

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY
CASE NUMBERS 2101099CFANO
2101513CFANO

STATE OF FLORIDA,

Plaintiff,
vs.

CORNELIUS WHITFIELD,
Defendant.

_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: PRETRIAL

BEFORE: The Honorable Philip Federico
Circuit Court Judge

DATE: September 16, 2025

PLACE: Courtroom 7
Pinellas County Justice Center
14250 - 49th Street North
Clearwater, Florida 33762

REPORTER: Robin Fraley
Registered Professional Reporter

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P R O C E E D I N G S

THE COURT: All right. Mr. Whitfield has joined us on his matters, the two cases that have the multiple counts. One has a -- one count of murder in the first degree. The others have several counts.

2101099 and 2101513.

I guess we're seeing -- the State is seeking the death penalty. We're -- I guess we set the first one for trial, which would be the precursor as it were?

MR. KOSKINAS: Correct.

THE COURT: All right. So how are we doing on making progress as far as discovery is concerned?

MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We're making a good deal of progress. We have most of the depositions completed for that first case. We have depositions to be set at the end of October and into November.

One of the witnesses is a little bit difficult to get ahold of. He is in Federal custody. So Mr. Bradlow is working on that. That is Deronick Green. He is set for a deposition tentatively at this point on November 18th. So --

1 THE COURT: Is March still a realistic trial
2 date on the one?

3 MR. KOSKINAS: We don't have March --

4 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: March is for the death
5 penalty case.

6 MR. KOSKINAS: Yes.

7 THE COURT: For the --

8 MR. KOSKINAS: Right. It is set in January.

9 THE COURT: Oh --

10 MR. KOSKINAS: -- and, yes, I think we are
11 chugging right along on that one. The inmate is
12 in Federal custody. We have got that resolved,
13 but we have been in touch with the Federal
14 government about securing his presence here. So
15 that should not be an issue.

16 THE COURT: Yes. I missed the 1/12 date.
17 The initial case is 1/12.

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

19 MR. KOSKINAS: Yes.

20 THE COURT: The other one is 3/23.

21 MR. KOSKINAS: Correct. I can't speak to the
22 progress on the March date. I'm not sure they are
23 going to be ready for that, but I think all focus
24 is on the January date at this point. And for the
25 record, that one is 2101099.

1 THE COURT: Besides the murder case in Jan,
2 is there other aggravators?

3 MR. KOSKINAS: Umm --

4 THE COURT: Are you alleging HACK (SIC)?

5 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No.

6 MR. KOSKINAS: So I -- it wasn't HACK (SIC),
7 but, you know, I haven't viewed --

8 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: There are also three
9 contemporaneous homicides.

10 THE COURT: I know.

11 MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah.

12 THE COURT: I'm remembering that.

13 MR. KOSKINAS: Right. I don't want to speak,
14 Judge -- we did file a notice of the aggravators
15 and I don't have that before me. It wasn't
16 something that I personally thought of -- wasn't
17 involved.

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: There is one.

19 MR. KOSKINAS: So there is two or three
20 aggravators listed on that, and the question is
21 whether we are going to amend that after the
22 conviction for this, potentially.

23 THE COURT: Are there -- I guess we can -- I
24 was going to ask about mitigation, but, I mean,
25 have a better handle on the aggravation. If the

1 aggravators are outside the facts of the case,
2 then that makes it more complicated for you guys,
3 right?

4 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I suppose.

5 THE COURT: No?

6 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

7 THE COURT: Looks like prior violent and
8 other stuff. There would be -- I mean, I have
9 always perceived it that way. It's within the
10 facts of the case.

11 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: It is.

12 THE COURT: Then it makes it less complicated
13 to try and deal with what the aggravators are, and
14 then you are still --

15 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: There is --

16 THE COURT: -- have to work out whatever your
17 mitigation is.

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: There is one aggravator.

19 THE COURT: Which one?

20 Right now there is only one listed?

21 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Prior violent felony.

22 THE COURT: Based on this case that we are
23 going to try, right?

24 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Well, we don't have a
25 statement of particulars. So it can refer to the

1 previous case or it can refer to the
2 contemporaneous case. That is how that aggravator
3 unforchantly works.

