

## Witness kept filming shootout as it unfolded - Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) - May 15, 2018 - page 1A

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The first 911 calls started coming in just about 6:25 p.m. Saturday, with people telling dispatchers at both the Columbus Division of Police and the Franklin County sheriff's office about the erratic driver in the Ford-F250 pickup who was wreaking havoc on the city's West Side.

The truck, callers said, had hit a vehicle in the area of Bohnburg Avenue and Big Run Bluffs Boulevard and took off. The driver was running red lights, weaving and speeding, and maybe had even hit a house.

Franklin County Deputy Sheriff Jacob Heaberlin, 29, heard all this unfolding over just a couple of minutes and intercepted the pickup. He tried to make a stop near Clime Road but the driver -- whom authorities identified as 55-year-old **Darrell Bruffy** of Orient -- kept going down Harrisburg Pike.

And that's where 19-year-old Ryan Smith can pick up the story. He was an up-close eyewitness to the mayhem that unfolded at the intersection of Harrisburg Pike and Eakin Road on Saturday night -- and used his iPhone 6S to record the ensuing gunbattle that left Bruffy dead and Heaberlin wounded.

Smith and his girlfriend had just pulled away from a Burger King and were northbound at the traffic light on Harrisburg Pike when Bruffy's black truck sped up behind them with a sheriff's cruiser right on its tail. Turning onto Eakin Road, the pickup fishtailed and crashed into a pole in front of the Shell gas station. And Smith, who lives just a couple miles down Eakin Road, started recording from the passenger seat of his girlfriend's Chrysler sedan.

He watched the deputy -- whom he now knows was Heaberlin -- draw his gun and take a couple of steps toward the pickup.

"The cop was saying 'Get out of the car, get out of the car,'" Smith recalled Monday. "That's when I realized I wasn't just recording the end of a car chase. That's when I thought, 'This could really go south.'"

Then, the first of what sounds on his video like at least 33 shots rang out in three separate bursts over the course of less than a minute. "I was like, 'We gotta hit the deck,'" Smith recalled. But he never stopped recording.

Franklin County Sheriff Dallas Baldwin said Monday that Bruffy opened fire with a handgun, hitting Heaberlin in the lower abdomen just below his armored vest. Heaberlin returned fire, and so did Franklin Township Police Officers Roger Myers and Joe Sheridan -- both on the force less than a year, their chief said. Each had roared to the scene after hearing the pursuit.

According to police radio traffic released Monday, Heaberlin said into his mic at 6:44 p.m., "I'm hit somewhere." Twenty-nine seconds later another voice on the police radio comes across: "Officer down."

Baldwin said Heaberlin, a seven-year veteran of the sheriff's office who works second-shift patrol, is tired but in good spirits at OhioHealth Grant Medical Center after surgery.

Chief Deputy Jim Gilbert said Heaberlin will need some time to recover but "he's very much wanting to get back to the streets."

It will take some time to sort out who hit Bruffy and where, said Chief Deputy Rick Miner, who oversees the sheriff's office investigations division. The Franklin County coroner's office conducted the autopsy, and it will all become part of the investigation being handled by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

Even before the 911 calls came in Saturday, Bruffy was known to law enforcement. He was accused earlier this year of breaking into his estranged wife's house and assaulting her. She told police he had stolen her .40 caliber Ruger handgun.

When he died Saturday, Bruffy had outstanding arrest warrants for domestic violence, assault, criminal trespassing and violations of a protection order.

That intersection at Harrisburg Pike bustles all the time, with a CVS on one corner, a Walgreens on another and a small motel nearby. Miner said investigators are pleased that people had the foresight to flee the area or get down when the shooting started and that no one else was injured.

Nobody had to tell Smith that. He watched it all firsthand. When the first shots rang out, he watched the driver in the car in front of his jump over a console and bail through a passenger door, leaving his vehicle abandoned in the road. A woman who had been on her phone outside the Shell station hit the ground on her belly. People ran screaming.

Smith, who will be a sophomore at Wittenberg University in Springfield and is home for the summer, said he was worried only about keeping his girlfriend safe and wasn't really thinking about what, exactly, his phone was capturing. She laid across the console to avoid the windows, and he jumped from the car to use the vehicle as cover as the bullets flew. Before she could even scramble out to follow him, it was over as quickly as it started.

The couple initially drove away from the scene but returned later to show the video to detectives. Until they went back, Smith said, they didn't really know the outcome of what they had seen. He had been hoping, even though his mind already knew better, that maybe everyone would be OK.

It will take some time, he said, to get over what he witnessed.

"I saw this terrible thing happen. You can't prepare your mind for those things that you see. You just can't," he said. "Nobody wants to see another person die."

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