

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA
21-01099-CF
SECTION M

STATE OF FLORIDA,
Plaintiff,
vs.
CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD
Person ID: 1566510,

Defendant.

_____ /

DEPOSITION OF: FRANCES ELENA JOHNSON

DATE: February 21, 2023

TIME: 10:33 a.m. to 10:56 a.m.

PLACE: County Justice Center
14250 49th Street North
Room 1100
Clearwater, Florida

PURSUANT TO: Notice by counsel for
Defendant for purposes of
discovery, use at trial
or such other purposes
as are permitted under
the Florida Rules
of Civil Procedure

BEFORE: Nathan F. Perkins, RDR
Notary Public, State of
Florida at Large

Pages 1 to 20

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

APPEARANCES:

THEODORA TAKTIKOS-DANZIG, ESQUIRE
THOMAS KOSKINAS, ESQUIRE
County Justice Center
14250 49th Street North
Clearwater, Florida 33762
Attorneys for Plaintiff

JESSICA MANUELE, ESQUIRE
Public Defender, Sixth Judicial Circuit
County Justice Center
14250 49th Street North
Clearwater, Florida 33762
Attorney for Defendant

I N D E X

DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. MANUELE	Page	3
CERTIFICATE OF OATH	Page	17
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE	Page	18
WITNESS' SIGNATURE PAGE	Page	19

E X H I B I T S

(None marked)

1 FRANCES ELENA JOHNSON,
2 the witness herein, being first duly sworn on oath, was
3 examined and deposed as follows:

4 DIRECT EXAMINATION

5 BY MS. MANUELE:

6 Q. Could you please state your name and
7 occupation for the record?

8 A. Yes. Frances Elena Johnson, and I work for
9 the St. Petersburg Police Department.

10 Q. How long have you been with the St. Pete PD?

11 A. About six years.

12 Q. Any prior law enforcement experience?

13 A. No, ma'am.

14 Q. And what unit are you currently assigned to?

15 A. I'm currently in the major crimes unit.

16 Q. And going back to February of 2021, how were
17 you so assigned?

18 A. I was also in the major crime unit then.

19 Q. Okay. We are here because you've been listed
20 as a witness in the State of Florida versus Cornelius
21 Whitfield regarding a homicide and attempted homicide
22 that occurred on or February 1st, February 2nd of 2021.
23 Are you familiar generally with the circumstances?

24 A. Yes, ma'am.

25 Q. Okay. And did you write a supplemental report

1 detailing your involvement?

2 A. Yes, ma'am, I did.

3 Q. Do you have that report with you?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Have you had an opportunity to review it?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. Was there anything in that report that you
8 found to be inaccurate or that you would like to change?

9 A. Yes. So I spelled one of the victims' last
10 names wrong in the second report, the 6023 one. It
11 should have been Antonio Brown, and I put Green. So
12 anything that should say Green should say Green.

13 Q. And I don't even have that one. How many
14 supplements did you do on 6023?

15 A. I did two. The second one was just like a
16 date typo. So not really --

17 Q. Let me see if I can pull that one up.

18 MS. TAKTIKOS-DANZIG: That's 21-6023?

19 THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.

20 MS. TAKTIKOS-DANZIG: Okay.

21 THE WITNESS: Would it be easier if you wanted
22 to review this one?

23 (A document was shown to counsel)

24 BY MS. MANUELE:

25 Q. Okay. Thanks. So we have one supplement

1 regarding the Barnes and Green case, and then two
2 supplements regarding the --

3 A. The house Emerson?

4 Q. Yes, the Emerson.

5 A. Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. And you have all three of those with you
7 today?

8 A. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. And then other than that typo, anything else?

10 A. No, ma'am.

11 Q. Did you review any other reports or
12 supplements prior to today?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. Tell me how you became involved on
15 February 2nd of 2021?

16 A. The one at the apartment complex?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. Okay. Yes. So that one I was tasked with
19 Detective Gaddis, Marissa Gaddis with canvassing. So
20 her and I went door-to-door looking for any video or
21 potential witnesses involved in the case. And her
22 report will document the full canvass.

23 Q. Okay. And about what time would this have
24 been? Like, are we talking about, like, at midnight or
25 some hours later on the 2nd?

