

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA
21-01099-CF
21-01513-CF
SECTION M

STATE OF FLORIDA

Vs.

CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD Person ID: 1566510,
Defendant.

DEPOSITION OF SERGEANT SCOTT D. ELIZONDO

Taken on Behalf of the Defendant

DATE: March 18, 2025

TIME: 9:32 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.

PLACE: Pinellas County Justice Center
14250 49th Street North
Clearwater, Florida 33762

Examination of the witness taken before:

Jill Brown, CER & ACE
Executive Reporting Service
4699 Central Avenue, Suite 200
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713
(727) 823-4155
production@executivereporting.com

Executive Reporting Service

1 APPEARANCES:

2 ATTORNEY FOR THE STATE:

3 STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, 6TH CIRCUIT
4 P.O. Box 17500
5 Clearwater, Florida 33762-0500
6 eservice@flsa6.gov

7 BY: THOMAS D. KOSKINAS, ESQUIRE

8 ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENDANT:

9 OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, 6TH CIRCUIT
10 14250 49th Street North
11 Clearwater, Florida 33762-2800
12 juliaseifer-smith@flpd6.gov
13 lamarkmcgreen@wearethehope.org
14 margaretrussell@co.pinellas.fl.us

15 BY: JULIA B. SEIFER-SMITH, ESQUIRE
16 LAMARK M. MCGREEN, ESQUIRE
17 MARGARET S. RUSSELL, ESQUIRE
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1	INDEX	
2	WITNESS	PAGE
3	SERGEANT SCOTT D. ELIZONDO	
4	Direct by Ms. Seifer-Smith	4
5	Direct by Ms. Russell	63
6	CERTIFICATE OF OATH	69
7	CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER	70
8	ERRATA SHEET	71
9		
10		
11	EXHIBITS	
12	PARTY DESCRIPTION	PAGE
13	(None)	
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 THE REPORTER: We are on the record. Today
3 is March 18th, 2025, and the time is 9:32 a.m.

4 Sergeant, please raise your right hand.
5 THEREUPON,

6 SERGEANT SCOTT D. ELIZONDO
7 was called as a witness and after having been first
8 duly sworn, was deposed and testified as follows:

9 THE REPORTER: Thank you.
10 You may begin.

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION

12 BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH:

13 Q. Can you please state your name for the record?

14 A. Sergeant Scott Elizondo.

15 Q. Okay. We're here in the matters of Cornelius
16 Whitfield. My name is Julia Seifer-Smith, assistant
17 public defender. Together with Lamark McGreen and
18 Margaret Russell, we represent Mr. Whitfield in these
19 matters. Also, present is Thomas Koskinas from the
20 State Attorney's Office.

21 I think we subpoenaed you under both of the
22 case numbers for which Mr. Whitfield had been arrested
23 for homicide. Yes, we did. So our court case numbers
24 are 21-01099-CF and 21-01513-CF. Those correspond
25 obviously to different police case numbers with the

1 City of St. Pete. Are you familiar with those cases?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And did you review anything in
4 connection with your involvement in those cases before
5 being sworn in for the deposition this morning?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Can you tell me what you reviewed?

8 A. A follow-up report I wrote in reference to the
9 first case and also some of the other reports that were
10 in there.

11 Q. Okay. Was there anything else that you felt
12 as though you needed to take a look at before we went
13 any further in the depo?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. And if you need to refer to anything --
16 I know you don't have anything in front of you --
17 please just let us know. We have our full case files.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. Okay. Can you give me a little bit of your,
20 like, professional background and history with the
21 department?

22 A. I started with the St. Petersburg Police
23 Department in 2001, I guess. It was a long time ago.
24 I was in patrol for about seven years, and I went and
25 was a member of the Street Crimes Unit for about one

1 year. I was in Special Investigations for, I believe,
2 seven. Then I transferred to the Major Crime Unit as a
3 detective. I worked there for maybe three years, and
4 then I was promoted to sergeant. I went off to the
5 street, but then I came back to Major Crimes as the
6 sergeant.

7 Q. And when did you come back to Major Crimes as
8 a sergeant?

9 A. I believe it was 2020. I think during the
10 COVID -- during COVID.

11 Q. Okay. Any previous law enforcement
12 experience?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. Any military experience?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And did you do any kinds of, like, higher
17 education regarding criminal justice (cross talk) --

18 A. I mean, I've had --

19 Q. -- data?

20 A. -- various trainings over the course of my
21 career.

22 Q. Okay. Did you receive any additional training
23 to be a supervisor?

24 A. We did go through supervisor training from the
25 department, but that was all.

1 Q. In kind of broad strokes, what are the
2 responsibilities for supervisors, specifically Major
3 Crimes?

4 A. What we would do is -- for instance, in
5 this -- in this particular case, we would have
6 sergeants -- we had two sergeants. One would be on
7 call, and he would receive calls from supervisors on
8 the street at any time of the day. They would let us
9 know what was happening, if we needed to come in or
10 not.

11 So in this case, like, an early morning call,
12 they call me up; they let me know what's happening, and
13 I make the determination as a supervisor in Major
14 Crimes how many people I'm sending in, who I'm sending
15 in, and where.

16 Q. Okay. So I guess let's just jump right into
17 it. How did you get involved in this case and when?

18 A. I was called early morning at home, while I
19 was asleep. I believe it was Lieutenant Mario that
20 called me, said there was a -- there was a homicide up
21 in the apartments off of 4th Street. I think at the
22 Emerald -- Emerald Bay.

23 Q. Is that usually how you're alerted to the
24 potential involvement for your division?

25 A. Yes, we get a -- unless we're working and

1 we're there and we hear it over the radio, we'll get a
2 call from usually the watch commander. A lieutenant,
3 or whoever's the highest ranking officer on the street
4 at that time will call us and let us know what's
5 happening.

6 Q. Any other information you remember receiving
7 from the lieutenant?

8 A. Just that there was one person which was dead.
9 Another person was possibly shot in the facial area,
10 and that's pretty much it. That's pretty much what
11 they gave us.

12 Q. I think you said that Emerald Bay Apartments.
13 Are those familiar to you for any reason?

14 A. They're just a large apartment complex that we
15 respond to as an agency a lot.

16 Q. What kind of responses?

17 A. Just random domestics. It's just there's --
18 it's a big population of people live in that. A lot of
19 them are younger. So we'll get, you know, disorderly
20 stuff, domestics, random things like that.

21 Q. Like, drug stuff too?

22 A. I would assume so, but I've never worked in
23 that district. I can just tell you what I'm aware of.

24 Q. Okay. So it sounds like your awareness is
25 kind of like more peripheral?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. And so what did you do once you got
3 that call?

4 A. So as a supervisor, we have a list of
5 detectives who are also on call, because they're not
6 always on call.

7 Q. Fair.

8 A. We give them a couple weeks off here and
9 there. So I have a list of who's available, and I make
10 calls to get these people in. And on that particular
11 case, I decided to call in Detective Mensah, who would
12 be the lead detective.

13 Q. How did you decide that, that she was going to
14 be the lead?

15 A. We go through -- so we kind of keep track. We
16 keep track of who has what cases. So if somebody has
17 an active homicide case, let's say -- let's say you're
18 a detective. You get one today. Well, I'm not going
19 to give you another homicide case, probably, for a
20 little bit because you've got a lot of work to do.

21 So the next detective down the line who
22 doesn't have a homicide case, they're going to get the
23 next one. So it's just kind of how we do it. We kind
24 of try and keep everybody fresh, because you can't --
25 you can't work two or three homicides at one time.

1 Q. Okay. About how many people were in the unit
2 at the time, if you remember?

3 A. I'm going to guess around 14 to 16, in that
4 area.

5 Q. Okay. So you made Detective Mensah the lead.
6 Do you know how many calls you put out to have people,
7 like, available for that kind of work, just after
8 midnight?

