

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY  
CASE NUMBER CRC21-01099CFANO  
CRC21-01513CFANO

STATE OF FLORIDA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD,

Defendant.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

PROCEEDINGS: MOTION TO SUPPRESS HEARING

BEFORE: THE HONORABLE PHILIP J. FEDERICO  
Circuit Court Judge

DATE: March 20, 2026

PLACE: Courtroom 8  
Pinellas County Justice Center  
14250 - 49th Street North  
Clearwater, Florida 33762

REPORTER: Carla Jessal  
Registered Professional Reporter

(Pages 1 to 109)

Administrative Office of the Courts  
Court Reporting Department  
Pinellas County Justice Center  
14250 - 49th Street North  
Clearwater, Florida 33762  
Telephone: (727) 453-7233  
Fax: (727) 453-7488

APPEARANCES

**APPEARING ON BEHALF OF  
THE STATE OF FLORIDA:**

THOMAS D. KOSKINAS, ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY  
ANTHONY S. BRADLOW, ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY  
Office of Bruce Bartlett, State Attorney  
Sixth Judicial Circuit, Pinellas County  
14250 - 49th Street North  
Clearwater, Florida 33762

**APPEARING ON BEHALF OF  
THE DEFENDANT CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD:**

JULIA B. SEIFER-SMITH, ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER  
MARGARET S. RUSSELL, ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER  
LAMARK M. MCGREEN, ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER  
Office of Sara Mollo, Public Defender  
Sixth Judicial Circuit, Pinellas County  
14250 - 49th Street North  
Clearwater, Florida 33762

\* \* \*

**INDEX TO PROCEEDINGS****(MARCH 20, 2026)**

	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
<b><u>STATE'S WITNESSES:</u></b>	
<b>AMALIA MARRERO</b>	
Direct Examination By Mr. Koskinas	16
Cross-Examination By Ms. Seifer-Smith	50
<b>JASON HARRIS</b>	
Direct Examination By Mr. Bradlow	86
Cross-Examination By Ms. Seifer-Smith	90
<b>CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER</b>	109

\* \* \*

INDEX OF EXHIBITS

<u>STATE EXHIBITS</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1	VIDEO	22
2	MIRANDA RIGHTS FORM	47

\* \* \*

( P R O C E E D I N G S )

1  
2 THE COURT: All right. Are we ready for  
3 Mr. Whitfield?

4 MS. RUSSELL: Yep.

5 THE COURT: All right. State of Florida  
6 versus Cornelius Whitfield. Motion to suppress  
7 statements to law enforcement. He's got a couple  
8 different numbers, right? He's got 21-1099. Let  
9 me see. What's the other one? That's two count --  
10 one count of murder in the first degree, attempt  
11 murder, and robbery. And then the other ones are  
12 21-01513, which is three counts of murder one,  
13 attempt murder. I believe those are the counts.

14 State, are you ready to proceed?

15 MR. KOSKINAS: State's ready.

16 THE COURT: Defense, ready?

17 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

18 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Whitfield has  
19 joined us. Who are we putting on first?

20 MR. KOSKINAS: Well, I'd like to have  
21 discussion first if we could, Judge, now that we're  
22 on the record to kind of expedite this and save  
23 some time.

24 There is a video recording that's probably  
25 five and a half, six hours long that I think the

1 majority of is irrelevant for purposes of the  
2 motion. If counsel is in agreement with that, the  
3 State's intent is to show you maybe half an hour of  
4 the video today, which is all I think is relevant  
5 at all. But if they wish to have you at your  
6 leisure watch the remaining five hours if they're  
7 in agreement with that?

