

**ELYRIA POLICE DEPARTMENT
INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION**



**PRESS CONFERENCE
ELYRIA PD# 2025-20129
OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING
MURDER INVESTIGATION — OFF. PHILLIP WAGNER**

INTRODUCTION

On July 23, 2025, at approximately 1:05 PM, an officer-involved shooting occurred in the city of Lorain Ohio, at the dead end of River Bend Drive (Missouri Avenue extension).

The incident involved multiple officers and resulted in on duty death (homicide) of Officer Phillip Wagner and gunshot injuries to Officer Peter Gale and Officer Brent Payne.

The suspect, Michael Parker, was shot and killed by responding officers at the scene.

The investigation into this incident was conducted by the Elyria Police Department, with the assistance of the Lorain County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

INTRODUCTION

Today, we will share with you what some of the details of what we presently know based on the evidence as well as a timeline of key events. Our goal is to be transparent and factual.

*This is the information as best known at this stage of the investigation and as the investigation progresses and additional evidence is reviewed the information is subject to change.

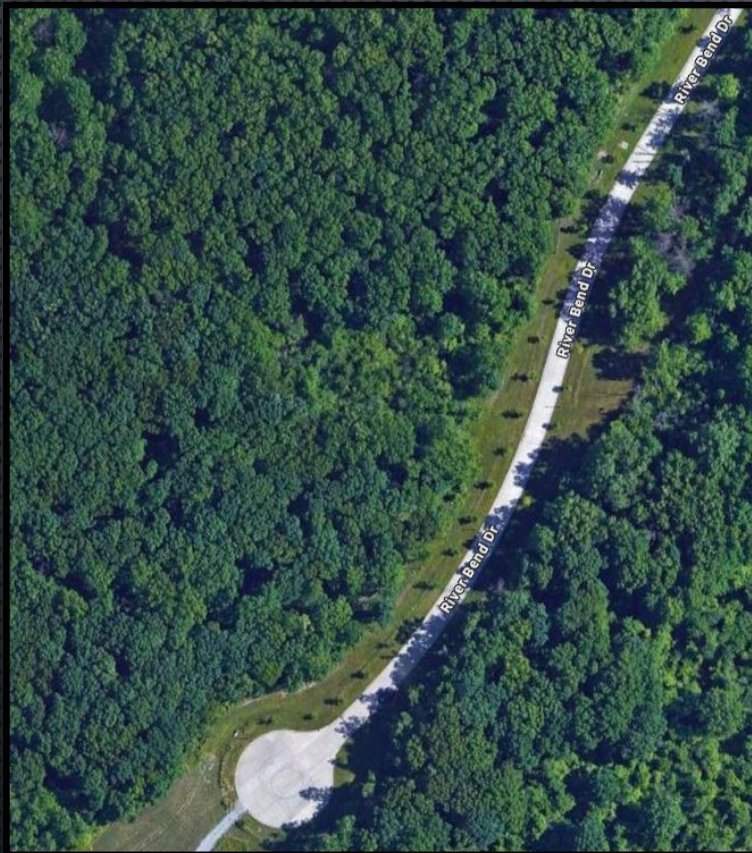
LOCATION

River Bend Drive, Lorain Ohio



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River Bend Drive, Lorain Ohio



River Bend Drive in Lorain is generally considered a quiet, cul-de-sac off Colorado Avenue that offers a popular green space for local residents and is frequented daily by walkers, joggers, and people enjoying outdoor scenery, jogging with pets, biking, or exploring nearby wooded trails.

The area's has connections to various trails that make it a scenic and accessible spot for recreation.

This area was also used at times by officers of the Lorain Police Department to take meal breaks as was the case on July 23, 2025.

INVESTIGATIVE UPDATE

- It was initially believed that the suspect was at the scene, staged with his firearms and waiting.
- After reviewing video footage the investigation has determined that this is not the case and that Officers were there first.
- After picking up lunch Officer Gale arrived at the end of River Bend Drive at 12:46 PM.
- Officer Wagner arrived at 12:52 PM and pulled up directly next to Gale.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