9 A. I -- I don't know how many people I called.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Usually, I'll call in at least three because I
12 like to have -- you got to have a -- one as the lead
13 detective. You got to have a scene detective, who's
14 going to be just in charge of taking care of the scene.
15 You have a -- another detective, which will be an aide
16 to the lead detective. So it's always usually at least
17 three. If we need a fourth, then I'll call in a
18 fourth, but I can't tell you how many offhand.

19 Q. Okay. Besides Detective Mensah, do you recall
20 anybody else that you called in?

21 A. Detective Webster.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Well, now she's Detective --

24 Q. Marzo?

25 A. Yeah, former Detective Marzo.

1 Q. Okay. And what else did you do before
2 actually going anywhere? Did you make any other calls?
3 Receive any other information?

4 A. I did call -- on these -- on these cases, when
5 we get these calls, I will have to call my immediate
6 supervisor and let them know, "Hey, we're going in for
7 a homicide." And I think at that time it was Major
8 Fuerst who was in charge of Major Crimes.

9 Q. Okay. Is that just, like, an informative
10 call? Like, "FYI, we have a homicide" before going in?

11 A. Yes. Because the chain -- the chain of
12 command, all the way up to the chief, Chief Holloway,
13 they want to know when a homicide occurs in the city.
14 So I'll contact my supervisor; he'll contact the
15 assistant chief; the assistant chief contacts the main
16 chief.

17 Q. Okay. And what did you do next after making
18 these calls?

19 A. Just headed in.

20 Q. Okay. Do you recall receiving any kind of
21 additional information on your way in?

22 A. I may have gotten another call or two.
23 That -- that happens where they'll let me know -- like,
24 because it takes us a while to get to where we need to
25 be. I may have gotten another call where they might've

1 told me, "Hey, one's going to the hospital," and let me
2 know that, but that would be it.

3 Q. Okay. And were you going into the station or
4 headquarters, or were you actually going to the
5 apartment complex?

6 A. I think that one I went right to the apartment
7 complex. I don't really recall, because it just
8 depends on what's happening and how far along the case
9 is going. Sometimes everything's contained in that one
10 area, and we don't have any witnesses, so we're right
11 there.

12 But in this particular case, we had one person
13 that was deceased; one that went to the hospital. We
14 also had one person that was a possible witness. So I
15 still think I went right to the apartment. I can't be
16 certain, though. I could've stopped at headquarters on
17 the way in.

18 Q. Okay. When you did get to the apartment, do
19 you remember what kind of observations you made upon
20 your arrival?

21 A. I mean, there was a deceased person right
22 inside the door. There was blood throughout the
23 apartment on the floor, some by the sink.

24 Q. So it sounds like you went into the apartment?

25 A. I did go in, yes.

1 Q. Who did you go in with?

2 A. I'm not sure. I believe it would either be
3 former Detective Marzo or lead Detective Mensah.

4 Q. Okay. Do you know if you had a warrant at
5 that time?

6 A. No, we didn't have a warrant at that time.

7 Q. And was Crime Scene with you? And I think at
8 this time, was it PCSO, or did you have techs from the
9 department?

10 A. I'm -- I'm not sure. It was -- I think it was
11 PCSO at that time.

12 Q. Okay. And do you recall if forensics were
13 with you during that entry?

14 A. I don't remember.

15 Q. Okay. Do you recall anything else about,
16 like, your walk-through of the apartment?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. Do you recall seeing any kind of, like,
19 paraphernalia associated with drug use? Drug sales?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. Any observations outside of the
22 apartment?

23 A. There was blood on the outside of the
24 apartment as well. Like, just kind of in the area of
25 the door, but that's all I remember.

1 Q. When you got there, you had mentioned that
2 somebody had been taken to the hospital. Was that
3 person already gone from the apartment complex?

4 A. Yeah, they weren't there when I got there.

5 Q. Okay. How about the potential witness or
6 witnesses? Were they still there?

7 A. I don't recall, though. I don't recall him
8 being there. If he was, I didn't see him.

9 Q. Okay. Did you speak with any patrol officers
10 or supervisors?

11 A. It's just when I -- when I get there
12 initially, they'll tell me again what happened, what
13 they got. And --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- that's pretty much it.

16 Q. Do you recall what the update was for you once
17 you arrived?

18 A. No.

19 Q. And do you remember who you actually spoke
20 with?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. You said that your recollection in
23 terms of going into the apartment was with, I think,
24 Detective Marzo?

25 A. Possibly, yeah. I wouldn't have gone in there

1 by myself.

2 Q. Okay. Was Detective Mensah there that you
3 remember, or no?

4 A. She probably would've been there too, but I
5 don't recall exactly.

6 Q. Did you delegate any particular roles to them
7 in terms of, like, lead crime scene (cross talk)?

8 A. Yeah, as soon as I make that call. When I
9 make that initial call, I let them know what they're
10 going to be so they're already prepared on what they
11 have to do. So Detective Mensah would've known on her
12 way in, she's going to be the lead. And whoever else I
13 made the scene detective or the aide to the lead, they
14 would know their -- their roles already.

15 Q. Okay. So you don't tell them then what to do?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. You leave it up to them in terms of,
18 like, knowing what they have to do relative to their
19 particular role as, like, crime scene detective or lead
20 detective?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Okay. After the walk-through in the
23 apartment, do you know what you did next?

24 A. I probably left to the station. I wouldn't
25 stay there the whole time.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Normally, we would just have it roped off.
3 We'd have officers in uniform standing by to keep a
4 perimeter. But at that point, I let my detectives work
5 and do what they need to do.

6 Q. Okay. When you went to the station, did you
7 do anything else involved in this case?

8 A. On that night? I mean, I would just -- it
9 would be random things a supervisor would need to do.
10 Like, if one of my detectives said, "Hey, we need this
11 out here," then I would make a call to get whatever
12 they needed done. So I can't remember anything in
13 particular, though.

14 Q. Okay. And is it typical for you, as the
15 sergeant, to write a report in connection with the
16 case?

17 A. It just depends. It depends on your
18 involvement. Most of the time, as a sergeant, my
19 involvement is minimal in the actual investigation, at
20 least from my supervisory ways. I don't -- I don't
21 micromanage. I trust my people, so I let them do what
22 they need to do. Then they'll come back later to me if
23 they have questions or if we have some things we need
24 to do. But I don't actually tell them their job.

25 Q. Okay. So it sounds as though the St.

1 Petersburg Police Department was alerted to a homicide
2 in the very early morning hours of February 2nd, 2021.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. And obviously, the investigation is, like,
5 pretty full bore for, like, the next hours or maybe
6 days after that.

7 A. Days usually.

8 Q. During that first day -- so, like, the full
9 day of February 2nd, were you going back and forth to
10 the scene at all or having any contact with civilians
11 at the apartment complex?

12 A. I was not personally, no.

13 Q. Okay. Were you more supporting your team,
14 like, from headquarters?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Okay. Was there anything that you recall
17 doing on the 2nd to support your team? I know you
18 mentioned some, like, sort of, like, supervisory or,
19 like, administrative type things that you don't
20 necessarily recall, but do you recall any specific,
21 like, research or investigations that you yourself
22 undertook?

23 A. I don't remember that, no.

24 Q. Okay. Now, it looks like, at least per the
25 report that you wrote on 22nd of February, that --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- you had some, like, pretty, I guess, like,
3 more material involvement the following day on the 3rd?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And do you remember why that was --

6 A. That was because --

7 Q. -- and how it came about?

8 A. -- at the time, Assistant Chief --

9 (Telephone ringing)

10 A. Sorry. I'll call them back. That was
11 because, at the time, Assistant Chief Dente was in
12 charge of that particular area, and he requested me to
13 go speak with the mother of Cornelius.

14 Q. It seems like kind of an unusual thing to
15 request a sergeant to do. Can you --

16 A. I agree.

17 Q. -- explain?

18 A. I can't.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. That was Assistant Chief Dente, and he was
21 somewhat peculiar.

22 Q. Okay. It looks like it wasn't just you, but
23 also Sergeant Demark who were asked to do it.

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Or did you kind of tag Demark in for this?