4 THE COURT: I'm aware.

5 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I'm sure your Honor is.
6 It doesn't seem as though the State is necessarily
7 aware of that. So it does not matter what occurs
8 in January in terms of their filing of a
9 superceding notice.

10 THE COURT: Are you basing it on a prior
11 violent and potentially the one in January or is
12 just it just the one in Jan or --

13 MR. KOSKINAS: Well, that is certainly an
14 aggravator, if he is convicted of that, Judge.

15 THE COURT: Agreed. But if I'm going to tell
16 them they have got to get ready by March, then
17 having the most knowledge they can get, so that
18 they can figure out the best way to try and rebut
19 that, would be helpful, to make sure we stay on
20 the same -- the right timeframe.

21 MR. KOSKINAS: Listen, I'd love to push them
22 to be ready in March and I don't want to speak for
23 them, Judge, but I don't think the focus -- and I
24 know they are in trial right now, and I don't
25 think the focus has been on the March date. I

1 think the focus is for them to try and get ready
2 for the January date. So I can't speak for them,
3 but do I realistically believe they are going to
4 say -- announce ready for the March date?

5 No.

6 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: And I certainly can't
7 announce ready --

8 MR. KOSKINAS: And --

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I certainly cannot
10 announce ready today.

11 THE COURT: I'm well aware of that.

12 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Would your Honor like an
13 intervening pretrial in December, after many of
14 the depositions have been taken?

15 I don't -- I don't know what the State is
16 asking right now. I'm not sure what your Honor is
17 asking, if your Honor is asking anything right now.

18 THE COURT: I am.

19 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Okay.

20 THE COURT: And I don't know -- I don't know
21 whether -- I mean, if we are going to try the --
22 the aggravator early next year and then late next
23 year we are going to be trying the other one, I
24 may have some overarching concerns about stuff.

25 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Fair.

1 THE COURT: It has nothing to do with the
2 trial itself.

3 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Understood.

4 THE COURT: I'm assuming you are going to
5 want the same jurist to decide all of these
6 issues --

7 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

8 THE COURT: -- before we get to a resolution?

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Of course, we would.

10 THE COURT: And I --

11 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Especially, given the
12 pendency of this case from 2021. I mean, I think
13 that your Honor is probably -- your Honor and Mr.
14 Whitfield I think are the two parties that have
15 been on case the longest, very unfortunately.

16 THE COURT: All right. I think probably we
17 should retrench to December and then go from
18 there.

19 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Great.

20 THE COURT: I think that makes the most
21 sense. Because there is nothing -- even what I'm
22 referring to, I haven't made any decisions or
23 there are no decisions to be made. We might have
24 more clarity by December.

25 Let me see. The week before the holiday is

1 like 16 or 17, or we can do the week before that, 9
2 or 10, which are Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

3 Any preference?

4 MR. KOSKINAS: I'll leave it to the Defense,
5 Judge. I'm available.

6 THE COURT: 9 or 10, 16 or 17; are any of
7 those good?

8 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I would prefer the 16th or
9 17th, if possible.

10 THE COURT: All right. Do you want to go
11 12/16?

12 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

13 THE COURT: All right. So let's leave them
14 set as they are.

15 Is that date okay with you, Counselor?

16 MR. KOSKINAS: That date is fine, Judge.

17 THE COURT: All right. I was asking --

18 MR. KOSKINAS: Oh, I'm sorry.

19 THE COURT: -- her other half.

20 MS. RUSSELL: That is fine.

21 THE COURT: Okay. So let's go 12/16 at 8:30
22 for a pretrial. The trial dates will remain.
23 We'll get together and see how we are doing and
24 make some decisions at that point. Okay?

25 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

1 MR. KOSKINAS: Yes.

2 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

3 MR. KOSKINAS: Thank you.

4 (PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

I, ROBIN FRALEY, REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL
REPORTER, certify that I was authorized to and did
stenographically report the foregoing proceedings
and that the transcript is a true record.

DATED this 5th day of November, 2025.

/S ROBIN FRALEY

Registered Professional Reporter