1 A. No, it was on the 2nd. It was in the morning
2 on the 2nd, like during daylight. Like, I wasn't called
3 in.

4 Q. Okay. Yeah. So as far as that night, it's
5 like right around midnight, within a couple minutes
6 after midnight that the initial call goes out.

7 A. I don't know. I wasn't there for that event.

8 Q. As far as within those first few hours between
9 midnight and like, let's say, 5:00 a.m., you would not
10 have been on scene, right?

11 A. That's correct, I would not have been there.

12 Q. Gotcha. And did you ever respond to the
13 hospital to have any contact with Mr. Green?

14 A. No, ma'am.

15 Q. Okay. When Gaddis has in her report about
16 10:00 a.m., does that sound about right when you guys
17 started the canvass?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. Okay. The video that you guys pulled from
20 Emerald Pointe, was there any video that showed the
21 actual building that the homicide occurred at?

22 A. I don't believe so. I believe the only video
23 was, like, the exterior, like, the entrances, coming and
24 going type of thing.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I don't believe that there was any video right
2 there. But again, her report would have all that.

3 Q. Well, it says, Nothing stuck out to us on the
4 video at that time.

5 A. Right.

6 Q. But it didn't really tell us where the video
7 is looking, so I don't know what should or should not
8 stick out.

9 A. Right. I remember looking at entrance and
10 exit points.

11 Q. You remember seeing entrance and exit points?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. Did you guys -- was there any, like,
14 making note of any of the vehicles coming and going?

15 A. We were basically looking for -- from what I
16 remember, I was looking for, like, anything that would
17 look out of the normal. So there was a lot of cars
18 coming and going at that time, but it would have been,
19 like, anything like going fast or whatever like that.
20 But we didn't note anything of importance at the time, I
21 should say. Anything that was pertinent. We didn't see
22 anything that stuck out.

23 Q. Did you ever speak to Deronrick Green?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. As far as any information he had

1 provided about what time he left the apartment and who
2 was there when he left, did you guys look for any
3 vehicles to confirm whether that was accurate or not?

4 A. Who is Deronrick Green.

5 Q. Rodney's brother?

6 A. I don't think I spoke with him. I don't
7 believe so. I don't -- I don't remember being asked to
8 do that. So I had minimal involvement, so I don't
9 really know too many names. I apologize for that.

10 Q. Oh, that's okay. So looking at Gaddis's
11 supplemental report, she has, like, "103 heard yelling
12 at 11:00 p.m."

13 A. Uh-huh (Affirmative response).

14 Q. How do I know who you guys spoke to at Unit
15 103?

16 A. His name should have been captioned in the
17 report if she was willing -- or if he or she was willing
18 to give the name. But if they don't give us the names,
19 because sometimes they don't want to be involved, and
20 they won't give us their name. They will just say what
21 they heard and leave it at that.

22 Q. Is this captured on like body-worn camera
23 footage?

24 A. No ma'am. We don't wear body cameras.

25 Q. So they are -- would be a witness -- I mean,

1 okay. So if the person doesn't want to give their name
2 but they heard yelling in relation to about the time a
3 homicide was taking place, I mean, could I get like a
4 male or female or age range? Like, how do I piece
5 together now who you guys talked to at that unit?

6 A. You'll have to talk to Detective Gaddis. I
7 don't know why she didn't put that in there. That's her
8 report. I'm not going to attest to her report. Sorry.

9 Q. You agree it's not incredibly helpful?

10 A. I would agree with that, yes.

11 Q. On Unit 105, and if your answer is the same, I
12 understand, but the timing was off. Do you know what
13 that -- what she is referencing there? Do you recall
14 what timing was off?

15 A. No, I don't.

16 Q. Okay. Or who would have made that, provided
17 that information?

18 A. Yeah. I have no idea.

19 Q. Were you with Detective Gaddis when she goes
20 out to the traffic stop on February 3rd?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. The complex manager, Jessica Tierney,
23 that you spoke with.

24 A. Yes, ma'am.

25 Q. She was going to upload some videos to

1 evidence.com. Did you -- like, did you guys ask for
2 certain videos for a certain time frame or all videos
3 for a certain time frame? Or what was the request of
4 what she was going to provide you all?