8 THE COURT: What's your -- I think you want me  
9 to watch all of it, right?

10 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I do. I mean, I think that  
11 the first hour is Mr. Whitfield by himself. I  
12 think that your Honor can probably fast forward  
13 through a great majority of it. I would point  
14 your Honor to some things during that hour that I  
15 think are important for your Honor to see. But  
16 with respect to the rest of it, it is Mr. Whitfield  
17 interacting with members of law enforcement and it  
18 is important for this hearing. Understanding that  
19 it would probably not be particularly efficient for  
20 all of us to be here during that time.

21 THE COURT: Agreed. So I will -- I mean, I  
22 haven't had a chance to view all of it at this  
23 point, but I think it makes sense. If they're  
24 requesting it, I don't think that I can -- I mean,  
25 I think I have to view all of it. I don't know

1           that we want to stay here until 5 o'clock today  
2           doing all of that.

3           MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah. I'm okay if they want  
4           you to view the whole thing.

5           THE COURT: Okay.

6           MR. KOSKINAS: I just would just like their  
7           agreement that the Court can view it at its  
8           leisure --

9           MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

10          MR. KOSKINAS: -- outside the presence of the  
11          attorneys.

12          MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

13          THE COURT: Okay. Then I'll do that. Which  
14          necessitates that I'm not gonna be able to rule at  
15          the end of the hearing today, right?

16          MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah. I mean, obviously.

17          THE COURT: I understand.

18          MR. KOSKINAS: Right. You can't if you have  
19          to watch the video.

20          THE COURT: I don't know that I probably am --  
21          the longer I've been -- when you're in family, you  
22          gotta do longer orders, but in crime I don't -- I  
23          probably will want to set a date to come back and  
24          just issue a ruling into the record regarding what  
25          the findings are. I'll make some notes, do a

1 summary, and then read it into the record. I just  
2 am --

3 MR. KOSKINAS: That's fine. I was told,  
4 Judge, that the defense wanted two witnesses that  
5 aren't available or something today.

6 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: That's correct. There were  
7 two witnesses that were referenced in the motions,  
8 Detective Burton and Detective Heer. It's spring  
9 break. My understanding is they're on spring break  
10 with their families. Mr. Bradlow was kind enough  
11 to reach out to the liaison and discovered that  
12 they are available next Friday. We're available.  
13 We were set to be in trial on the 1099 case. So if  
14 your Honor wanted to come back on Friday. I  
15 anticipate that their testimony would be quite  
16 short. If you were able to view the video between  
17 now and Friday, we could certainly come back on  
18 Friday, hear from those witnesses, and then do  
19 argument at that time.

20 THE COURT: Yeah. The only problem is I do  
21 mental health court on Friday morning. So it's  
22 probably gonna be 11:00 a.m. until I can start next  
23 Friday if you want me to do it. I would --

24 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We're available then or  
25 even in the afternoon. Whatever your Honor

1 prefers.

2 THE COURT: I'd rather start, get as much done  
3 as we can to like 12:30. You don't think that's  
4 gonna cover it with those two witnesses and  
5 argument, right, until 12:30ish?

6 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I think that probably would  
7 cover it. If it was 11:00 to 12:30, 90 minutes  
8 should probably be enough.

9 THE COURT: So why don't we -- are you okay  
10 with that next week?

11 MR. KOSKINAS: Sure.

12 THE COURT: So I would say 11:00. That way --  
13 I don't like to mix these types of cases with  
14 mental health court I think for obvious reasons.

15 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Understood.

16 THE COURT: But I'm normally done by about  
17 11:00 with that. You might have to wait a few  
18 minutes. I don't think so. Most of the time I  
19 don't have any in-custodies with Mr. Whitfield, but  
20 I wouldn't need him over for 8:30 in the morning  
21 when I'm doing mental health court if I have any  
22 in-custodies, but I'll talk to my bailiffs next  
23 week about that. You don't need him over much  
24 before 11:00, do you, next week?

25 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No.

