

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case Numbers: 21-01513CFANO/21-01099CFANO

STATE OF FLORIDA,

Plaintiff,

VS.

CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD,

Defendant.

DEPOSITION OF:

MEGHAN RULISON

TAKEN BY:

Counsel for the Defendant

DATE:

October 23, 2023

TIME:

2:25 p.m. - 2:33 p.m.

PLACE:

Pinellas Co. Justice Center
14250 49th Street - 1100-4
Clearwater, FL

REPORTED BY:

Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR
Notary Public, State of FL

Pages 1 - 12

APPEARANCES

THEODORA TAKTIKOS-DANZIG, ESQUIRE

THOMAS KOSKINAS, ESQUIRE

Assistant State Attorney

14250 49th Street North

Clearwater, Florida 34620

Attorney for the State of Florida

JESSICA MANUELE, ESQUIRE

MARGARET RUSSELL, ESQUIRE

Assistant Public Defenders

14250 49th Street North

Clearwater, Florida 34620

Attorneys for the Defendant

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EXHIBITS

(No exhibits were marked for identification.)

1 WHEREUPON,

2 DETECTIVE MEGHAN RULISON

3 (the deponent herein, being first duly sworn, was examined
4 and testified as follows:)

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY MS. MANUELE:

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

9 A Meghan Rulison. I'm a detective with the
10 Economic Crimes Unit for St. Pete Police Department.

11 Q And how long have you been with St. Pete PD?

12 A As a sworn, thirteen years.

13 Q what did you do before that?

14 A Call-taking just for a year-and-a-half.

15 Q Okay. And how long have you been in the
16 Economic Crimes Unit?

17 A Six years.

18 Q So we're here on a case from February 1st to
19 February 2nd of 2021. would you have been in Economic
20 Crimes at that time?

21 A Yes.

22 MR. KOSKINAS: This was not an economic crime
23 however.

24 THE DEPONENT: It sure was not.

25 MS. MANUELE: So we can get rid of that felony

1 murder then.

2 Q (By Ms. Manuele) We're here because you've been
3 listed as a witness in the State of Florida versus
4 Cornelius Whitfield regarding the homicide of Darren
5 Barnes beginning of February of '21. Tell me how you
6 became involved in the case.

7 A The Major Crimes sergeant, Demark, came over to
8 our office the morning of the 2nd, February 2nd, and asked
9 for assistance canvassing the nearby area of the apartment
10 complex where the offense was alleged to have occurred.

11 Q All right. So as far as being out at the
12 apartment complex prior to 9 a.m., you would not have been
13 out at that scene?

14 A Correct. I never even went into the scene. I
15 never went into the apartment complex. My involvement
16 included canvassing 74th Avenue, which is the avenue just
17 north of the complex. It just included knocking on all
18 the residential homes' doors on 74th Avenue and then a few
19 of the mobile homes in the Americana Mobile Home Park,
20 which is on the east side of First Street. So 74th Ave.
21 runs east to west. First runs north to south on the east
22 side of the apartment. Never went into the complex.

23 Q Okay. And the -- you indicate in your report
24 that you were inquiring as to whether residents had heard
25 or seen anything between 2350 on 2/1 and 0010 on 2/2,

1 correct?

2 A Correct.

3 Q where did you get that window?

4 A Sergeant Demark when he came in our office. He
5 didn't give us any cars or suspects to -- you know, that
6 they had. He just said we're looking for any doorbell
7 cameras around the area. So if you saw any vehicles or
8 people going up or down 74th or First in this 20-minute
9 timeframe, collect the doorbell camera footage.

10 Q Okay. And so when you were speaking to the
11 residents, were you specifically asking them for that time
12 period?

13 A Correct. And then there was one resident who
14 even went so far as to -- he just started looking on his
15 doorbell camera for the entire night before, and he only
16 saw activity at 5:09 p.m. on the 1st, and he didn't see
17 anymore activity until 7:37 a.m. on the 2nd. So that was
18 at 200 74th Avenue North. And then he recorded the 20
19 minutes that I inquired about and uploaded it to
20 evidence.com, but it showed nothing.