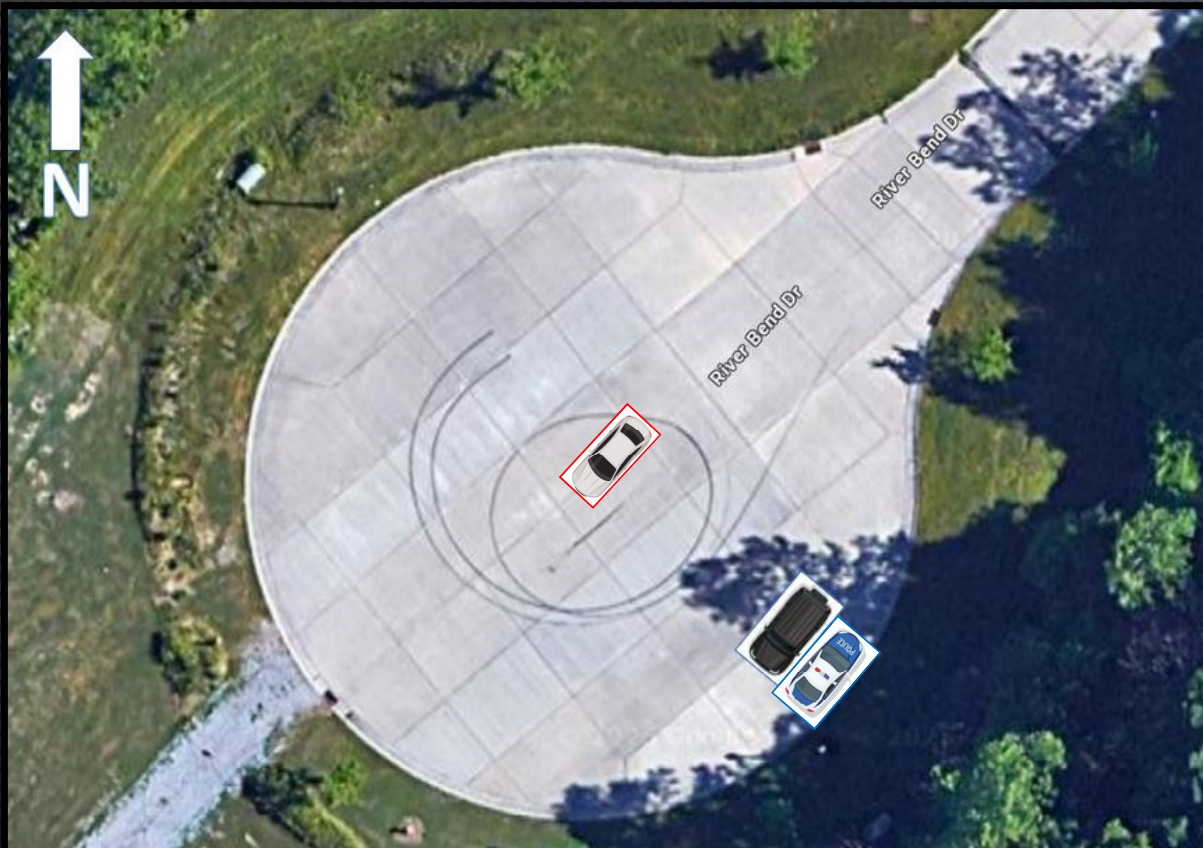
12:52 PM – 1:03 PM



On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at approximately 1:03 PM, Lorain Police officers Phillip Wagner (Black SUV) and Peter Gale (Silver Cruiser) were in marked Lorain Police cruisers parked door-to-door in the area of River Bend Drive (Also referred as the Missouri Extension).

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:03:48 PM



Both officers were eating lunch when the suspect, arrived in the same area as the officers in his vehicle.

Parker immediately began firing a rifle into Officer Wagner's cruiser near the center of the cul de sac.

Officer Wagner was struck by the gunfire and incapacitated.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:03:56 PM



Officer Gale fled from the incoming barrage of gunfire and radioed "shots fired" and provided the shooting location.

Officer Gale eventually staged North of the shooting location and awaited backup.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:04 to 1:07 PM



The suspect then began preparing for the law enforcement response by repositioning his vehicle to the far southern end of the cul de sac.

It was during this period that the suspect began staging various rifles, several with scopes, and other equipment around his vehicle. Several of the rifles were pointed towards the only direction that officers would be responding from.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

- Hearing the radio traffic Officer Brent Payne began responding to the scene along with other police personnel.
- Officer B. Payne turned onto River Bend Drive where he was able to link up with Officer Gale and both officers approached the area of the reported shooting.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:07:42 PM



As officers came into sight of the suspect's vehicle that was parked at the southern most section of River Bend Drive, the suspect began firing upon them with accurate rifle fire.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:08:01 PM



Officer Gale advises over Lorain Police radio that the suspect was armed with a rifle.

Within seconds bullets begin impacting Officer B. Payne's front windshield.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:08:04 PM



Two more bullets strike Officer B. Payne's front windshield in rapid succession.