1 THE COURT: Okay. So let's shoot for 11:00.  
2 I'll look at the video in the interim. We'll take  
3 the rest of the testimony. It's a good idea  
4 because everything will still be fresh in my mind.  
5 If we -- you know, I don't mind if we get past  
6 12:30 if you want to take a quick break for lunch.  
7 I don't have to do the normal hour, hour and a half  
8 for lunch if I can avoid it.

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: That's fine.

10 THE COURT: So we'll just work through that  
11 the best way we can. All right. That covers it?

12 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I think so.

13 MR. KOSKINAS: Lastly, Judge, I don't know if  
14 you have a copy of their motion. You do?

15 THE COURT: Yeah.

16 MR. KOSKINAS: They've alleged two grounds in  
17 here, and I just want to make sure everybody is on  
18 the same page. Their motion, obviously, indicates  
19 the statements made by the defendant in the Miranda  
20 waiver. However, they state two grounds, and  
21 ground A could be interpreted as they're suggesting  
22 there was an indication by the defendant. I want  
23 to make sure that's not the allegation and that  
24 they're not gonna argue that the defendant somehow  
25 invoked at a previous time other than this

1 interview or interrogation because that would  
2 necessitate other witnesses. I don't believe that  
3 to be the case after speaking with them. However,  
4 I'd like it on the record that that's not what  
5 they're claiming.

6 THE COURT: What I read in the motion was at  
7 the time he was brought in to the police station,  
8 there were issues related to Miranda and the  
9 waiver. Is that where we're at?

10 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct.

11 THE COURT: Okay.

12 MR. KOSKINAS: Okay.

13 THE COURT: All right.

14 MR. KOSKINAS: That's fine.

15 THE COURT: We ready?

16 MR. KOSKINAS: We're all on the same page.  
17 Yes.

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Your Honor, I just wanted  
19 to verify I think Angela confirmed that you do have  
20 a copy of everything that we handed in December,  
21 including the video? If not, we'll make sure --

22 THE COURT: Yes, I do.

23 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: -- that your Honor has a  
24 copy.

25 THE COURT: I have files and I have notes and,

1           yes, I have video.

2           MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Great.

3           MR. KOSKINAS: Well, so nothing's been  
4 introduced into evidence, Judge. So if they sent  
5 you a copy of things independently of the State --

6           THE COURT: No. I think that --

7           MR. KOSKINAS: -- I would like to know what  
8 that is.

9           MS. SEIFER-SMITH: This was confirmed on the  
10 record --

11          THE COURT: Hold on. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe  
12 I don't --

13          MS. SEIFER-SMITH: -- mid December when  
14 counsel was present.

15          THE COURT: Hold on. Video, right? Yes?

16          MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

17          MR. KOSKINAS: Okay. You can't -- I don't  
18 know what that is, Judge. You can't review it.

19          THE COURT: I haven't reviewed it.

20          MR. KOSKINAS: Good.

21          THE COURT: That's why --

22          MR. KOSKINAS: Good.

23          THE COURT: I wanted to make sure we got  
24 together.

25          MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah. I don't know what that

1 is. You can't review it.

2 THE COURT: Well --

3 MR. KOSKINAS: I've got a video of the  
4 interaction that we plan to introduce today that  
5 will be entered into evidence that the Court can  
6 review. I'd ask you to discard that, whatever that  
7 is. Throw it away.

8 THE COURT: Is that the copy of the six hours?

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct.

10 THE COURT: Okay. Well, once it's introduced,  
11 I don't know the --

12 MR. KOSKINAS: I don't know what that is.

13 THE COURT: Well, they just represent --  
14 they're not gonna tell me it's not -- it's the copy  
15 of the video if it's not the copy of the video,  
16 right?

17 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct.

18 THE COURT: I mean, I --

19 MR. KOSKINAS: Stranger things have happened,  
20 Judge.

21 THE COURT: Well, I know, but --

22 MR. KOSKINAS: I don't know what that is.  
23 It's not in evidence. The Court can't review  
24 it. The State would object.

