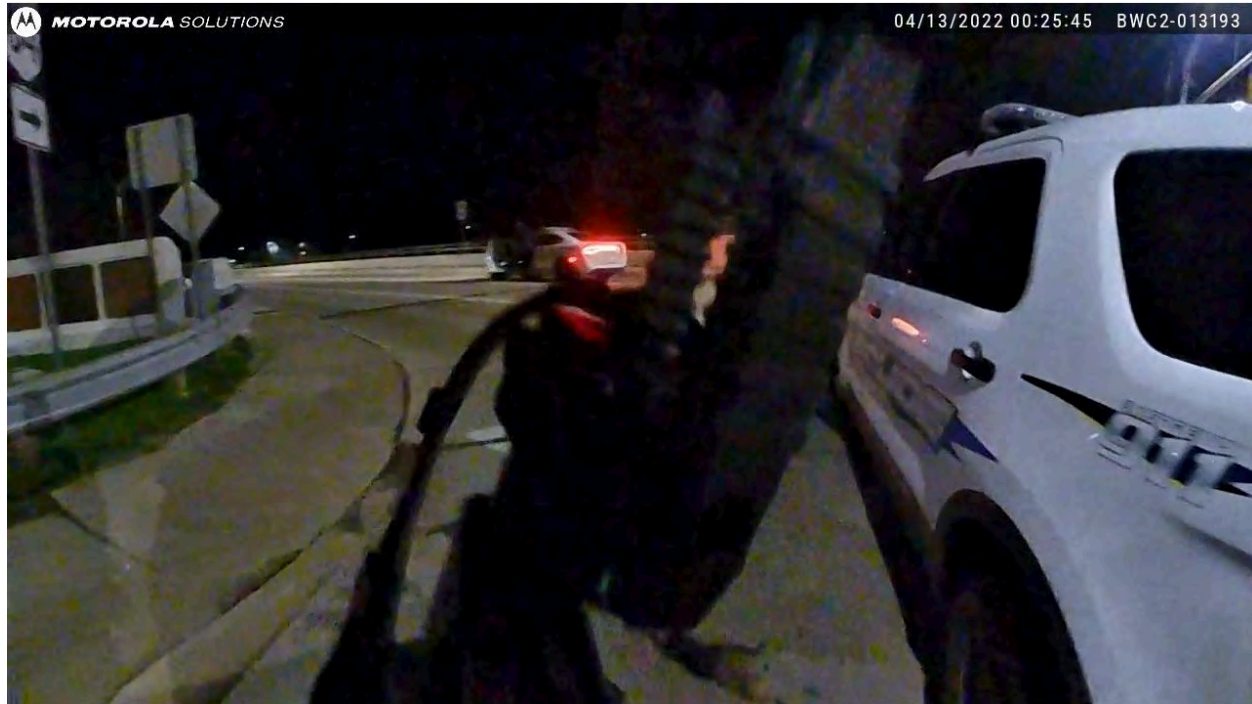
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See screenshot below taken at 00:25:45, showing [REDACTED] walking toward the sidewalk with his rifle:



[REDACTED] then takes a prone position on the sidewalk. At 00:27:07, [REDACTED] says that it is too dark for him to see. At 00:27:27, [REDACTED] says, "I don't see a 40 on him." Note that a code 40 is the code used for "gun." [REDACTED] says that it looks like he has a cell phone. At 00:27:57, [REDACTED] asks dispatch to call Ward back. Dispatch advises that they are on the phone with Ward now. At 00:28:22, [REDACTED] says, "Yeah I see, I see it now." Zukoski asks, "A gun?" [REDACTED] says, "Yeah."

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See screenshot below showing the camera view, while [REDACTED] is in a prone position behind his rifle. Note that the camera is pointing toward the ground.



At 00:28:52, [REDACTED] advises dispatch to inform Ward that they just want to talk to him. Dispatch replies, "I already advised. He said negative. He's refusing to put the 40 down." At 00:29:26, Ofc. Allen, badge P8, radios to dispatch asking if they can forward the call with Ward to her cell phone. Dispatch advises that they can do that. At 00:29:57, [REDACTED] tells Zukoski to keep an eye on Ward and that he'll be right back. While [REDACTED] is retrieving something from his truck, he contacts Lt. Parkomaki, via cell phone. [REDACTED] advises Parkomaki that they have a suicidal male with a shotgun on the Spring Street bridge and that he says he is going to shoot the first cop he sees. He also said that he scoped the subject and he could see the gun, and they have the bridge blocked off at both ends.

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The screenshot below was taken as [REDACTED] walks back to his rifle. Note the location of the rifle in the lower-left portion of the image.



At 00:32:03, Zukoski asks, “What did you range that at 100 yards?” [REDACTED] says that he doesn’t know.