5 A. So the cameras that would have captured, like,
6 the entrances and exits, we requested a certain time
7 frame.

8 Q. Do you remember what time that was?

9 A. I don't, but I believe the time would have
10 been a few hours -- like an hour beforehand to an hour
11 after, I believe. But that also would have been
12 narrowed later on in the investigation. I'm not sure.

13 Q. Fair to say it's best, I guess, to, like, over
14 ^ and then narrow what's important later?

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 Q. When you guys -- so you and Gaddis then go
17 back on February 5th; is that correct?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. Do you make contact with Jessica Tierney then
20 also?

21 A. I don't remember if we made contact with her.
22 I remember a maintenance man kind of showing us where
23 the video, like, box is to download onto the thumb
24 drive, because we had to download it ourselves.

25 Q. Okay. So as far as what video we have from

1 the apartment complex, would that essentially be
2 whatever you and Detective Gaddis placed on the thumb
3 drive?

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. Okay. Am I -- I guess does she have like
6 videos isolated and said "I just can't upload them," or
7 did she say, "Here is the whole video system. I can
8 figure it out. You guys take what you want"?

9 A. She said "Here is the whole video system." I
10 don't recall if the video may have been too big to
11 upload. I think that might have been an issue.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So it was just easier to put it on a thumb
14 drive.

15 Q. Okay. And then the video from Laser Center --
16 we are talking about two different videos, right? There
17 is a thumb drive from the apartment and then an
18 additional video from Laser Center; is that right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know what time frame was
21 collected from Laser Center?

22 A. I don't. It would have been similar to the
23 time frame from Emerald Pointe, though.

24 Q. Okay. Were you ever asked to, like, go back
25 and review the video to, I guess, see if you can see any

1 specific vehicles or people?

2 A. No. I was not asked to do that.

3 Q. Okay. Do you have any involvement in this
4 investigation after 2/5, before -- in between 2/5 and
5 2/16 of '21?

6 A. No, ma'am.

7 Q. Okay. As far as you know, have you ever had
8 any contact with Cornelius Whitfield?

9 A. No, ma'am.

10 Q. Okay. And on February 16th, what is your
11 involvement on that date?

12 A. And that's the one on Emerson?

13 Q. Yes.

14 A. So that one I was tasked about getting the
15 residential search warrant and assisting with the search
16 at the house.

17 Q. Were you on scene at all before Mr. Whitfield
18 was arrested?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. Were you at all responsible for making
21 the calls on, like, taking the tank to the house or
22 anything like that?

23 A. Oh, God no.

24 Q. Did you write the search warrant?

25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. Okay. And did you do the search warrant just
2 for the residence, or did you author any other search
3 warrants?

4 A. Just for the residence.

5 Q. Okay. How did you get tasked with that?

6 A. They split up tasks when anything big comes
7 out, just to make life easy.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And I just kind of happened to be available,
10 and they are, like, "Hey, go do this," and I said okay.

11 Q. So did you talk to -- like who did you get
12 information from in order to draft it?

13 A. A lot of the information was from 911, like,
14 notes and calls. Like, from the call notes. I'm sorry.

15 Q. Gotcha.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Then during the search of that residence, was
18 that video recorded?

19 A. The search itself?

20 Q. Uh-huh (Affirmative response).

21 A. No, ma'am.

22 Q. Okay. Was there video of the scene before the
23 search started?

24 A. Yes, ma'am.

25 Q. Okay. Was it St. Pete or PCO Forensics or a

1 combination?

2 A. It was St. Pete.

3 Q. Okay. Were you responsible for filling out,
4 like, the search warrant return?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. Do you happen to have a copy with you?

7 A. Not of the return, no, ma'am. I returned that
8 to the clerk of the court.

9 Q. And do you know what time you would have been
10 executing this search warrant?

11 A. So I began reading it at 20:58 hours. So
12 right after I finished reading is when we would have
13 begun the execution.

14 Q. And did you turn in the return on that one?

15 A. Yes, ma'am. On 2/19 of 2021.

16 Q. I don't have one on that. 2/19 of '21?

17 A. Yes, ma'am.

18 MS. MANUELE: Okay. Do you have a copy with
19 you or no?

20 MS. TAKTIKOS-DANZIG: No. It would be
21 upstairs in a big box.

22 MS. MANUELE: All right.

23 BY MS. MANUELE:

24 Q. On the off chance I have any questions about
25 that, I might ask you to come back in to ask a couple

1 questions about that, if there's anything I see on that.