25 THE COURT: I haven't reviewed it. If the

1 same thing is introduced into evidence, then I'll  
2 have a chance to review it, right?

3 MR. KOSKINAS: No. The State would object to  
4 anything that's not in evidence reviewed by the  
5 Court. We plan to introduce it today. This is  
6 really a non-issue, Judge.

7 THE COURT: It is.

8 MR. KOSKINAS: We're going to introduce what  
9 the Court needs to review.

10 THE COURT: All right.

11 MR. KOSKINAS: Thank you.

12 THE COURT: I will -- even if they're probably  
13 identical, I will review the one that's introduced  
14 into evidence.

15 MR. KOSKINAS: Thank you.

16 THE COURT: Okay? All right. Does that cover  
17 preliminaries?

18 MR. KOSKINAS: Yes, I think so.

19 THE COURT: All right. Who is calling what?  
20 Are you calling witnesses?

21 MR. KOSKINAS: Yes. We would call  
22 Detective Marrero, formerly Detective Mensah of the  
23 St. Petersburg Police Department.

24 THE COURT: Okay. Can we ask her to step in?  
25 Thank you.

1 THE CLERK: Can I ask is this motion as to  
2 more than one case or just --

3 THE COURT: Yeah, that's a good question.

4 MR. KOSKINAS: I don't know if they put two  
5 case numbers on there.

6 THE CLERK: We have three case numbers --

7 THE COURT: Actually, there is two case  
8 numbers on the motion to suppress.

9 MR. KOSKINAS: I think it probably applies to  
10 both.

11 THE COURT: Yeah.

12 THE CLERK: To both the murder cases?

13 THE COURT: Yes.

14 THE CLERK: Okay.

15 THE BAILIFF: Stand right here. Face the  
16 clerk. Raise your right hand to receive the oath.

17

---

18 THEREUPON,

19

AMALIA MARRERO,

20 the witness herein, having been first duly sworn, was  
21 examined and testified as follows:

22

---

23 THE COURT: Good morning.

24 THE WITNESS: Good morning.

25 THE COURT: Whenever you're ready, Counselor.

**DIRECT EXAMINATION**

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

BY MR. KOSKINAS:

Q Good morning, ma'am. Could you introduce yourself to the Court, please.

A Good morning. I'm Officer Amalia Marrero, M-A-R-R-E-R-O.

Q And for purposes of the record, it's formerly Mensah; is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q All right. Thank you. Where do you work?

A St. Petersburg Police Department.

Q And how long have you been so employed?

A About ten and a half, almost 11 years now.

Q I'm sorry?

A Almost 11 years.

Q Okay. And in what capacity do you work for them?

A Currently, I'm in District 1 patrol.

Q And did you have participation in the investigation of State versus Cornelius Whitfield?

A Yes.

Q Can you tell the Court briefly, summarily, your participation in that?

A At the time I was a detective in the major crimes unit for the police department and I was the lead

1 detective that was assigned.

2 Q Okay. Did you -- so we've got multiple cases;  
3 is that right?

4 A That's correct, sir.

5 Q Okay. So for the purposes of the record, could  
6 you give us your understanding of the multiple cases prior  
7 to coming in contact with Mr. Whitfield?

8 A The first case was a shooting, a homicide, that  
9 occurred at an apartment complex.

10 Q Okay.

11 A And then the second one was a shooting homicide  
12 at the family home, the Whitfield family home.

13 Q Okay. And you say first. You mean first in  
14 time?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Yes. Thank you. Okay. So as a result of that,  
17 your agency, were you looking for Mr. Whitfield? Did he  
18 become a suspect?

19 A Yes.

20 Q All right. Did ultimately you guys make contact  
21 with Mr. Whitfield?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Can you explain to the Court how that was?

24 A We had a call up of an in-progress shooting.  
25 SWAT was called out. SWAT was able to get him from the

1 home and then he was brought to the police department, at  
2 which time he was interviewed. And myself and  
3 Detective Harris interviewed him.