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See screenshot below showing the new location of Zukoski's patrol vehicle after he backed up to provide a better barrier to block off the bridge from vehicular traffic:



At 00:34:41, ██████ advises Parkomaki that Ward is leaning against the bridge smoking a cigarette. He advises that he tried to get ahold of Allen but she is not answering her phone. At 00:36:00, ██████ radios Ofc. Caruso, badge P25, and asks if Allen is on the phone with Ward. Caruso responds, "I believe so." At 00:40:00, someone radios to dispatch to have the fire department stage on Collins Boulevard by the light. At 00:41:12, Zukoski tells ██████ that Allen is on the phone with Ward and Allen doesn't want Ward to hear the radio. At 00:42:36, ██████ appears to be trying to use a rangefinder.



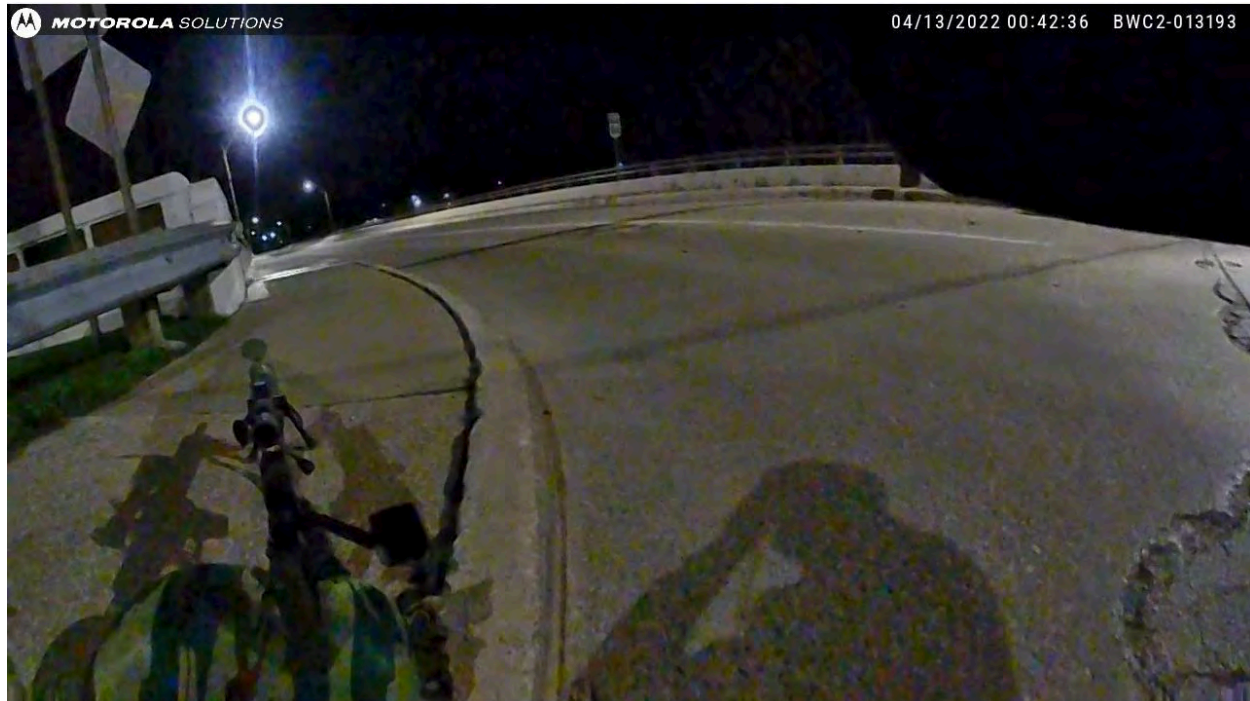
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The screenshot below shows a view across the bridge, as [REDACTED] is on his knees using the rangefinder:



At 00:44:33, Zukoski tells [REDACTED] "Sheri says he's drunk." Note that Sheri is Officer Sheri Allen. At 00:48:01, dispatch advises [REDACTED] that the Highway Patrol has one trooper en route. At 00:48:42, [REDACTED] tells someone that Ward is shaking back and forth, and he still has the gun in his left hand. At 00:52:31, [REDACTED] says, "Alright, he's walking toward us." At 00:52:35, Zukoski says, "What do you got boss?" [REDACTED] replies, "He's walking toward us." At 00:52:47, [REDACTED] says, "He stopped." At 00:52:48, Zukoski tells [REDACTED] "Sheri says that he wants, he is wanting suicide by cop."

At 00:56:59, [REDACTED] asks dispatch to check to see if they have any relatives or family members of Ward that they can contact. At 00:57:50, Zukoski says that Ward will calm down and then start flipping out again. At 01:03:09, [REDACTED] tells someone on the phone (likely Parkomaki) that Allen is still talking with Ward. [REDACTED] states that Ward is highly intoxicated, wants suicide by cop, that Ward will be calm and talk with Allen, and then he'll get excited and start rambling. [REDACTED] also says that Ward has walked toward them with the shotgun in one hand and a cell phone in the other hand. The caller asks [REDACTED] if he can tell if it is a real shotgun.