1 A. I think I kind of tagged him in.

2 Q. Okay. This seems like something that would
3 normally be a detective's role?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. I know that the detectives were also
6 doing, like, investigative work as well. Was it, like,
7 a staffing issue, if you know?

8 A. No, it was not.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. It was simply a directive from the assistant
11 chief at the time.

12 Q. Okay. How did you find Ms. Harilal?

13 A. She worked at -- at the time, she was working
14 at Eckerd College.

15 Q. How did you know that?

16 A. I can't -- I don't know. I can't tell you how
17 I found that out. I'm assuming it was one of my
18 detectives that said, "Hey, she works here."

19 Q. Okay. And what was the purpose of going to
20 speak with her?

21 A. To try and locate her son, who we were getting
22 a warrant for.

23 Q. Okay. And do you know why the warrant was
24 being sought for her son?

25 A. For homicide.

1 Q. Okay. And do you know why? Like --

2 A. Yeah, because he shot the guy in the head, I
3 think.

4 Q. Are you familiar with -- well, are you
5 familiar with, like, the underpenning -- underpinning
6 rather, like, evidence that developed him as a suspect?

7 A. No, I'm not.

8 Q. Okay. Do you recall conversations with your
9 detectives about what they had learned?

10 A. I mean, I don't recall any specific
11 conversation. But at the time, we had already known
12 that we were looking for Cornelius Whitfield because
13 there was a witness. I believe he had stated that he
14 brought Cornelius to that apartment, and his -- I think
15 it was his brother who was one of the victims.

16 And that witness left, and it wasn't long
17 after that his brother, I think, called him and said,
18 "Hey, Cornelius did this," or something like that. So
19 we were already looking for Cornelius for this.

20 Q. Okay. So it sounds like that's your
21 recollection of how --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- probable cause was developed for an arrest
24 warrant?

25 A. Well, there was more to it, I'm sure, but

1 that's just kind of the gist.

2 Q. By the time that you were contacting
3 Cornelius's mother, though, do you recall if you knew
4 much more in terms of the evidence that would've
5 supported an arrest for Cornelius, or no? And I know
6 this is tough because it's four years later.

7 A. I mean, we were in the process of looking for
8 him. He was -- if he wasn't already the prime suspect,
9 then he was a huge person of interest at that time.

10 Q. Okay. Did you phone Ms. Harilal or go and see
11 her in-person at the college?

12 A. I don't know. I think I went to see her
13 in-person the first time.

14 Q. Okay. And was that with Demark, or were you
15 by yourself?

16 A. No, Sergeant Demark was there.

17 Q. Okay. And where did you find her?

18 A. At Eckerd College.

19 Q. Okay. Like, in a classroom? Or --

20 A. In a building near the baseball field. I
21 think it's for their janitorial services and things
22 like that.

23 Q. Okay. And do you recall much of your meeting
24 with her?

25 A. I remember talking to her about -- asking her

1 if she knew where her son was. Because I always
2 believe it's best to just let them know, "Hey, this is
3 what we have, and we need to find him" and talked to
4 her about it like that. And I remember her saying that
5 she didn't know where he was. I didn't necessarily
6 believe her at the time.

7 But we talked for a while, and I ended up
8 giving her my phone number, and I got her phone number
9 in return, I believe. But anyways, I gave her my phone
10 number to let me know if she finds out where he is.
11 Because she was -- she said she would try and find him,
12 and if she finds out where he is, she would let me
13 know.

14 Q. Okay. The conversation that you had with Ms.
15 Harilal, was that recorded in any way? Like, video or
16 audio?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. Is there a reason for that?

19 A. It was just a conversation. There's no --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. At the time, we didn't -- we didn't wear body
22 cameras or anything. I don't know if the detectives
23 are right now.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. But those are just conversations you have with

1 people.

2 Q. Okay. And you didn't, like, purposefully
3 bring, like, an audio recorder or anything like that?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Do you recall about how long you spoke
6 with her?

7 A. Maybe half an hour. I mean, I would -- I know
8 I remember walking outside to make a call to -- it was
9 either Assistant Chief Dente or Major Fuerst in
10 reference to my talking to her, but -- so there was
11 some intermittent times when I'd walk outside, make a
12 phone call, and come back in. It's probably about half
13 an hour total.

14 Q. Was there anybody else with her? Like, a
15 colleague, a supervisor, or was it just the three of
16 you?

17 A. There was a supervisor there, and he let us
18 use a -- another room in there. I don't know his name,
19 though.

20 Q. Was he present for the conversation?

21 A. Some of it, yeah, I think. I don't know if he
22 was there the whole time, but he was there for some of
23 it.

24 Q. Do you recall the name of that person?

25 A. No, I do not.

1 Q. Okay. And, like, per your report, Ms. Harilal
2 told you that her son, Cornelius, had been -- and this
3 isn't in quotes, but just the phrase is withdrawn. He
4 wasn't eating, and he had become extremely agitated.
5 Was this something that she volunteered, or had you
6 asked her about his behaviors, if you remember?

7 A. I don't remember. It could've been -- it
8 could've been either way.

9 Q. But it sounds as though it was notable enough
10 that you recorded this later --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- in terms of, like, memorializing what she
13 described --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- of him? Okay. Do you recall if she
16 described anything to you about what his extreme
17 agitation was and what that looked like?

18 A. No, I just -- I recall her -- because he had
19 previously got out of prison, I think, not long before.
20 Like, maybe a year -- the year before he got out. And
21 since that time, he'd been the way she described.

22 Q. Okay. So your recollection is that she had
23 described this behavior as kind of being, like, from
24 his release from prison until the present day when you
25 were speaking with her?

1 A. Well, I don't know if it's the cause of the
2 release, but from -- from that time, that's how he had
3 been.

4 Q. Okay. So it was certainly different from how
5 she'd previously known him?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And did she describe anything else in
8 terms of, like, the withdrawn behavior, the not eating,
9 anything like that?

10 A. No, just what I have in my report.

11 Q. Okay. Was he familiar to you? Prior to his
12 name just, like, arriving in the investigation, once
13 you saw his name in the investigation, did you recall
14 having had any kind of prior contact or --

15 A. On the original -- on the first case, we're
16 talking about?

17 Q. Yeah, we're talking about the first case.

18 A. No, I did not recognize his name.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I did find out later that he was involved --
21 or he was involved with his girlfriend -- I think it
22 was -- in a previous case, not long before that, maybe,
23 like, six months or so before that, where his
24 girlfriend got arrested for possible attempt homicide
25 or something along those lines.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But I never -- I didn't recall him.

3 Q. Okay. So you didn't have any prior contact
4 with him that you know of?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. And you had mentioned that he was
7 released from prison. Was this something that Ms.
8 Harilal told you about, or is this something that you
9 knew once his name had arisen in the investigation?

10 A. No. Once -- once we got the name and the
11 detectives started working, that's part of what they do
12 is they'll do background on -- on these individuals.
13 So that came to us that way.

14 Q. Okay. So you would've known that prior to
15 speaking with her?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Can you describe, if you remember, what
18 her appearance and demeanor was like when she was
19 speaking with you about him?

20 A. She -- I mean, she seemed normal. She did
21 seem concerned. But the way I felt about it was her
22 concern didn't trump her being a mother -- is the way I
23 felt. So it just seemed like she did have some
24 concerns, but she was also concerned about her son.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. I don't know where the balance is between her
2 concern for what we needed to do and what she felt, but
3 I think it was more towards her son. She was trying to
4 give him the benefit of the doubt at the time, I
5 believe.

6 Q. Are you describing that as, like, a kind of
7 protective type of disposition towards her son?

8 A. Not -- not so much protective, but it just
9 felt like she was -- she would give me a little bit of
10 information, like how she felt he was -- his behavior
11 was. But I also felt she was not really being super
12 sincere when she told me that she didn't know where he
13 was.