OFFICER BRENT PAYNE'S — IN-CAR FOOTAGE

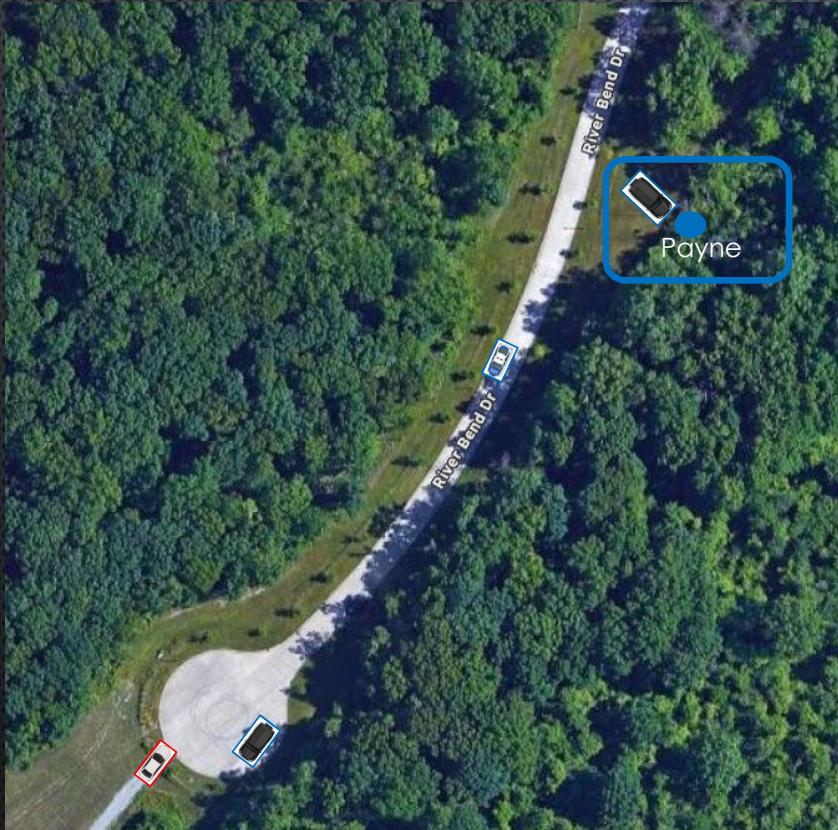
INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:08 PM – 1:10 PM

- Both officers and their cruisers were struck by the incoming rifle fire. The suspect fired an initial volley of approximately 25-30 shots at both officers and their cruisers.
- After being struck in the hand by gunfire, Officer Gale managed to drive himself out of the area even as he came under a barrage of continued gunfire. Officer Gale radioed “active shooter” over the radio. He was later transported to Mercy Hospital, where he was treated for a serious but non-fatal injury.
- Officer B. Payne returned fire with his service handgun but was struck by gunfire while attempting to move toward a wood line north & east of his cruiser’s position. The suspect fired an additional volley of approximately 30 shots at Payne as he was maneuvering towards the wood line.
- Officer B. Payne sustained gun shot injuries to his hip/leg and lower arm. Despite his wounds, Officer Payne was able to crawl into the wood line and radio for assistance.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:10 PM - 1:13 PM



Detectives Shoemaker and Rodriguez with SA John Thompson (FBI) responded together in an SUV and upon arriving in the area observed/heard incoming gunfire.

This group of personnel provided immediate medical aid and safely extracted Officer B. Payne from the wood line, secured him in their vehicle and transported him to Mercy Hospital for treatment.

OFFICER BRENT PAYNE'S — BODY CAMERA FOOTAGE

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:11 PM



At approx. 1:11 PM a SUV containing Lt. Manicsic, Detective Hartman, Detective Sanchez and Lt. Ball arrived in the area taking position behind Officer B. Payne's cruiser. All subjects dismounted the vehicle and began taking positions of cover behind B. Payne's cruiser.

Another SUV with Detective Craig Payne and Sergeant Vrooman followed Lt. Manicsic's SUV to the scene stopping behind Manicsic's SUV. C. Payne and Vrooman dismounted their vehicle.

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:11 PM - 1:19:59 PM

Officers observed the suspect near his vehicle firing upon them. In response to this deadly threat the officers discharged their service weapons at the suspect, ultimately striking and killing him, thus neutralizing the deadly threat.

- First shot fired by officers at 1:11:11 PM
- Multiple officers advanced on the suspect's position.
- Last shot fired by officers at 1:12:30 PM

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

1:19:59 PM



A tactical team approached the suspect who was determined to be deceased.

Officers then began taking action to secure the scene.