4 Q Okay. Did you respond to the scene or did you  
5 meet him first at the station?

6 A Initially to the scene.

7 Q Okay. Did you participate in his being taken  
8 into custody?

9 A No.

10 Q All right. Were you present for that?

11 A I was at a different location, like different  
12 spot. So I was a block or so away.

13 Q Fair enough. did you have the opportunity to  
14 have a briefing with other officers once he was taken into  
15 custody?

16 A Yes.

17 Q As the lead, did you instruct what was to be  
18 done with Mr. Whitfield?

19 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Objection. Hearsay and  
20 relevance.

21 THE COURT: It kind of is. It's not really --  
22 it's not really -- go ahead. It is. It is.

23 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

24 Q What was to be done? Like was there a request  
25 for an interview?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Okay. How did that take place?

3 A So he was placed in an interview room. Once  
4 Detective Harris and I got upstairs --

5 Q Well, let's back up for one second. Did he --  
6 was he taken into custody at the scene of the Whitfield  
7 home?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And did you order or request that he be  
10 transported to the station?

11 A That's correct.

12 Q And who did the transport; do you have any idea?

13 A I don't know who transported him.

14 Q Fair enough. All right. Did you instruct or  
15 request anybody take any statements to him or inform  
16 Mr. Whitfield of anything?

17 A Prior do that, no.

18 Q Okay. And then, ultimately, you first came in  
19 contact with Mr. Whitfield at the station; is that right?

20 A That's correct.

21 Q Now, you had the opportunity to be briefed about  
22 the circumstances of his being taken into custody; is that  
23 right?

24 A Correct.

25 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Objection. Calls for

1           hearsay.

2           THE COURT:  The next question probably would.

3           I'm not sure that one did.  Go ahead.

4  BY MR. KOSKINAS:

5           Q     Well, was there any --

6           MR. KOSKINAS:  I think it goes to state of  
7           mind and effect of the listener.

8  BY MR. KOSKINAS:

9           Q     Was there any indication to you that  
10          Mr. Whitfield had invoked his rights in any way?

11          A     No.

12          Q     Okay.  Was it your intent to inform the  
13          defendant of his Miranda rights and obtain a waiver from  
14          him?

15          A     Yes.

16          MS. SEIFER-SMITH:  Objection.  Relevance.

17          THE COURT:  I'm sorry?

18          MS. SEIFER-SMITH:  Objection.  Relevance.

19          THE COURT:  No, I don't think.  I think this  
20          is relevant.  Go ahead.

21  BY MR. KOSKINAS:

22          Q     Okay.  So this was -- this took place at the  
23          St. Petersburg Police Department?

24          A     Yes.

25          Q     In an interview room?

1           A     Yes.

2           Q     Is the interview room equipped with recording  
3 equipment?

4           A     Yes, audio and visual.

5           Q     Audio and video? Was it your intent that this  
6 be recorded?

7           A     Yes.

8           Q     All right. I'm showing --

9           MR. KOSKINAS: May I approach the witness,  
10 Judge?

11           THE COURT: Sure.

12           MR. KOSKINAS: I'm showing defense what's been  
13 marked as State's Number 1. May I approach the  
14 witness?

15           THE COURT: You may.

16 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

17           Q     I'm going to show you now, ma'am, what's been  
18 marked as State's Number 1 for identification purposes.  
19 I'm going to take it out of the sleeve and I'm going to  
20 ask you to look at this and tell me if you recognize the  
21 disk.

22           A     Yes, I recognize it.

23           Q     And how is it that you recognize that disk?

24           A     It has my initials and my employee number.

25           Q     Did you have the opportunity to view that disk

1 prior to your testimony here today?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And can you say whether the contents of that  
4 disk contain a fair and accurate representation of  
5 Mr. Whitfield in that interview room and your later  
6 interrogation?