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██████████ said that he has the best eyes on it; and from what he can see, it is a real shotgun. ██████████ states that using the closest pole, he lasered the distance at 186 yards.

At 01:05:52, Allen radios that Ward hung up. At 01:06:56, ██████████ radios dispatch and advises that Ward is yelling something at them but he can't tell what is being said. At 01:08:07, dispatch radios and informs Allen that they are continuing to try to call Ward but he is not answering his phone. Allen replies and tells dispatch to keep trying to call him. At 01:08:51, dispatch advises Allen that they have Ward on the phone and they are going to send the call to her. At 01:12:21, Zukoski states, "She said he is talking about walking to you guys and forcing you to shoot him."

At 01:14:00, ██████████ says, "Alright he's walking." Zukoski responds, "I got it boss." At 01:14:59, ██████████ says, "Put the gun down" (indicating that Ward put the gun down). Zukoski replies, "Yep got it." ██████████ continues, "Smoking one hand and talking with the other." Zukoski asks, "Does he got the phone in the right hand?" ██████████ replies, "Yeah." At 01:16:07, ██████████ says, "That's Will [Lt. William Parkomaki] coming up on us." At 01:18:45, Zukoski's K-9 begins barking. At 01:19:21, ██████████ says, "Will he's set the gun down for right now. It's still at his right side, um I don't know if he's, I don't think Sheri is talking to him anymore but he was on the phone with her and he set it down so he could have a cigarette." Zukoski says, "He says he sees us and the trooper." Parkomaki tells ██████████ to get his bean bag gun out in case Ward comes toward them. ██████████ goes to his vehicle and retrieves a shotgun with an orange color stock and forend from the trunk. Parkomaki tells ██████████ that he is going to go to the west side of the bridge. Gillepsie tells Parkomaki that his Fitbit was telling him that his heartrate was over 120. ██████████ then returns to a prone position behind his rifle.

At 01:21:45, Zukoski says, "He's looking at us." ██████████ responds, "Yeah, he's been doing that off and on." At 01:22:32, dispatch advises ██████████ that they have Ward's father on the phone. At 01:22:47, ██████████ says, "Shit. He's moving toward us. [Unintelligible] he's walking back toward us." At 01:23:13, Zukoski says, "He's still leaning up against the..." ██████████ radios, "Ok, he set the gun down for now but he stopped." At 01:23:39, ██████████ says, "Picked it back up he's walking toward us some more." Zukoski responds, "Yep, got ya covered."

At 01:23:57, ██████████ yells, "Drop the gun, drop the gun, drop the gun, drop it, drop the gun, drop it." At 01:24:25, Zukoski yells, "Police stop." At 01:24:30, ██████████ yells, "Put your hands up." At 01:24:39, ██████████ yells, "We just want to talk to you. Put your hands up and walk away from the gun." At 01:24:55, ██████████ yells, "We don't have to do anything, you just drop the gun walk away." At 01:25:11, ██████████ yells, "We can talk this through I just need you to walk away from on the gun." At 01:25:22, ██████████ yells, "Drop the gun." At 01:25:27, a gunshot can be heard and movement, consistent with ██████████ firing his rifle, can be seen on the body camera.

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The screenshot below shows what the camera recorded at the time the shot is fired:



At 01:25:32, [REDACTED] says, "Fuckin damn you." [REDACTED] then radios dispatch and advises that shots have been fired and that the subject is down. Radio traffic from other officers can be heard.

At 01:26:30, [REDACTED] stands up. [REDACTED] and Zukoski remain at the east end of the bridge, while officers approach Ward from the west side.

The video ends at 01:28:35.

Body-Camera Videos of Ofc. Zukoski, Ofc. Allen and Ofc. Caruso

Note that reports have been written that detail each officer's body-camera video. Please refer to those reports for additional information.

Zukoski was wearing a body camera but it was not activated during the incident. Zukoski said that the battery on their body cameras usually do not last a full shift. Zukoski said that during the incident, he could see that APD Lt. [REDACTED] had his body camera activated and, therefore, Zukoski had his off. Zukoski said that when their cameras are activated, a red light can be seen illuminated on the front of the camera.

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Allen was wearing a body camera, which she turned on and off during the incident. Allen stated that she has done negotiations in the past that have taken several hours. As a result, she toggled the camera on and off so that the battery would not run out of charge.

Ofc. Caruso's body camera was activated during the incident. Due to Caruso's distance from Ward during the incident, Ward cannot be seen in the video.

Contact Information

The preceding information comprises only a portion of facts and circumstances collected during the investigation of the officer-involved shooting incident. For further review of specific information or documentation collected during the investigation, please refer to the individual reports and documents from which this summary was derived. Any questions regarding the content or context of the information contained in this document can be directed to the attention of Special Agent Jon Lieber. SA Lieber can be reached via email at Jonathan.Lieber@OhioAGO.gov or by telephone at (440) 258-2865.