OFFICER BRENT PAYNE'S — IN-CAR FOOTAGE

INVESTIGATION SYNOPSIS

- Officers then located Officer Wagner in his cruiser. He was extracted and emergency aid was administered and he was transported by police cruiser to Mercy Hospital.
- Due to the severity of the incident, Lorain PD requested mutual aid. Numerous law enforcement agencies, including tactical teams, responded and conducted a coordinated search of surrounding areas to confirm there was no ongoing threat to public safety.
- Once the scene was secured, the Elyria Police Department Investigative Unit, with assistance from the Lorain County Sheriff's Office and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), initiated an investigation into the officer-involved shooting.
- Suspicious packages were located inside the suspect vehicle and the Lorain County Bomb Squad responded to the scene. Ultimately it was determined to be approximately 100 pounds of suspected tannerite inside two containers. The Lorain County Bomb Squad safely removed the materials and conducted a controlled detonation of the materials.
- Tragically, Officer Wagner succumbed to his injuries the following day, on July 24.

THE SCENE

Scene and Related Evidence

As part of this investigation, we want to provide an overview of what the scene and the recovered evidence tell us about the suspect's capabilities and the threat level officers faced on July 23, 2025.

THE SCENE

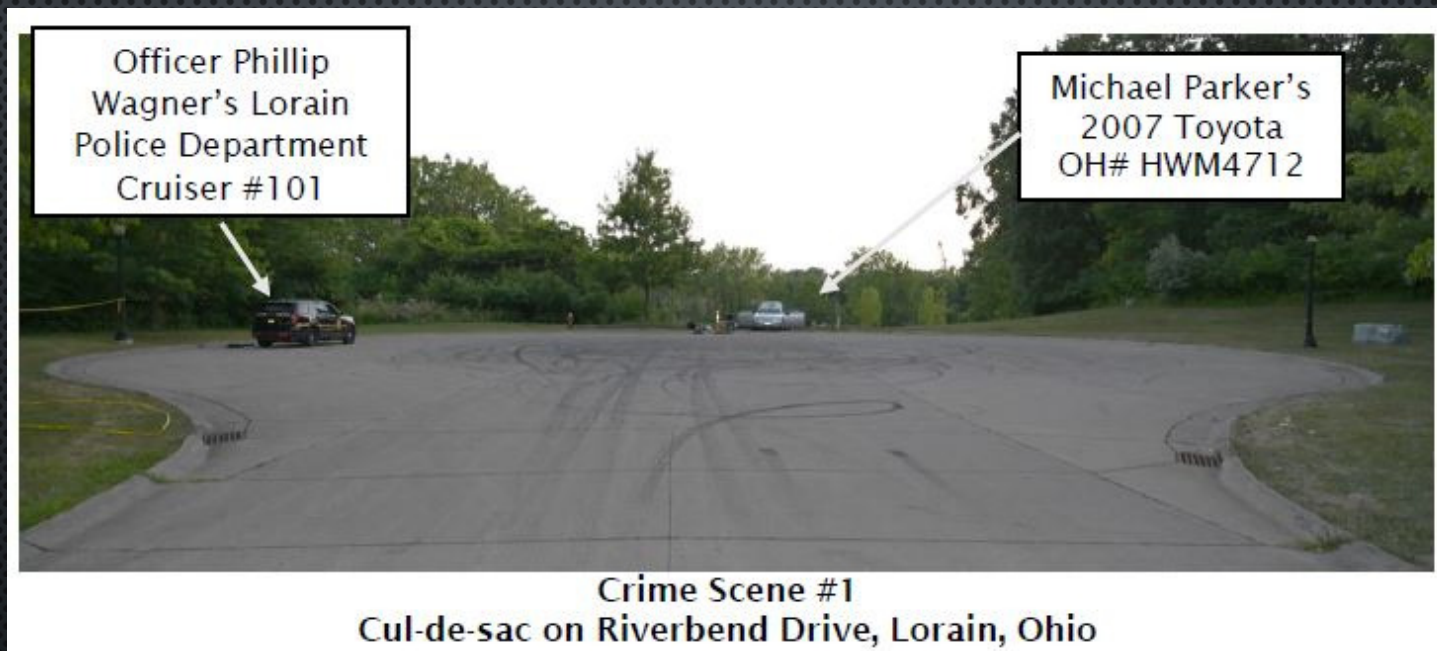
Scene 1

The suspect was heavily armed. A total of ten firearms that were all purchased by the suspect over the last few years were recovered at the scene:

- **Seven rifles**, the majority of which were equipped with magnified optics, indicating an intent to engage from distance and with precision.
- **One shotgun**
- **Two handguns**

THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1

Based on spent casings located at the scene, it is confirmed that the suspect fired at officers **103 times**, primarily using a rifle platform.