21 Q Okay. Was that --

22 A On the next page.

23 Q I was watching -- how many videos did you
24 upload?

25 A Just the one.

1 Q Just the one. So am I correct it's your body
2 camera trying to film his, like, cellphone video?

3 A It's my cellphone. As a plain-clothes
4 detective, I don't wear body camera. So it was my
5 department-issued cellphone, and yes, I recorded his Ring
6 app on his phone.

7 Q Okay. That wasn't like the 20-minute window
8 though? That was just a couple of seconds?

9 A It was 20 minutes, but he fast forwarded so it
10 would show there was nothing. So we didn't sit there and
11 do the whole 20 minutes. He was able to -- the owner of
12 that camera was able to kind of just fast forward the 20
13 minutes.

14 Q Okay. And what was captured -- the 1509 that
15 had captured activity, what was that? I'm sorry, 1709.

16 A I -- because it's not in the report, I don't
17 remember.

18 Q Was that -- but that part wasn't like recorded
19 from you, right?

20 A Right.

21 Q It was not?

22 A It was not. He just went through his phone and
23 was like, I see something at 1709. I said, well, that's
24 not the time period I was asked to collect evidence for,
25 so I'm not worrying about that because it was, what, five

1 hours -- seven hours before.

2 Q Then looking at Mr. Fabian at 190 74th Avenue
3 North, your report indicates that he was not home but
4 advised he would review his exterior camera between the
5 1150 and 1210 and would contact detectives if there is
6 anything to review. Contact you or did you give him one
7 of the homicide detectives' numbers?

8 A No, I gave him my contact information because
9 the homicide detectives are tasked with enough. So if I
10 canvass an area, I have the people follow up with me, but
11 he never got back to me with anything.

12 Q And is there any, like, either department policy
13 or personal policy where if, you know, in a situation like
14 this where they said we'll follow up but then don't that
15 you would reach out to them or attempt a second contact?

16 A If the homicide detectives come back around and
17 say, hey -- they read our reports, and if they ask us to
18 go out and follow back up because that person never
19 followed up on their own we would.

20 Q Were you ever asked to do any follow-up in this
21 case?

22 A No. I was just asked to make sure the Ring
23 video was uploaded to evidence.com from 200 74th Avenue.

24 Q Okay. Was any of your canvass, any of your
25 conversations with any of these individuals recorded?

1 A No.

2 Q And were -- other than what we've discussed and
3 what's included in your report, were you responsible for
4 any other aspect of the investigation?

5 A I was not.

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

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. As far as --

10 A I didn't know he had other things going on.

11 Q Okay. As far as you know, have you ever had any
12 contact with Rodney Green?

13 A Not to my knowledge.

14 Q Or Darren Barnes?

15 A Not to my knowledge.

16 Q Nothing that sticks out?

17 A Huh-uh.

18 MS. MANUELE: I don't have any other questions.

19 MR. KOSKINAS: That's it. Thanks for coming in.

20 (Deposition concludes at 2:33 p.m.)

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1 COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

2 STATE OF FLORIDA)

3 CERTIFICATE OF OATH

4

5 I, the undersigned authority, certify that
6 DETECTIVE MEGHAN RULISON personally appeared before me and
7 was duly sworn.

8 witness my hand and official seal this 20th day
9 of December, 2024.

10

11

Tamara M. Pacheco

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Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR
COMMISSION # 474485
EXPIRES: March 30, 2028

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ERRATA SHEET

IN THE CASE OF: STATE OF FL V. CORNELIUS T. WHITFIELD
NAME OF DEPONENT: DETECTIVE MEGHAN RULISON
CASE NUMBER: 21-01099CFANO

Please read the transcript of your deposition.
If you feel you need to make corrections, please note on
this page. DO NOT mark on the transcript itself.
Sign and date the transcript below.

PAGE	LINE	ERROR/AMENDMENT	REASON FOR CHANGE

Signature

Date

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

I, Tamara M. Pacheco, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the Deposition of Detective Meghan Rulison; 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.

Tamara M. Pacheco

Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR