



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.

Investigative Activity: Interview with Witness
Involves: David Ward, Jr. (S), David L. Ward (O)
Date of Activity: 04/13/2022
Activity Location: Ward, David L. – Home – 1724 E. 47th Street, Ashtabula, OH 44004, Ashtabula County
Author: SA Stacey A. Fifer, #116

On April 13, 2022, at approximately 0617 hours, BCI Special Agents Stacey Fifer (SA Fifer) and Jon Lieber (SA Lieber) interviewed David L. Ward, Senior (Ward Sr) regarding the officer-involved shooting incident that occurred on the W. 46th Street bridge in Ashtabula, Ohio. The incident involved the Ashtabula Police Department (APD) and David Ward, Junior (Ward Jr). The incident resulted in the death of Ward Jr.

Prior to our arrival, Ward Sr. was aware of his son's death and had responded to the Ashtabula County Medical Center. The interview took place at 1724 E. 47th Street, Ashtabula, Ohio 44004 (residence of both Ward Sr and Ward Jr). Also present for the interview was Cheri Stuper (Stuper), Ward Sr.'s girlfriend. Agents asked Ward Sr questions 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 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.

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 and working the past two months there was the longest time period his son ever worked. Ward Sr said his son was depressed and Ward Jr took it "really hard" in reference to being fired. SA Fifer asked Ward Sr if Ward Jr generally had depression and 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

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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 (photograph attached). 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 by SA Fifer.

As far as Ward Jr.'s cell phone number and type of phone, Ward Sr said his son's cell phone number is 440-387-0676 and he showed agents a Samsung Galaxy box that belonged to his Ward Jr (photographs attached).

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."

SA Fifer asked Ward Sr if his son ever sought treatment for being suicidal or having depression and 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 and 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

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said, "He got in his own head." Stuper works as a case worker in the health care field when asked by SA Lieber.

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 that 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.

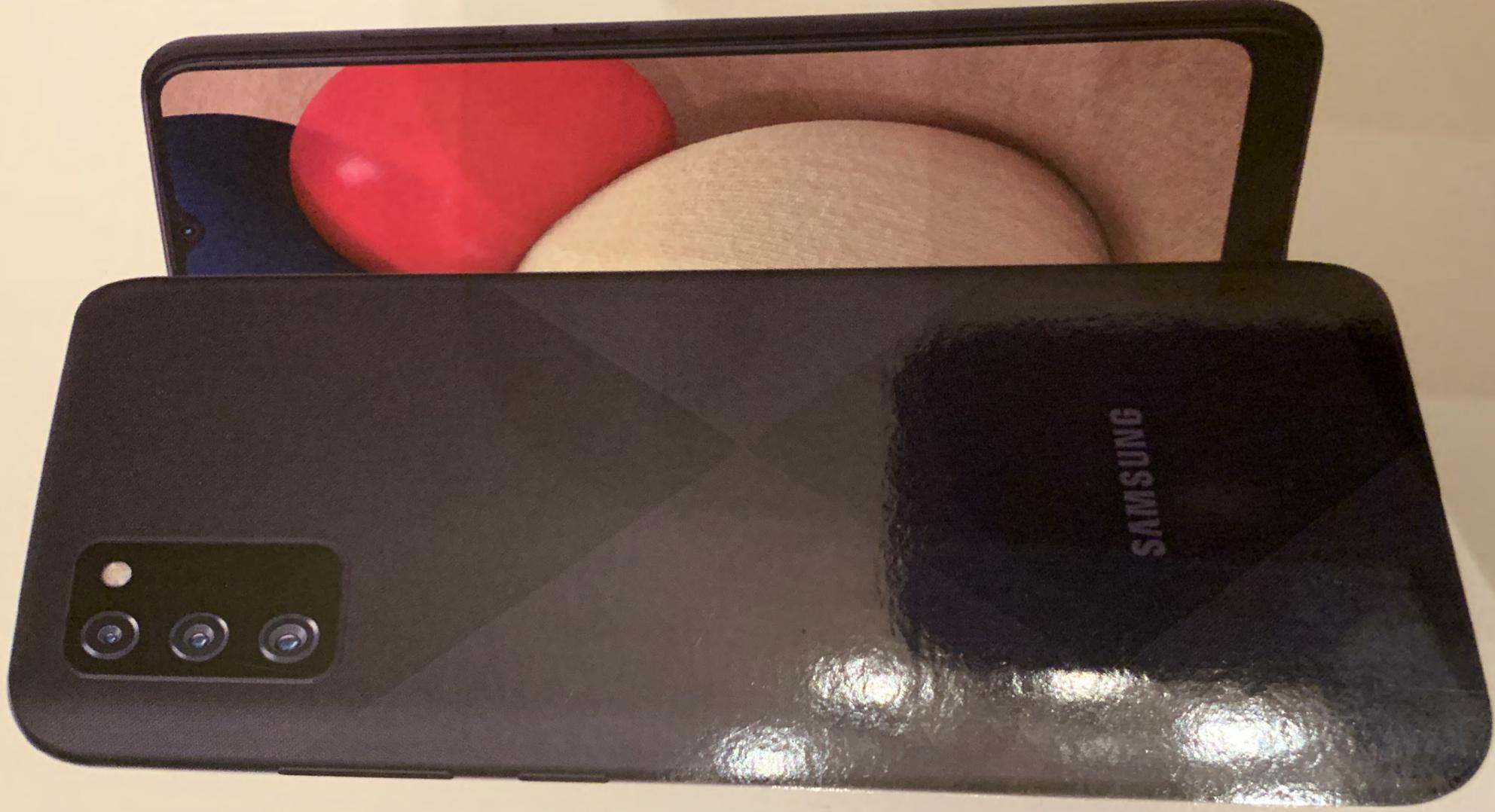
Ward Sr was frustrated with not getting any information from APD about the incident. Stuper mentioned there were comments on Facebook discussing the incident. General information on the officer-involved shooting investigation process was provided to Ward Sr and Stuper after they had questions about the investigation.

The interview was audio recorded and a copy of the audio recording was submitted to the case file (refer to audio recording for complete details).

Attachments:

- Attachment # 01: Galaxy box pictures 4-13-22
- Attachment # 02: vodka bottle picture 4-13-22
- Attachment # 03: David Ward Sr 4-13-22

Galaxy A02s

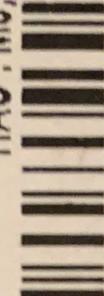
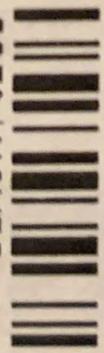


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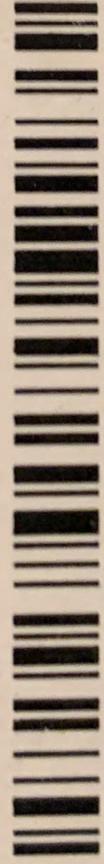
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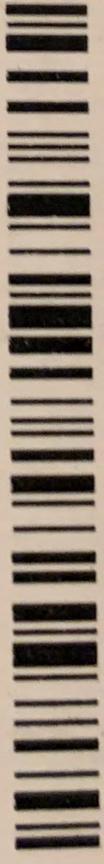
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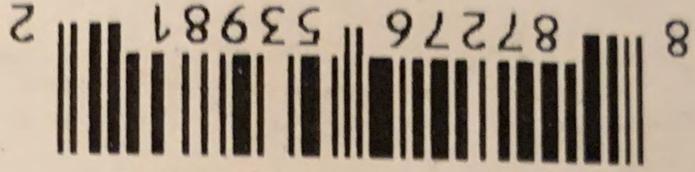
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