14 Q. Okay. You had mentioned stepping out from the
15 conversation a few times to speak with some folks over
16 the phone. When you did that, did Sergeant Demark stay
17 in the conversation with her?

18 A. I believe he stayed with her. I don't know if
19 he -- what -- that they talked at all.

20 Q. Okay. You described this conversation as
21 taking place over the course of maybe 30 minutes, an
22 exchange of numbers, and then you and Sergeant Demark
23 left Eckerd College. Is that right?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. When you parted, was there any kind of, I

1 guess, like, directive to her or, like, request of her
2 to do anything?

3 A. We just asked her to call -- call me --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- if she found out where he was.

6 Q. Okay. And did you and Demark discuss anything
7 regarding the information that you learned from Ms.
8 Harilal?

9 A. Well, I'm sure we did, but I can't recall what
10 we discussed.

11 Q. Okay. Do you know what, if anything, you did
12 after you spoke with her?

13 A. I went back to the station where we continued
14 the investigation.

15 Q. Okay. And it seems as though you had contact
16 with her again later that day?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. Can you describe how that occurred?

19 A. I was directed by Assistant Chief Dente again
20 to bring her back to the station and talk to her in an
21 interview room.

22 Q. Okay. Was there information that Assistant
23 Chief Dente would've received that would've merited
24 that request?

25 A. I don't know.

1 Q. Okay. But you weren't told that. You were
2 just told to contact her?

3 A. I was told to bring her back because we were
4 still trying to locate Cornelius.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. But he wanted me to bring her back and
7 interview her in an interview room.

8 Q. Okay. So similar to what you had done earlier
9 that day, just a more formal setting?

10 A. More -- more formal. He also wanted it
11 recorded, and he wanted me to try and possibly get a
12 layout of the home for tactical reasons later, if we
13 needed it.

14 Q. Okay. Can you tell me how you contacted her
15 in order to (cross talk)?

16 A. I think I just called her.

17 Q. Okay. And I'm assuming that's, like, a cell
18 phone that you called?

19 A. It was either -- it was my issued cell phone
20 or what -- my desk phone.

21 Q. Okay. And did she speak with you over the
22 phone again when you called?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. And did she agree to speak with you?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And how did you get her to the station?

2 A. Myself and Sergeant Demark picked her up in
3 one of our detective vehicles. We just pulled up on
4 the street, and she walked out and walked to the car.

5 Q. So, like, a unmarked car?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. While you were waiting for her to walk out,
8 did you see anybody at the home?

9 A. I don't remember seeing anybody.

10 Q. Okay. And when you made contact with her
11 again, how did she seem?

12 A. Same as before, same as I previously talked to
13 her.

14 Q. Okay. Any kind of conversation occur in terms
15 of, like, the transport from her home to the station?

16 A. Nothing special, because I knew they wanted me
17 to interview her in the interview room and be recorded.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It was probably just small talk. I remember
20 talking to her about, actually, ham hocks and -- and
21 food that her and her grandmothers -- or her and her
22 mother and her grandmother would -- would often
23 prepare, so.

24 Q. Okay. And how does the, like, video system
25 work in the interview room?

1 A. So it's a -- it's just a room probably a
2 little smaller than this. There is one camera, and it
3 feeds into a closed circuit television system that
4 records and also you can watch from a different area of
5 the department.

6 Q. Okay. So what, you'd, like, turn it on when
7 you walk in the door kind of thing?

8 A. You can, or you can turn it on from a computer
9 outside the --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- interview room. But I can't tell you how
12 it was turned on that day.

13 Q. Was there any part of the conversation with
14 Ms. Harilal that was not recorded in that room?

15 A. I don't think so.

16 Q. Okay. And about how long were you with her
17 that you remember?

18 A. I would guess maybe half an hour, 40 minutes.

19 Q. Did you review the conversation before you
20 came in for deposition?

21 A. I did not.

22 Q. Okay. Do you have a general recollection of
23 the conversation that you had with her?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Was her, like, demeanor, appearance, behavior

1 consistent with what you had described earlier, or was
2 there any kind of change in her behavior?

3 A. No, I -- I think it was pretty similar.

4 Q. Okay. Was there any additional information
5 that you had learned from the first time that you spoke
6 with her that day to this conversation that you shared
7 with her in terms of your investigation or concerns,
8 things like that?

9 A. We talked about how we were in the process of
10 getting a warrant for his arrest at that time, and that
11 we wanted to -- we wanted to get him into custody
12 without any problems, without any violence, without
13 anybody else getting hurt. And because of what she had
14 said previously about his behavior that she provided to
15 us and what had just occurred that we were getting a
16 warrant for, we had -- I had concerns that something
17 else could happen, and I didn't want to see anything
18 happen to anybody at -- at her home.

19 Q. Okay. Did she appear -- did that change at
20 all during the conversation in terms of, like, her
21 concerns? Because it sounded as though she had
22 previously not been particularly afraid, like, more
23 protective. Did she appear as though, like, that was
24 resonating with her in any particular way?

25 A. I think -- I think it was very similar to the

1 first conversation. She -- she -- I mean, she heard
2 what I would say. She -- and she would listen to me,
3 but then she would say she didn't -- you know,
4 basically, she didn't know where he was. She hadn't
5 seen him.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. So it was another one of those things where,
8 you know, I'm trying to -- I'm trying to reach her, but
9 I just think that maybe the mother side of her wouldn't
10 let me.

11 Q. And I think she described to you, again, like,
12 some of his behaviors, like, at home, right? Like,
13 some of her -- what she described as, like, I guess,
14 kind of concerning behaviors, right?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Like the agitation, the not eating, the, like,
17 lack of engagement --

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. -- with the people that, like, loved and cared
20 about him?

21 A. Family members.

22 Q. Yeah. And did she tell you any other kind of
23 information about the home or the people who lived in
24 it?

25 A. She did -- she did explain that she had her

1 mother and her grandmother living in there, and there
2 were often children in there, including one little
3 girl. I can't remember her name or age. But there
4 were often children in there. They would come over
5 during the day, and then they would leave, almost like
6 helping out the other family members or whatever.

7 But she also mentioned that her and Cornelius
8 stayed in the same room, which was further back in the
9 house. But anything else I did -- that's when I
10 started asking her a little bit more about the, I
11 guess, design, the -- the layout of the house, so --

12 Q. Right.

13 A. -- if we needed it later, we'd have that
14 information.

15 Q. And that was specifically something that
16 Assistant Chief Dente had asked you to do?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Get the layout? Okay.

19 Now, what she had described to you in terms of
20 his behaviors, did that kind of strike you as behaviors
21 consistent with somebody who's having a mental health
22 crisis?

23 A. I don't know if it's a mental health crisis.
24 I'm not a doctor. But I can tell you when somebody --
25 when we're investigating somebody we believe murdered

1 someone else and shot somebody else in the face, and
2 one of the persons he shot was a friend and then we
3 talk to the family members, especially the mom, and
4 she's stating that he's got -- he's being despondent,
5 he's not eating, I mean, I have concerns. I don't know
6 if he's -- I don't know if he's having a mental health
7 breakdown or what, but it's obviously a situation
8 that's not good.

9 Q. Right. But you've been doing this a long
10 time.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And you were on patrol for a long time.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Safe to assume that you've had a lot of
15 contact with people who are, like, not having their
16 best days?

17 A. Sure.

18 Q. Some of whom may have mental health issues?

19 A. Sure.

20 Q. And you've received training with the
21 department in terms of, like, engagement with people
22 who are having mental health issues?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. The behaviors that she described, would
25 those tend to indicate that somebody is, like, not

1 doing great in terms of their mental stability,
2 especially the extreme agitation? Those were your
3 words that you used based on what she described.

4 A. Yes. But, see, I -- I don't -- I don't
5 really -- there's a lot of people that do have mental
6 health issues, and I understand that. That is for
7 sure. But there are also people that just have a
8 demeanor, and that's just who they are. So I don't
9 know if I would consider him, at the time, having a
10 mental health crisis or if this is just who he is,
11 because I didn't know him personally.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So I -- I don't -- I'm not sure how to answer
14 that question.