Also recovered were **294 loaded magazines** containing various types of rifle ammunition. Combined with loose rounds, a conservative estimate places the total round count at well over **7,500 rounds** of ammunition.

The volume and type of weapons, ammunition, and explosive material recovered paint a very clear picture: this was a heavily armed individual who came prepared for a violent and sustained confrontation with law enforcement.

THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1



ERL_1228



ERL_1229



ERL_1230



ERL_1231



ERL_1232



ERL_1233



ERL_1234



ERL_1235



ERL_1236



ERL_1237



ERL_1238



ERL_1239



ERL_1240



ERL_1241



ERL_1242



THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1



THE SCENE

Scene 1

84 rifle casings fired by suspect



THE SCENE

Scene 1

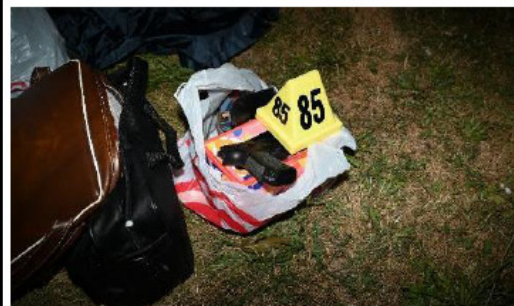


THE SCENE

Scene 1



Evidence Item #84
located on the ground on the right side of the vehicle
PTR Industries PTR91; .308



Evidence Item #85
found on the ground on the right side of the vehicle
Taurus TH10 / 10mm pistol



THE SCENE

Scene 1



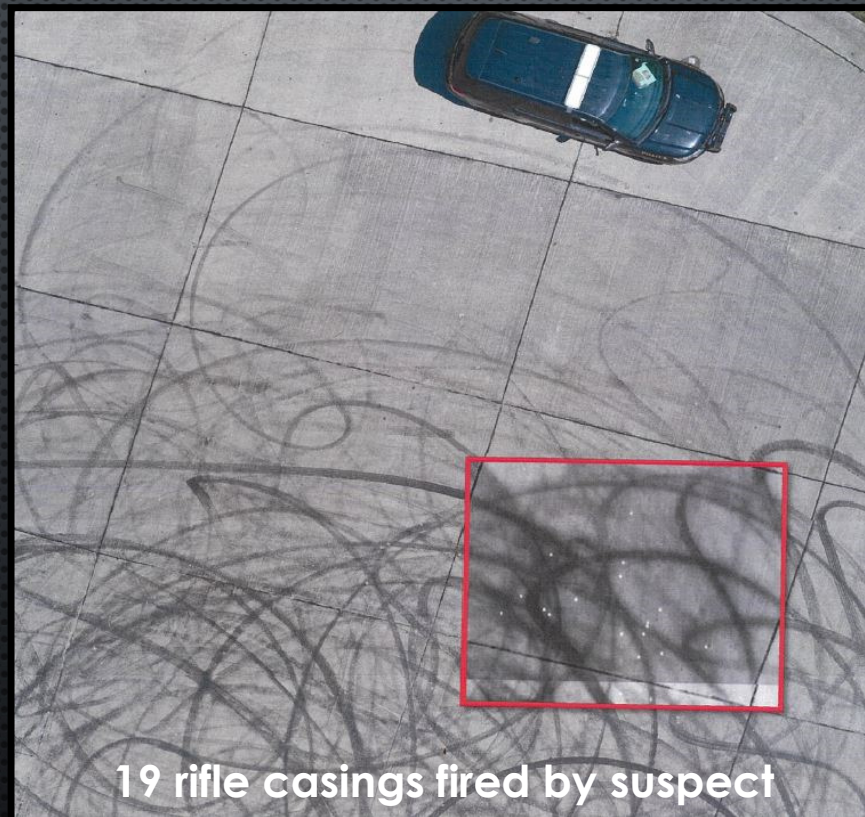
Evidence Item #87
discovered in the center front console
P80 9mm pistol



Evidence Item #86
found on the ground inside a cardboard box, located at the left rear of the vehicle
Patriot 7mm PRC

THE SCENE

Scene 1



19 rifle casings fired by suspect

SCENE 2

THE SCENE

Scene 2



THE SCENE

Scene 2

BCI Report: The scene was cordoned off with crime scene tape and was actively being secured by personnel from Elyria and Lorain Police Departments.

The scene was located in the roadway and grass area adjacent to the south of River Bend Drive. Placards were used to identify and document the fired cartridge casings and live bullets.

It was stated by Elyria Police Department, this area was where backup police officer(s) staged and returned fire towards the subject. Multiple items were identified and collected as evidence.