2 A. No problem.

3 Q. Do you remember any --

4 You wouldn't know. Or do you know? Do you
5 remember anything specifically that stuck out on the
6 warrant return there?

7 A. No.

8 Q. After executing that warrant, were you asked
9 to do any additional follow-up on any items that were
10 recovered?

11 A. What do you mean?

12 Q. Like, I guess, were you asked to submit any
13 items for additional testing or submit any items for
14 comparison purposes or --

15 A. No, nothing like that. No.

16 Q. Okay. Would forensics have been on scene,
17 like, while you guys were searching?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. As far as you know, had you had any
20 contact with Darren Barnes before?

21 A. No, ma'am.

22 Q. Had you had any contact with Rodney or
23 Deronrick Green?

24 A. Not that I know of.

25 Q. Any other involvement in this, in Mr.

1 Whitfield's cases other than what we have discussed?

2 A. No, ma'am.

3 MS. MANUELE: I don't have any other
4 questions. Do you guys?

5 MS. TAKTIKOS-DANZIG: I don't either.

6 THE WITNESS: Thanks. I'll read.

7 (Concluded at 10:56 a.m.)

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE OF OATH

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

I, the undersigned authority, certify that
Frances Elena Johnson, personally appeared before me and
was duly sworn.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 26th day
of September, 2023.



Nathan F. Perkins, RDR
Notary Public - State of Florida
My Commission Expires: 7/18/2025
Commission No. HH 122841

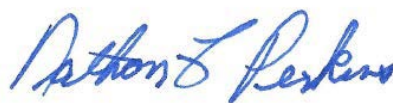
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

I, Nathan F. Perkins, Registered Diplomate Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the deposition of Frances Elena Johnson; that a review of the transcript was requested; and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Dated this 26th day of September, 2023.



Nathan F. Perkins, RDR

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

WITNESS' SIGNATURE PAGE

PLEASE ATTACH TO THE DEPOSITION OF FRANCES ELENA JOHNSON
TAKEN ON FEBRUARY 21, 2023, IN THE CASE OF STATE OF
FLORIDA VS. CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD.

Job No. FLA5759448

PAGE LINE CORRECTION AND REASON THEREFOR

I HAVE READ THE FOREGOING PAGES AND, EXCEPT FOR ANY
CORRECTIONS OR AMENDMENTS INDICATED ABOVE, I HEREBY
SUBSCRIBE TO THE ACCURACY OF THIS TRANSCRIPT.

FRANCES ELENA JOHNSON

DATE

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE

DATE

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

September 26, 2023
Officer Frances Elena Johnson
C/O: Theodora Taktikos-Danzig, Esquire
County Justice Center
eservice@flsa6.gov

Re: 2/21/2023 deposition of Frances Elena Johnson
State of Florida vs. Cornelius Trevon Whitfield

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter is to advise that the transcript of the above-referenced deposition has been completed and is available for review. Please email the signed errata sheet to transcripts-fl@veritext.com or sign below to waive review of this transcript.

It is suggested that the review of this transcript be completed within 30 days of your receipt of this letter, as considered reasonable under Federal Rules*; however, there is no Florida Statute to this regard.

The original of this transcript has been forwarded to the ordering party and your errata, once received, will be forwarded to all ordering parties.

Sincerely,

Nathan F. Perkins, RDR
Veritext Legal Solutions

Cc: Jessica Manuele, Esquire

WAIVER:

I, _____ hereby waive the reading & signing of my deposition transcript.

Deponent Signature

Date

*Federal Civil Procedure Rule 30(e)/Florida Civil Procedure Rule 1.310(e)

&	21-01099 1:1	accurate 8:3	available 13:9
& 20:19	21-6023 4:18	action 18:16,17	20:8
1	25003 17:20	actual 6:21	b
1 1:24	18:23	additional	b 2:16
1.310 20:24	26 20:1	11:18 15:9,13	back 3:16 10:17
103 8:11,15	26th 17:12	advise 20:7	11:24 14:25
105 9:11	18:19	affirmative 8:13	barnes 5:1
10:00 6:16	2nd 3:22 5:15	13:20	15:20
10:33 1:14	5:25 6:1,2	age 9:4	basically 7:15
10:56 1:14 16:7	3	agree 9:9,10	began 14:11
1100 1:16	3 2:11	amendments	begun 14:13
11:00 8:12	30 20:11,23	19:19	believe 6:22,22
122841 17:22	33762 2:4,7	answer 9:11	7:1 8:7 10:9,11
14250 1:16 2:3,7	3rd 9:20	antonio 4:11	best 10:13
1566510 1:8	4	apartment 5:16	big 11:10 13:6
16th 12:10	49th 1:16 2:3,7	8:1 11:1,17	14:21
17 2:12	5	apologize 8:9	body 8:22,24
18 2:13	5:00 6:9	appearances 2:1	box 10:23 14:21
19 2:14	5th 10:17	appeared 17:9	brother 8:5
1st 3:22	6	arrested 12:18	brown 4:11
2	6023 4:10,14	asked 8:7 11:24	building 6:21
2/16 12:5	7	12:2 15:8,12	c
2/19 14:15,16	7/18/2025 17:22	assigned 3:14	c 20:2
2/21/2023 20:5	9	3:17	call 6:6 13:14
2/5 12:4,4	911 13:13	assisting 12:15	called 6:2
20 1:24	a	attach 19:2	calls 12:21
2021 3:16,22	a.m. 1:14,14 6:9	attempted 3:21	13:14
5:15 14:15	6:16 16:7	attest 9:8	camera 8:22
2023 1:13 17:13	above 19:19	attorney 2:8	cameras 8:24
18:19 19:2 20:1	20:8	18:14,16	10:5
20:58 14:11	accuracy 19:19	attorneys 2:4	canvass 5:22
21 1:13 12:5		author 13:2	6:17
14:16 19:2		authority 17:8	canvassing 5:19
		authorized 18:7	

FLORIDA RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

Rule 1.310

(e) Witness Review. If the testimony is transcribed, the transcript shall be furnished to the witness for examination and shall be read to or by the witness unless the examination and reading are waived by the witness and by the parties. Any changes in form or substance that the witness wants to make shall be listed in writing by the officer with a statement of the reasons given by the witness for making the changes. The changes shall be attached to the transcript. It shall then be signed by the witness unless the parties waived the signing or the witness is ill, cannot be found, or refuses to sign. If the transcript is not signed by the witness within a reasonable time after it is furnished to the witness, the officer shall sign the transcript and state on the transcript the waiver, illness, absence of the witness, or refusal to sign with any reasons given therefor. The deposition may then be used as fully as though signed unless the court holds that the reasons given for the refusal to sign require rejection of

the deposition wholly or partly, on motion under
rule 1.330(d)(4).

DISCLAIMER: THE FOREGOING CIVIL PROCEDURE RULES
ARE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.
THE ABOVE RULES ARE CURRENT AS OF APRIL 1,
2019. PLEASE REFER TO THE APPLICABLE STATE RULES
OF CIVIL PROCEDURE FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION.

VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS

COMPANY CERTIFICATE AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Veritext Legal Solutions represents that the foregoing transcript is a true, correct and complete transcript of the colloquies, questions and answers as submitted by the court reporter. Veritext Legal Solutions further represents that the attached exhibits, if any, are true, correct and complete documents as submitted by the court reporter and/or attorneys in relation to this deposition and that the documents were processed in accordance with our litigation support and production standards.

Veritext Legal Solutions is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of client and witness information, in accordance with the regulations promulgated under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as amended with respect to protected health information and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, as amended, with respect to Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Physical transcripts and exhibits are managed under strict facility and personnel access controls. Electronic files of documents are stored in encrypted form and are transmitted in an encrypted

fashion to authenticated parties who are permitted to access the material. Our data is hosted in a Tier 4 SSAE 16 certified facility.

Veritext Legal Solutions complies with all federal and State regulations with respect to the provision of court reporting services, and maintains its neutrality and independence regardless of relationship or the financial outcome of any litigation. Veritext requires adherence to the foregoing professional and ethical standards from all of its subcontractors in their independent contractor agreements.

Inquiries about Veritext Legal Solutions' confidentiality and security policies and practices should be directed to Veritext's Client Services Associates indicated on the cover of this document or at www.veritext.com.