15 Q. Well, I just -- and you may or may not know
16 this, but it seemed as though what Ms. Harilal had
17 described to you was that this behavior was different
18 to her normal son.

19 A. Before he was in prison?

20 Q. Right.

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Okay. And this behavior seemed as though it
23 was also concerning to her. Is that right?

24 A. Yes, I would say so.

25 Q. Did she describe to you that it was concerning

1 to anybody else in the home or who had contact with the
2 home?

3 A. I don't remember her saying anything like
4 that.

5 Q. Okay. And did she describe to you any kind of
6 attempts that family made to help her son?

7 A. I don't remember anything like that.

8 Q. Okay. And was it yourself and Sergeant Demark
9 who were involved in this second conversation with her?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. And do you know if anybody was watching
12 the conversation? Because you said that it was
13 available by a live feed.

14 A. I'm pretty certain there are probably a bunch
15 of people watching it --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- because it was very odd for two sergeants
18 to --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- interview someone involved in a homicide.

21 Q. Any idea who those people were who were
22 watching?

23 A. I can tell you Assistant Chief Dente was
24 watching. I believe probably Major Fuerst was in
25 there, because he would've been there, but I can't tell

1 you if he was or not.

2 Q. Okay. Did you get any information from Ms.
3 Harilal that you did not know before going into that
4 conversation with her?

5 A. I don't -- I don't recall any new info.

6 Q. Okay. Were you left with any particular
7 impressions from Ms. Harilal that you didn't have
8 before?

9 A. Nothing new. I still felt that she was
10 holding back and not actually telling me everything.

11 Q. Okay. Based on that, was there anything that
12 you were going to do in terms of your investigation or
13 direct your detectives to do in terms of their
14 investigation?

15 A. No. Â

16 Q. Okay. When you left the conversation with Ms.
17 Harilal, did you ask her to do anything? Or --

18 A. I again asked her to -- you know, if you know
19 where he's at, we can -- if you can help us find him,
20 let us know, please.

21 Q. Okay. And in terms of leaving the
22 conversation, did you then have to transport her back
23 to her home?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. And was that again, like, yourself and

1 Demark in the car?

2 A. I think it was myself and Demark.

3 Q. Okay. Did you take her back to her home?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And at the home, any observations of
6 anybody else at the house?

7 A. No, we never went in the house. We stayed in
8 the car and pulled up, and that was our interaction
9 with her right there. She got in the car; she got out
10 of the car.

11 Q. Okay. And you didn't see anybody, like, at
12 the door, windows, anything like that?

13 A. I don't remember seeing anybody.

14 Q. Okay. What did you do next after that meeting
15 with her?

16 A. Just went back to the station.

17 Q. Okay. Did you ever review the conversation --
18 like, the video conversation?

19 A. Yeah, back then I did. I --

20 Q. Was that just for the writing of the report?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. So was it just that one time review,
23 like, (cross talk)?

24 A. I don't know. I'm not sure.

25 Q. Okay. Do you recall doing anything else in

1 connection with the Barnes murder investigation?

2 A. The Emerald -- Emerald Pointe one?

3 Q. Yes.

4 A. I don't -- nothing in particular. Just the --
5 again, if the sergeant needs something, just the random
6 things (indiscernible) we have to do it.

7 Q. Okay. And then about two weeks later, on the
8 16th, was the second set of homicides.

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Is that when you were kind of like re-engaged
11 in terms of, like, investigations regarding Mr.
12 Whitfield, or had you had, like, kind of constant
13 information from your detectives during their
14 investigation?

15 A. I mean, during that time, we're -- we're
16 constantly going over the information and trying to,
17 you know, develop the case and the investigation and
18 trying to locate where he might be.

19 Q. Okay. But you weren't doing, like, any active
20 investigations, such as, like --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- conversations with witnesses?

23 A. No, because as a sergeant, that's not the only
24 case that my detectives have. I got to deal with the
25 other cases as well as they need them.

1 Q. So how did you get involved with that kind of
2 second --

3 A. So the second one happened -- we usually work
4 either 7:00 to -- at the time, we work 7:00 to 3:00,
5 8:00 to 4:00, that kind of time. And I think I had
6 just -- it happened just before 4:00 that we got this
7 call, and I was already heading on my way home when I
8 heard it come out. And then I immediately got a -- a
9 call. I believe it was from Acting Chief -- or
10 Assistant Chief Dente that he wanted me to respond to
11 the hospital to speak with Cornelius' mother who had a
12 gunshot wound.

13 Q. Okay. So you heard first on the radio. Is
14 that right?

15 A. Yes, we have radio in our cars, so I heard it
16 going out. But I didn't know at that time who was
17 involved or what was happening.

18 Q. Okay. And do you recall what you heard via
19 the radio?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Just there would -- because you'll have your
23 radio on scan and you'll hear something come over. I
24 can't tell you exactly what it was.

25 Q. So just, what, like, indications of a homicide

1 or shots?

2 A. A shooting.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. A shooting at the time.

5 Q. Okay. And how soon after did you receive the
6 call from Assistant Chief Dente?

7 A. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. It wasn't long,
8 though.

9 Q. Okay. He had directed you to the hospital.
10 Which hospital?

11 A. So originally, I don't know if he told me to
12 go to St. Anthony's or if somebody else told me it was
13 St. Anthony's, but I was responding to St. Anthony's at
14 the time because that's where the information I had is
15 where she was going.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. While getting there, I got more information.
18 Again, I can't tell you from who or where, but she was
19 at Bayfront.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So then I went to Bayfront.

22 Q. Okay. And when you got to Bayfront, did you
23 make contact with Ms. Harilal?

24 A. I did.

25 Q. Okay. And where was that?

1 A. In the emergency room.

2 Q. Okay. Was she able to speak with you?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And what did you talk about?

5 A. I wasn't -- again, directed by Chief Dente, I
6 wasn't -- I wasn't going there to talk to her on any
7 specifics about what occurred. It was more about
8 possible a tactical entry, any information we could get
9 about who might be in the house, what they were
10 wearing, if there were any children in there. Just
11 more -- my -- the information I was looking for was
12 tactical in nature for a possible SWAT team
13 interdiction.

14 Q. Okay. Were there any other officers or
15 colleagues with (cross talk)?

16 A. Yes, there was -- Detective Harris was there.
17 He was actually doing the interview of -- of
18 Cornelius's mother for purposes of the investigation.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. There was another officer there, too, in
21 uniform. I don't recall his name, though.

22 Q. Were the officer and Harris there prior to
23 your arrival?

24 A. I think so. I think they were there before
25 me.

1 Q. Did you overhear any of the conversation that
2 Harris had with Ms. Harilal?

3 A. I'm sure I did, but I don't recall it.

4 Q. Okay. And what can you tell me about your
5 conversation with her?

6 A. Again, I was just asking her more about, you
7 know, who was in the house, where they were, what they
8 were wearing, so we could differentiate. Since she had
9 said that her brother was shot in the house, we wanted
10 to make sure we knew who was who, because we didn't --
11 I didn't -- me in particular, I didn't know her
12 brother. I didn't know if he looked like Cornelius or
13 not. So it's one of those things where you want to be
14 able to identify the people in the home.

15 Q. Okay. So in telling you who was in the home,
16 what did she say?

17 A. She said her -- her grandmother, her mother,
18 her brother, who she had gone into the house with,
19 should be in the house, and there was possibly a little
20 girl in there.

21 Q. Did she say anything about what she had seen
22 in the house?

23 A. I don't -- she did, but I wasn't concerned
24 really about that because my -- my purpose at that time
25 was to get tactical information. So I was just --

1 there was certain things I wanted to know. I wasn't
2 really thinking about the investigation part.

3 Q. Okay. Did you ask her any questions about
4 Cornelius?

5 A. I might've asked her if Cornelius was in
6 there. If we did that, I don't know.

7 Q. Do you recall her responses?

8 A. I don't.

9 Q. Okay. Do you recall her describing him that
10 day?

11 A. I think she said he was wearing all dark,
12 maybe. He was -- he was wearing all dark, and that's
13 the best of my recollection.

14 Q. You don't remember anything else?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Anything about his behavior? What he said?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. And was she receiving treatment from
19 medical personnel while you spoke with her?

20 A. Off and on, yes.

21 Q. Okay. Did she appear as though she was in
22 pain?

23 A. Not as much as you would think from being
24 shot. I think she was shot, like, up here in the
25 shoulder. Not as much as you would think. I kind of

1 assumed it was the adrenaline, and she wasn't really
2 feeling anything yet. Plus, they may have given her
3 some pain relievers, but she didn't seem to be in that
4 much pain at that point.

5 Q. Okay. Was she responsive to your questions?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Like, did she appear as though she was
8 under the influence of any kind of pain reliever?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. And how about her just kind of general
11 demeanor? Was she upset? Was she (cross talk)?

12 A. I mean, she'd just got shot, so she was kinda,
13 I feel like, in disbelief of what happened. Like, she
14 couldn't believe this happened, but she was pretty
15 calm.

16 Q. Okay. And was she also responding to
17 questions from Detective Harris at the same time?

18 A. I mean, maybe. I don't recall how that went.
19 I just remember I would wait -- I would wait until
20 Detective Harris was speaking, when he was done, and
21 then I would for a -- like, a pause, like a natural
22 pause in whatever he was doing to get the information I
23 needed, so.

24 Q. Okay. And what were you doing with the
25 information that you needed?

1 A. Calling back to -- I believe it was Chief
2 Dente to let him know the information.

3 Q. Okay. Do you know if Ms. Harilal had any
4 family members or friends who were with her?

5 A. At that moment?

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. No.

8 Q. No, you don't recall, or no, there was nobody
9 there?

10 A. There was nobody in the room at that time. It
11 was medical personnel, the uniformed officer, and
12 Detective Harris, from what I remember.

13 Q. Okay. And were you paying much attention to
14 the work that Detective Harris was doing?

15 A. Not in particular. It wasn't what I was there
16 for. It's not what my directive was.

17 Q. Okay. About how long do you think you spent
18 with Ms. Harilal?

19 A. Not long, really. Maybe -- I mean, I was at
20 the hospital for a while because we were expecting,
21 hopefully, to get more patients, which we didn't get.
22 But my interaction with her, maybe 10, 15 minutes at
23 the most.

24 Q. Okay. And you said you made a phone call to
25 Assistant Chief Dente?

1 A. (Cross talk) it was Assistant Chief Dente,
2 yes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Because he was -- I think he was there. I
5 wasn't at the scene. I think he was there with the
6 SWAT commander.

7 Q. Okay. And so the information that you passed
8 on to him was just, like, who was in the home, which
9 was her brother --

10 A. Who -- yeah, we wanted to know who -- who was
11 still in the home that she knew of --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- if she could tell us where they were and
14 the clothing -- if she could recall any clothing.

15 Q. Okay. I'm sorry if you had already given me
16 this information. So who did she say that she knew was
17 in the home?

18 A. I thought it was -- I think she said it was
19 her -- her mother, her grandmother, her brother, and
20 possibly the little girl.

21 Q. Okay. Did she say that Cornelius was in the
22 home?

23 A. I mean, I didn't ask her, "Is Cornelius in the
24 house?"

25 Q. Did you just assume that he was?

1 A. I -- I don't know. I'd have to look back at
2 the video.

3 Q. What video?

4 A. There should be a video of the officer that
5 was there with body cam.

6 Q. Okay. I see. Do you recall the name of that
7 officer?

8 A. I do not.

9 Q. Did you ask that officer to, like,
10 specifically record your conversation with Ms. Harilal?

11 A. No, he had it on. Because the only reason I
12 knew he had it on was because later when he came out,
13 he asked about turning it off, because at the time,
14 officers were told they couldn't turn off their body
15 cam until the sergeant told them to turn it off.

16 Q. Okay. And what did you say when he asked you
17 that?

18 A. Well, that was after -- when he came out to
19 me, that was -- he just kind of -- I don't even
20 remember how he asked, but he's like, "Can I turn this
21 off?" I'm like, "Yeah," because at that point, we were
22 just waiting for any other people to come in.

23 Q. Okay. So I guess it kind of just depends on
24 where the officer was pointed at the certain point in
25 the conversation?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. It sounds like you didn't actually ever have
3 an opportunity to review that?

4 A. I did review that.

5 Q. Oh, you did?

6 A. Yeah, I did review that, but I can't tell you
7 exactly -- you know, it records audio, too, so I'm sure
8 there's a bunch of audio on there that I remember.
9 But --

10 Q. When did you review the body cam?

11 A. That, I reviewed maybe a few weeks ago.

12 Q. Okay. And you said you stayed at the
13 hospital, it sounds like, for some time?

14 A. Not -- not too long once -- because I stayed
15 at the hospital until I was told that Cornelius had
16 walked himself out of the house and was in custody and
17 that they had gone in, and there -- we would have no
18 more patients coming to the hospital, and that's when I
19 left.

20 Q. Okay. Before you received that information,
21 did you receive any other information from your
22 colleagues?

23 A. Not -- nothing in particular I can remember.
24 I had my radio on, so I was listening to what was going
25 on. But --

1 Q. Okay. And once you received information that
2 Cornelius had walked out of the home and was taken into
3 custody, what did you do?

4 A. Oh, I still waited until they gave me
5 information about the patients because I was letting
6 medical personnel there know if they would be getting
7 any more and what those injuries would be. And so
8 when -- when we found out that there would be no more
9 patients coming to the hospital, I informed the medical
10 personnel, and that was pretty much it for me.

11 Q. Okay. What did you do at that point?

12 A. Then I left and went back to headquarters and
13 just did supervisory duties while they were
14 investigating.

15 Q. Okay. And is that what you did for the
16 remainder of the 16th, like, in the afternoon?

17 A. Yeah. I don't recall doing anything in
18 particular.

19 Q. Did you go to Ms. Harilal's home that day?

20 A. I don't think I did. I can't be certain, but
21 I don't believe I went there that day.

22 Q. Okay. Did you go the following day?

23 A. I don't know if it was the following day. It
24 was either the following day or the day after when I
25 did go back with a bunch of other detectives. The home

1 was -- after we had gotten a warrant for the house, the
2 home was sort of pack rat-ish, I guess you could say.
3 There was a -- a lot of things that were in there.
4 They just kept everything, so we did end up having to
5 move some of that stuff outside of the home, and I was
6 there for that.

7 Q. Okay. Did you assist in moving things out of
8 the home?

9 A. I mean, it was -- yeah, I did. I mean, I
10 helped pick up just random things. There were, like,
11 boxes that were nothing. We were just trying to move
12 them out of the -- the home.

13 Q. And sorry. What was the purpose of moving
14 these things out of the home?

15 A. We -- there were multiple purposes. Some of
16 the purposes was -- the main purpose was for evidence
17 collection, looking for any evidence. So as the
18 techs -- the forensic technicians would go in, they
19 would finish with something, and they'd need things
20 moved so they could continue on. That's what we were
21 doing.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We were also concerned that we didn't know if
24 there could be other deceased people in there at the
25 time because of how much stuff was in there.

1 Q. Got it. Okay. And did you yourself discover
2 anything that you believe to be of an evidentiary
3 value?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Were you there during any kind of
6 discoveries of potential evidence?

7 A. I mean, I -- I probably was, but I don't -- I
8 was --

9 Q. Don't recall at this time?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. And about how long were you there at
12 the scene?

13 A. For that?

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. I -- I would -- I can't even -- I don't know.
16 Maybe an hour or two. I don't know.

17 Q. Any contact with any family members, either
18 during that time or after?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. Did you ever have contact with
21 Cornelius himself?

22 A. When he was finally interviewed, yes.

23 Q. Okay. Can you tell me about that?

24 A. He was interviewed by Detective Harris and
25 Detective Mensah at the station. And when he was -- in

1 his room, we had an officer stationed outside of the
2 room who was armed because we did not want -- we didn't
3 want any firearms in the interview room when they're
4 doing the interview.

5 So at some point when the interview was
6 complete and -- well, when the -- when most of the
7 questions were done being asked by Detective Harris and
8 Detective Mensah, we would have a technician come in to
9 take photos and process.

10 And when we did that, I was standing next to
11 the uniformed police officer, and the door opened and
12 Cornelius was there, and he looked directly at the
13 firearm of my uniformed officer. And that was very
14 concerning to me. So I told her to step back, get back
15 further, and I stood in the doorway as a barrier
16 between Cornelius and that officer.

17 Q. Were you armed at the time?

18 A. I don't recall if I was or not.

19 Q. And you said the detectives that had gone in,
20 so Harris and Mensah, to the interview room --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- that they were not armed?

23 A. I -- I can't be a hundred percent certain, but
24 I think that was one of the cases where we decided that
25 we didn't want any firearms in the interview room.

1 Q. Okay. Did you discuss your observations of
2 Cornelius looking at the firearm with any of your
3 colleagues?

4 A. Just -- I think I may have said something.
5 Yeah, I'm sure I did. But as soon as I saw it, I told
6 the officer, "You need to back up. Back up right now."

7 Q. Okay. And what happened when you did that?

8 A. Nothing. He just -- Cornelius kind of stood
9 there, and my detectives, I think they understood what
10 I was doing. I didn't have to say it. But I think
11 they kind of understood what -- what was happening and
12 what I was doing that for.

13 Q. Okay. And what happened next with Cornelius?
14 Was he being taken somewhere for further processing or
15 what?

16 A. No. The tech was in there and taking photos
17 and -- and taking whatever evidence or -- she needed
18 to collect.

19 Q. Okay. The conversations or the interrogation
20 that Harris and Mensah did of Cornelius, that was
21 recorded because it was in an interview room. Is that
22 right?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. So same thing, like, there's a live
25 feed happening while they're in there?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Was anybody watching that?

3 A. Yes. I think I might've even been watching it
4 too.

5 Q. Do you recall anything of that interview?
6 Like, observations that you made, like, while it was
7 happening?

8 A. I just remember Cornelius speaking in circles,
9 not really being forthwith, just not really giving any
10 info.

11 Q. Do you recall anything of his behavior or his
12 mannerisms?

13 A. Nothing in particular.

14 Q. Okay. And you said that you -- like, the door
15 opened, and about how close was Cornelius to, like,
16 yourself and the other officer when you made those --

17 A. Well --

18 Q. -- observations of him?

19 A. Again, so the interview room is probably half
20 this size.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. If that's the door here to the -- to the
23 actual interview room, you would be in the spot a
24 little bit further that way, though, where Cornelius
25 was.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So when we opened the door, I was at the
3 doorway, and the officer was right there as well.

4 Q. Was Cornelius still sitting down?

5 A. No, he was standing at that point, I think.

6 Q. Okay. Handcuffs? No handcuffs?

7 A. I don't recall.

8 Q. Okay. So it sounds like he was still several
9 feet away from you and the officer at that time?

10 A. Yeah, maybe seven feet.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Seven feet to ten feet.

13 Q. And you said that you were able to see that he
14 was looking at the firearm that was, I'm assuming,
15 like, on the kind of belt of the officer next to you?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Did you notice anything about, like,
18 his facial features? Like, his eyes at that time?

19 A. The only thing I remember noticing is his
20 eyes. Because I was standing basically directly across
21 from him. The officer was to my right, I believe, and
22 he didn't look at me. He looked down. And she's
23 shorter than me. He looked right down where her belt
24 was and her gun side, and he looked right in that area,
25 and that's when I told her she needs to back up.

1 Q. Okay. Any other observations of him after
2 you, like, told her to back up?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. Did you ever hear him say anything?

5 A. He tried to -- while this was going on, he was
6 being somewhat uncooperative, and he tried to get a
7 rise at me by swinging his penis around, and I just
8 ignored it.

9 Q. Okay. That's kind of an odd behavior,
10 especially given the circumstances.

11 A. I mean, he's wearing a jumpsuit, and he
12 doesn't really care at that point, in my opinion. He
13 knows he's going to jail, so it's not an odd behavior
14 for some people in that position.

15 Q. He was still in the interview room at the
16 time?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. And were you there when he was taken
19 out of the interview room?

20 A. Yeah, I stood in the same area while he was
21 escorted out.

22 Q. Okay. Did you talk to any officers,
23 detectives, about, like, your concerns? Like,
24 observations that you had made?

25 A. Yeah. I know I did. I can't tell you --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- who. I'm pretty sure I probably told that
3 to everybody -- is because I was saying this is why I
4 did that.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So --

7 Q. Did you hear about him, like, looking at other
8 people's gun belts?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. Did you talk to Mensah and Harris after
11 their interrogation of Cornelius?

12 A. I'm sure I did.

13 Q. Okay. Do you remember anything about that
14 conversation?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay. Any further work after that time or any
17 further involvement in that investigation?

18 A. I did listen to a few jail calls that he would
19 make with his mom, and I also listened to some phone
20 calls from his girlfriend, who was in jail, talking to
21 her mom, but nothing -- nothing evidentiary came out of
22 that.

23 Q. Okay. Anything notable? Not necessarily of
24 evidentiary value, but anything that you thought was
25 interesting?

1 A. The news got to Georgia pretty quickly, only
2 because one of the calls that his girlfriend made to
3 her mom, who was in Georgia, the mom told her daughter
4 what had happened. That was an interesting call, only
5 because I was surprised that she had not known yet,
6 because I know she was here in Pinellas County Jail as
7 well, so.

8 Q. So it was, like, Mom in Georgia breaking the
9 news --

10 A. To her daughter who was in jail --

11 Q. -- (cross talk) in jail?

12 A. -- yeah.

13 Q. Okay. But it sounds like you didn't -- like,
14 you didn't discover anything?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay. How many jail calls would you say you
17 listened to?

18 A. I don't know. Maybe 10. I don't know.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Usually, it's the first few where you are
21 likely to find some information, but I don't recall
22 anything that came out of it.

23 Q. Okay. Did you have any further contact with
24 Ms. Harilal?

25 A. I don't believe so, no.

1 Q. Okay. Do you know if Assistant Chief Dente
2 had any kind of contact with her or her family?

3 A. I don't Know.

4 Q. Okay. Anything further that you do -- or did,
5 rather, in the investigations into these cases?

6 A. I can't think of anything else.

7 Q. Did you ever have any contact with Darren
8 Barnes' mother, who was the victim -- the deceased
9 victim in the first case?

10 A. I don't think so.

11 Q. Okay. And as the sergeant for -- like, the
12 supervisor of the investigators involved in these
13 cases, did you review the reports that were written by
14 the detectives who investigated?

15 A. So I'm sure I did, but I don't know if I
16 approved those because each sergeant has their own
17 detectives that are assigned to them. And at the time,
18 I don't know -- I think Jason was assigned to --
19 Detective Harris was assigned to Demark. I can't
20 remember if Detective Mensah was assigned to me or not.
21 But they would give the sergeant, whoever's detective
22 it was, they would usually give final approval on those
23 reports.

24 Q. Okay. What are you looking for, like, as a
25 supervisor in the reports for approval?

1 A. Pertinent information, everything that was
2 involved. But there's so many reports that go into a
3 homicide case. The lead detective has their
4 information, and they're kind of putting it together,
5 putting the whole case together. But you also have all
6 these other supplements that -- where there may be
7 specific info that the detective will --

8 Q. Incorporate?

9 A. -- refer to, yeah, or incorporate in their
10 report, so it just depends. You know, I want to make
11 sure -- when I review the reports, I want to make sure
12 the main points are obviously there. And if they have
13 other information that's involved in another supplement
14 from somebody else, that they note that, that, "Hey,
15 this is where I got that information from," that kind
16 of thing.

17 Q. Okay. Do you recall any kind of corrections
18 that you made either to your own report or to anybody
19 else's reports in connection with these investigations?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. I know that's --

22 A. It was a while ago.

23 Q. -- quite a while ago. In terms of the writing
24 of your report, it looks as though it was written on
25 22nd of February, 2021, so after both of the homicides

1 had occurred. Is there a reason that it wasn't written
2 earlier, even though your conversation with Ms. Harilal
3 was on the 3rd of February?

4 A. No. No reason.

5 Q. Okay. And who would've reviewed your report?

6 A. Well, as a sergeant, I can approve it, but
7 then it goes to another group of report readers --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- who do a final approval on it.

10 Q. Okay. And the case agents or, like, the lead
11 detective would have access to all the reports that are
12 written in connection with a particular --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- case number. Is that right?

15 A. Correct.

16 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Okay. All right. I don't
17 think I have any further questions. How about my
18 colleagues? Yes?

19 DIRECT EXAMINATION

20 BY MS. RUSSELL:

21 Q. I just have a couple for you.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. I'm sorry. I just want to ask you about the
24 jail calls.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. In general, how many cases would you say you
2 get to the point of reviewing jail calls? So, for
3 example, would you say it's 1 out of every 10 cases or
4 9 out of --

5 A. Me, as a sergeant?

6 Q. -- every 10 cases? Yes.

7 A. As a sergeant?

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. Just ones that -- I review ones that I just
10 found particular interest in. This was a high profile
11 case where we had the same suspect shoot and kill two
12 people previously and then his family members on
13 another date. So that one, I just kind of decided to
14 listen to them on my own. There's no set rule.
15 There's cases where I will never listen to jail calls.

16 But as a detective, if you're asking me as a
17 detective, I pretty much reviewed every jail call I
18 could get from any of my cases, and I think most of the
19 detectives do that.

20 Q. So in this case -- and I would just say in
21 this case going back from sort of the present time to
22 then, right, if we're talking about --

23 A. Present, you mean today?

24 Q. Right. Going back to --

25 A. Okay. Yeah.

1 Q. -- 2020 or 2021, or if you want, we can go
2 from 2020 --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- forward. How do you get access to those
5 jail calls?

6 A. You have to request access through -- well,
7 again, I haven't done this in a while. So you get
8 access through the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

9 Q. And when you reviewed the jail calls in this
10 case, did you sort of start at minute point zero 1 and
11 listen to the entire call all the way through, or do
12 you sort of listen for a little bit and skip through?

13 A. I think I just listened to them, so listened
14 to them all the way through. Because they're normally
15 not very long. They're normally short conversations,
16 maybe less than 10 minutes.

17 Q. And I know that Ms. Seifer-Smith asked you how
18 long you listened to the jail calls and your answer was
19 hours? Minutes?

20 A. Just -- I don't know if it was that quick.
21 I -- I don't -- I listened to jail calls maybe -- I
22 don't know. I can't tell you. I mean, I -- when she
23 asked how many -- how many calls I listened to, maybe
24 10. But I can't tell you how many times or how long
25 those conversations were. That was a long time ago.

1 Q. Okay. So as you sit here now, you can't tell
2 me whether you spent an afternoon reviewing jail calls
3 or whether --

4 A. I would just sit -- no, I --

5 Q. -- it was more like an hour?

6 A. Yeah, it -- I mean, in this particular case,
7 I -- I really -- I really can't -- I don't know. It's
8 not like I sat there all day and listened to jail call,
9 jail call, jail call, jail call. It would be during
10 some times when I didn't have anything in particular
11 going on. Then I would -- you know, I might pull up
12 some jail calls to listen to. So maybe 10, 15 minutes
13 at a time. And who knows, if you combine them all,
14 maybe an hour. I -- I don't -- I really don't know.

15 Q. In this case, what were you hoping to find
16 when you listened to the jail calls?

17 A. I mean, anytime you listen to a jail call on a
18 homicide case, you're hoping that they're going to say
19 something that they probably shouldn't say for their
20 case. And that's what you're looking for. I mean,
21 it's not like I'm going to find any physical evidence.
22 This is all going to be them maybe confessing or saying
23 something. That's what you're looking for.

24 Q. And in this case, was there a confession on
25 those calls you listened to?

1 A. I don't recall one.

2 Q. Do you recall any exculpatory information that
3 came to light during the jail calls?

4 A. I don't recall any.

5 Q. If there had been, would you have noted that
6 or brought it to someone's attention?

7 A. I mean, yeah, if -- if you -- so if I hear
8 anything on a jail call -- and it's not my case, right?
9 This is -- I'm just a supervisor. This would be the
10 detective's case. I would immediately tell that
11 detective, "Hey, you need to listen to these calls."
12 And that would -- that would be it.

13 Q. In this case, did you give that directive to
14 either Detective Mensah or Detective Harris?

15 A. I don't recall that.

16 MS. RUSSELL: Thank you.

17 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Mr. Koskinas, any
18 questions?

19 MR. KOSKINAS: That's it. Thanks, Scott.

20 THE WITNESS: All right.

21 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We'll reserve your right
22 to read?

23 THE WITNESS: Sure.

24 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yeah? Okay. Thanks very
25 much.

1 MR. KOSKINAS: All right. Thank you.

2 THE REPORTER: Off the record at 10:40 a.m.

3 (Deposition concluded at 10:40 a.m.)

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

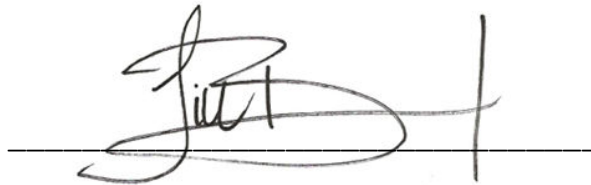
25

CERTIFICATE OF OATH

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF PINELLAS

I, Jill Brown, the undersigned authority, certify that
SCOTT D. ELIZONDO appeared before me via videoconference on
March 18, 2025, and was duly sworn.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 31st day of
March, 2025.



Jill Brown

Notary Public, State of Florida

Commission No.: HH 132691

Commission Expires: 5/23/2025

Produced Identification X Type of Identification Produced FL DL X Appeared X physically

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

STATE OF FLORIDA

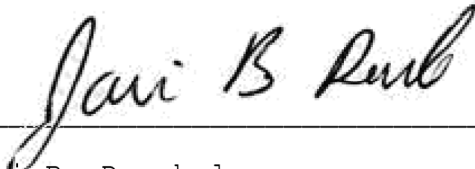
COUNTY OF PALM BEACH

I, Jani B. Drushal, transcriber for the Executive
Reporting Service:

Do Hereby Certify that the foregoing transcript, pages
1 through 71, inclusive, constitutes a true and correct copy
of the proceedings (transcribed to the best of my ability).

I FURTHER CERTIFY I am neither an attorney or counsel
of any of the parties hereto, nor a relative or employee of
any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor
financially interested in the event of said cause.

DATED this 31st day of March, 2025.



Jani B. Drushal

AAERT CER-2242

Executive Reporting Service

4699 Central Avenue

St. Petersburg, Florida 33713

1 IN RE: DEPOSITION OF SCOTT D. ELIZONDO
 2 TAKEN: 3/18/2025 IN THE CASE OF
 3 STATE OF FLORIDA VS. CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD

ERRATA SHEET

DO NOT WRITE ON TRANSCRIPT - ENTER CHANGES

4	-----			
5	Page No.	Line No.	Change	Reason
6	-----			
7	-----			
8	-----			
9	-----			
10	-----			
11	-----			
12	-----			
13	-----			
14	-----			
15	-----			
16	-----			
17	-----			
18	-----			
19	-----			
20	-----			

21 Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the
 22 foregoing document and that the facts stated in it are true.

23 _____

24 DATE SCOTT D. ELIZONDO

25