THE SCENE

Scene 2



THE SCENE

Scene 2



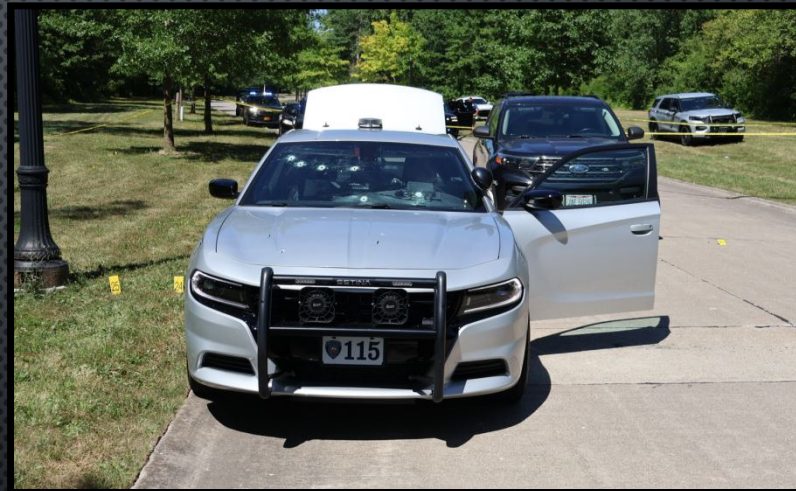
THE SCENE

Scene 2

- There were 47 total spent casings recovered inside scene 2.
- The casings matched the brand known to be used by officers of the Lorain Police Department.
- Casings were for both rifle and handgun ammunition.

THE SCENE

Scene 2



THE SCENE

Scene 2

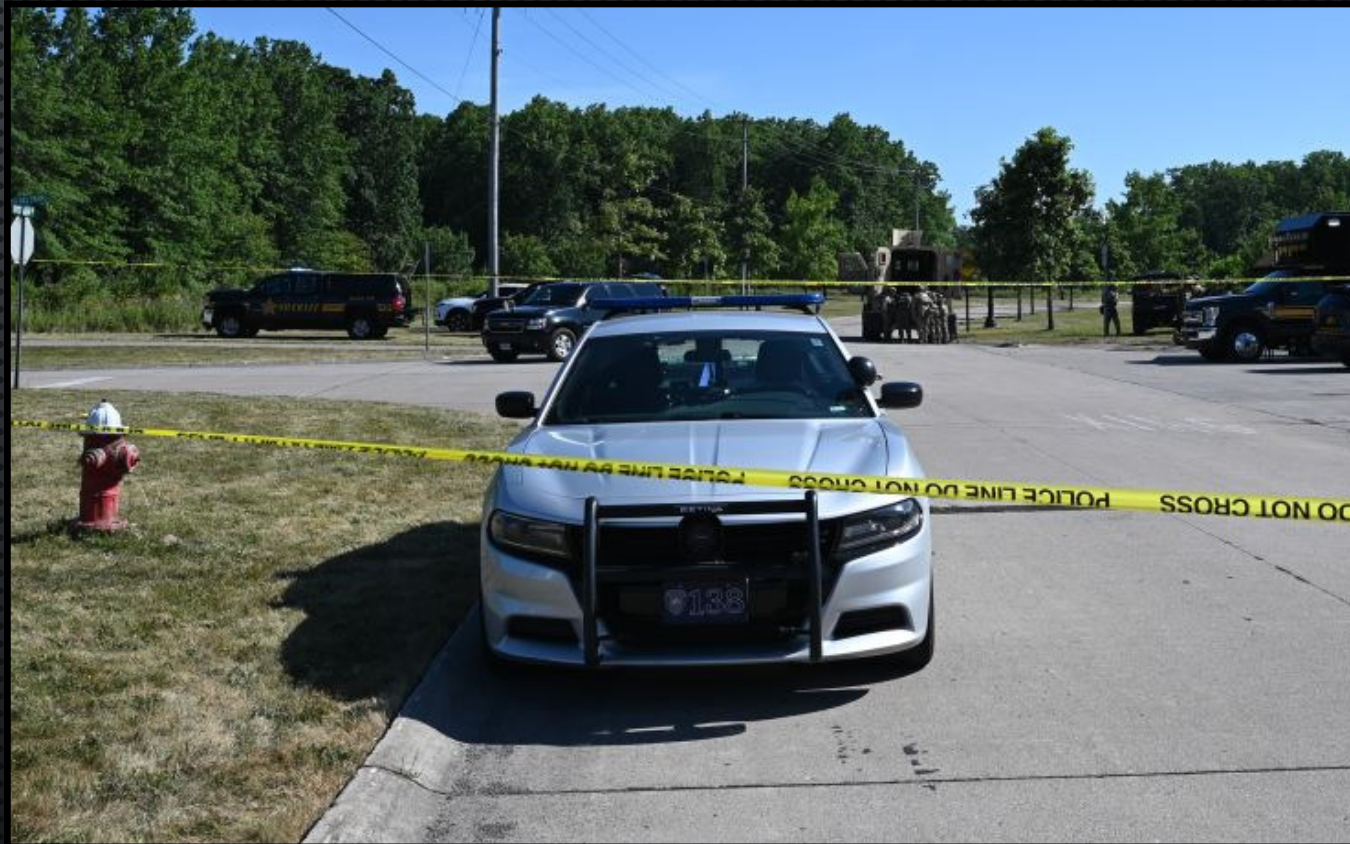


25 total Ballistic Impacts (BI)

SCENE 3

THE SCENE

Scene 3



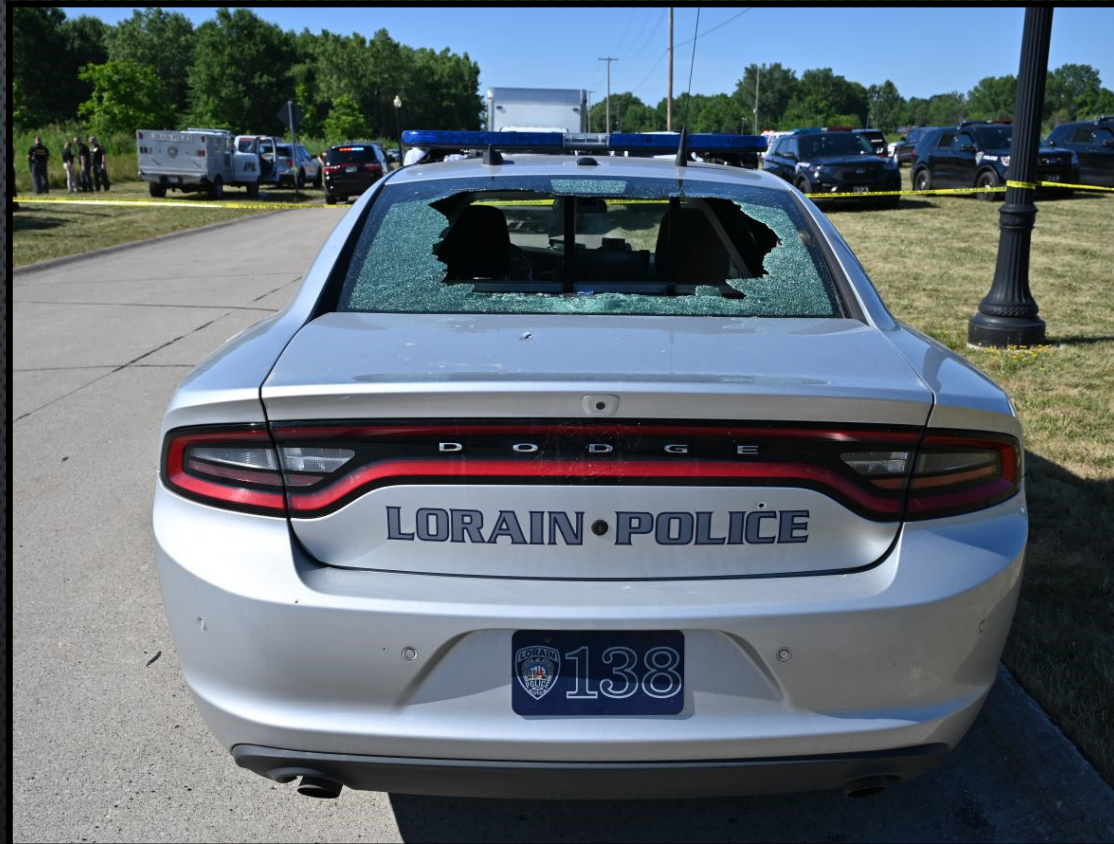
THE SCENE

Scene 3



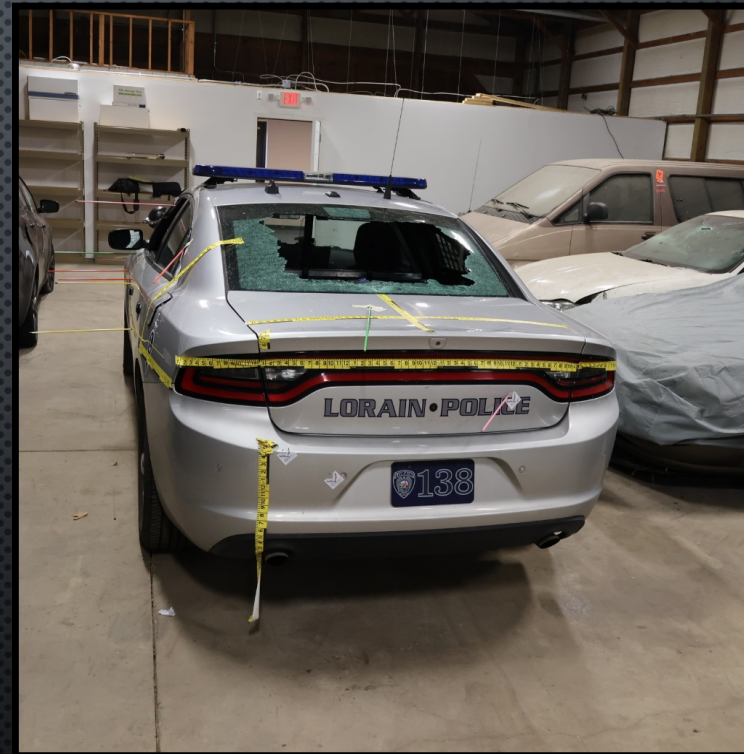
THE SCENE

Scene 3



THE SCENE

Scene 3



INTERVIEWS WITH OFFICERS

- Responding officers encountered an active shooter armed with a high-powered rifle.
- The suspect was observed in a shooter's stance, aiming and firing at officers.
- Officers reported seeing muzzle flashes, hearing gunfire, and observing rounds striking around them.
- Officers had knowledge that the suspect had struck other officers with gunfire.
- The suspect continued to reposition, reload, and remain engaged, showing his intent to inflict deadly harm.
- One officer recounted the suspect wearing hearing protection.

INTERVIEWS WITH OFFICERS

- Officers recognized the suspect's actions as an immediate and ongoing deadly threat to human life.
- In response to this deadly threat and in defense of their lives, the lives of fellow officers, five officers discharged their service weapons at the suspect.
- Gunfire was directed toward the suspect until he was no longer an active threat.
- Several additional personnel at the scene did not fire as they were focused on extraction/rescue operations.

SUSPECT: MICHAEL JOSEPH PARKER

MOTIVE

As part of this investigation, we have reviewed prior contacts between the suspect and law enforcement in an effort to better understand his possible motive. We are aware that Officer Phillip Wagner was the investigating officer in a motor vehicle crash involving the suspect, Michael Parker, which occurred on October 23, 2022, in the City of Lorain. As a result of that investigation, Officer Wagner issued Parker a citation.

The case was resolved in Lorain Municipal Court on May 4, 2023, with Parker entering a plea of *No Contest* to a Left of Center violation. A separate charge, *Leaving the Scene of an Accident*, was dismissed.

Additionally, the other motorist involved in that crash filed a civil suit in Lorain County Common Pleas Court on February 6, 2023. That case was settled out of court in or around March of 2024.

MOTIVE

While this information provides background context, I want to be clear that **at this stage, we have not uncovered any evidence to support that any specific individual, including Officer's Wagner or Gale, were an intended target.**

Furthermore, all available evidence at this point supports that Michael Parker **acted alone** in his armed attack on law enforcement.

PLANNING & INTENT

Based on the evidence recovered so far, it is clear that **Michael Parker had a plan**. The full extent of that plan is still under investigation, but what we do know is that this was not a spontaneous act.

Parker's firearm purchase history dates back to 2019. However, what stands out most is his increased purchase **activity between March and July of 2025**, during which he legally acquired **three rifles and one shotgun**, all of which were recovered at the scene, loaded and ready for use.

In addition to the firearms, Parker had been steadily **acquiring large amounts of ammunition and other tactical equipment** over the previous months, including materials that were used to carry out the attack. The volume of ammunition, estimated at more than 7,500 rounds, and the presence of 294 loaded magazines and 100 pounds of Tannerite suggest a level of preparation that goes beyond typical ownership.

PLANNING & INTENT



NEXT STEPS

Murder Investigation - Through the FBI, we continue to examine digital evidence and other materials recovered from the scene and the suspect's residence, and we are still awaiting the results of these examinations.

Our goal is to gain a fuller understanding of Parker's intent and planning process and determine whether he acted alone or was influenced or assisted by others.

NEXT STEPS

Officer Involved Shooting – This aspect of the case will be formally presented to the Lorain County Prosecutor's Office for review at the conclusion of the investigation.

END OF PRESENTATION