7 A Yes.

8 MR. KOSKINAS: I'd move to admit this into  
9 evidence as State's Number 1.

10 THE COURT: Any objection?

11 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No objection for purpose of  
12 the hearing.

13 THE COURT: Received. Thank you.

14 (STATE'S EXHIBIT NUMBER 1 WAS RECEIVED IN EVIDENCE)

15 MR. KOSKINAS: May I publish, Judge, the  
16 relevant portion that the State feels is necessary?

17 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Without the editorializing  
18 from the State, we have no objection.

19 THE COURT: Go ahead.

20 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

21 Q Okay. Detective, before you came into the room,  
22 he was located and restrained inside the interview room;  
23 is that fair to say?

24 A Yes.

25 Q All right.

1           A     He was in custody, yes.

2           Q     It took you some time to get there to the  
3 station --

4           A     Yes.

5           Q     -- why was he left in a room alone, I guess?

6           MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Compound question,  
7 your Honor. I'd ask that it be separated.

8           THE COURT: Yes. Just one of them. Go ahead.

9           MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah, I'll strike that.

10 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

11          Q     Why was he left in the room alone?

12          A     There is an officer that's stationed outside of  
13 the interview room. He was in there just so no statements  
14 between an officer and Mr. Whitfield occurred prior to our  
15 arrival.

16          Q     Okay. When you interview a suspect, do you  
17 interview him in the presence of another detective? Is  
18 that routine?

19          A     Yes.

20          Q     Okay. Was that the intent in this case?

21          A     Yes.

22          Q     And is that what was done in this case?

23          A     Yes.

24          MR. KOSKINAS: I think we've got to turn  
25 off --

1           MR. BRADLOW: No, no. I think it's over here,  
2           isn't it?

3           MR. KOSKINAS: You're west, right? Is that  
4           west?

5           MR. BRADLOW: I just had it teed up. I don't  
6           know what's going on.

7           MR. KOSKINAS: Is it plugged in?

8           MR. BRADLOW: It should be good.

9           MR. KOSKINAS: There we go.

10          MR. BRADLOW: Do you want me to fast forward  
11          to the --

12          MR. KOSKINAS: Well, hold on.

13 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

14          Q     Is this -- can you look over your right  
15          shoulder, please, and tell us is this the interview room  
16          in which you conducted the interrogation of Mr. Whitfield?

17          A     Yes.

18          Q     All right. So he sits in this room for roughly  
19          an hour before you guys conduct the interview room; is  
20          that approximately --

21          A     Yes.

22          Q     All right.

23          MR. KOSKINAS: With the Court's permission,  
24          Judge, I'm gonna -- I'm gonna pan forward about an  
25          hour until the detectives arrive at the interview

1 room.

2 THE COURT: I don't have a problem  
3 understanding that at some time between now and  
4 next Friday I'm going to see all of it, right?

5 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I don't have an objection.  
6 I just ask if we can put the timestamp on where  
7 we're going to start it for the record.

8 MR. KOSKINAS: Absolutely.

9 THE COURT: Okay.

10 MR. KOSKINAS: I want to say it's 1:02, 1:03,  
11 something like that, but we'll make sure.

12 A little bit more. You're at 58 right now.  
13 Back up to 1:01, maybe, if you can.

14 MR. BRADLOW: Trying my best here. Hold on.

15 MR. KOSKINAS: Okay. There you go. All  
16 right. This is 1:01:34. Let's play it from there.

17 (AN EXCERPT OF STATE'S EXHIBIT 1 WAS PUBLISHED TO THE  
18 COURT. DUE TO POOR AUDIO QUALITY, SPEED OF CONVERSATION  
19 AND/OR SIMULTANEOUS SPEAKING, THE FOLLOWING TRANSCRIPTION  
20 IS NOT A VERBATIM RECORD OF SAID VIDEOTAPE)

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. I'm Detective  
22 Mensah. This is my partner Detective Harris.

23 (Unintelligible) the cuffs off you so you're a  
24 little more comfortable? Alrighty. Go ahead and  
25 stand up for me. Did they already pat you down?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: All right. Let me  
3 just double check. All right? We'll take those  
4 off. Okay?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Let me see if they've  
6 got some zip-tie cutters.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Yeah.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: (Unintelligible)  
9 zip-tie cutter?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Yeah, can you pop  
11 these real quick? Just don't move your fingers.  
12 Keep them down. Watch your fingers, yeah.

13 (SIMULTANEOUS SPEAKING)

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 4: Hold on. Let's get  
15 some cutters.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: (Unintelligible) real  
17 quick.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Yeah, we're gonna try  
19 some cutters.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: You wanna run to our  
21 office and see if someone can grab some?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 4: Yes, sir.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Thanks.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Don't want you to get  
25 poked anymore.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Yeah, we'll get those  
2 off you. All right.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: All right. So we  
4 want to talk to you about what brought us here  
5 today. Okay? So are you willing to talk with us,  
6 give us a few minutes of your time? I know you  
7 know the rodeo and you know how it goes and we have  
8 to go through the steps and the protocol and  
9 everything like that. Today, you know, is kind of  
10 unusual circumstances and everything like that, but  
11 we'd really like to hear your side of the story.  
12 You know, if we don't get that opportunity here  
13 (unintelligible) hear it. So I know something  
14 brought us together today. Do you have a key? I  
15 don't have (unintelligible).

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: He's got an anklet.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: So is that all right  
18 with you if we go through it and give us a few  
19 minutes of your time and tell us what brought us  
20 all together today? Do you prefer if we call you  
21 Cornelius or do you prefer Cornbread? How did you  
22 even get that name?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: (Unintelligible) my  
24 family gave it to me.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: When you were little?

1 And where'd that come from?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I guess they say I  
3 like to eat it.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Ever had the jalapeño  
5 ones? They're great. They are. I mean, you can  
6 tell I enjoy them.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: That's good. That is  
8 my favorite (unintelligible).

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: It's awesome.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: My mom will put  
11 little pieces of corn in it and I was like, eww,  
12 not my favorite. But the jalapeño, that one was my  
13 favorite. Do you mind if I go through and read  
14 this for ya and talk about what got us here today?  
15 Because I really want to hear your side, Cornelius.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You want to hear my  
17 side?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Absolutely.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Absolutely.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: You have our ears.  
21 We'll pay full attention to everything you got to  
22 say.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Just looking at your  
24 artwork on you, you have a story to tell. Like,  
25 you don't have tattoos like that and not have a

1 story. Because they tell a story.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Those tattoos are  
3 actually good.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Yeah.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: A lot of guys come in  
6 here, or I can tell you, if you can see.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Yeah.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: I can tell you I --  
9 because sometimes and you're like, whew, wouldn't  
10 have done that.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Yeah. So I know you  
12 have a story. I've got 'em. I'm covered. You  
13 just can't see 'em. So I know you have a story.  
14 You don't come in with art like that without having  
15 a story. All right? Are you good with us calling  
16 you Cornbread? That one makes you smile. Look,  
17 you've got dimples.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You know, honestly,  
19 every time I'm in new places, just like yourself,  
20 it always be some BS. So I don't even know what  
21 to -- where to start or what, you know.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Well, how about we do  
23 this. We'll get through the form and we'll start  
24 wherever you want to start. Because, obviously,  
25 there's a reason you came out of the house, right,

1 today. That's why you're here. There's some  
2 issues at the house right now that are being looked  
3 at. We'd like to talk to you about that. So, you  
4 know, you're gonna be the best person to tell us  
5 what happened, quite honestly, because we weren't  
6 there, right? So all I have to go on is you.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Well --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: But before we do  
9 that, we have to go through your form here. Okay?  
10 Because I -- I want to make sure you understand  
11 your rights and everything -- everything is on the  
12 table. Okay?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Can you spell your  
14 first name for me? I know how to spell it, but I  
15 have to make sure you know.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: C-O-R-N-E-L-I-U-S.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. Do you have a  
18 middle name, Cornelius?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Trevion.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Trevion. T-R?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: E-V-I-O-N.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. And your last  
23 name?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Whitfield,  
25 W-H-I-T-F-I-E-L-D.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. And what's  
2 your birthday?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: (Unintelligible).

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: And that makes you  
5 how old?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Like 31 or something.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Like 31, something  
8 like that. All right. And what's your address?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Um, uh, I really  
10 don't have one, I mean, you know what I'm saying?  
11 I was just (unintelligible) in Greenwood.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. Your  
13 grandmother's at that 2968? Okay. All right. So  
14 now I have a couple silly questions. All right?  
15 So just bear with me. Are you under the influence  
16 of prescription drugs? Told you they were gonna be  
17 silly. They're going to get sillier.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Probably so.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Probably so. Okay.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You know, I -- I  
21 smoke. I drink. I do all that.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Who's your -- are  
23 you -- are you on any medication?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: No, not at the  
25 moment.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. Are you under  
2 the influence of alcohol right now? Illegal drugs?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. What drugs?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I smoked some weed  
6 already so that might not count.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Anything else? We  
8 don't really care. We just need to know.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Nah.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Not -- not that I'm  
12 aware of.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: What was the last  
15 grade you completed?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Um, I got a GED.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: And can you read?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: A little bit, but,  
19 um.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Can you write? Is  
21 that a yes?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah, I can write. I  
23 can read. I can write.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: And can you hear?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yes.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Not too --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: I told you --

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Not too good, but --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: I told you some of  
6 these were silly, right?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Right.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. And today's  
9 the 16th.

10 And, Jay, do you have the time?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: It is 6:17.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: All right. I'm  
13 Detective Mensah with St. Pete.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: I'm Harris.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Now we've gotta ask  
16 the serious questions. Do you understand you have  
17 the right to remain silent?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yes.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Do you understand  
20 that anything you say can and will with used  
21 against you in a court of law? Is that a yes?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: I guess you can't  
24 write a head nod. Sorry.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Do you understand

1           that you have the right to have an attorney present  
2           while you're being questioned?

3                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:  Head nod, yes, yeah,  
4           uh-huh.

5                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:  All the different  
6           forms of yes, right?  Yes, yeah, uh-huh, head nod.  
7           All right.

8                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:  Yeah.  You just made  
9           me think of something, but go ahead.

10                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:  Do you understand  
11           that if you cannot afford to hire an attorney one  
12           will be appointed to represent you before you have  
13           any questioning if you wish?

14                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:  Yeah.

15                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:  Do you understand  
16           that you can decide at any time to exercise these  
17           rights and not answer any questions or make any  
18           statements?

19                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:  I should have been  
20           real (unintelligible), but, you know.  Yeah, I  
21           understand.  I understand.

22                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:  Okay.  And do you  
23           understand the rights I just explained to you?

24                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:  Yeah.

25                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:  And having these

1 rights in mind, do you wish to talk to us now?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Um.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: That way we can get  
4 Cornelius' story.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: It's just I don't --  
6 I don't really know what -- what's going on right  
7 now. I don't know what -- what like --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Well, we can hear  
9 what brought us together today.

10 (SIMULTANEOUS SPEAKING)

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: (Unintelligible).

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Because on any other  
13 day -- yeah, on any other day we probably wouldn't  
14 have run into each other, right? So something  
15 brought us together today. But in order for us to  
16 figure out exactly what brought us together today,  
17 you know, I have to know that you're willing to  
18 speak with me. Does that make sense?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I mean, you know,  
20 things be making sense, but sometimes things  
21 doesn't, at least to me. So I really would --  
22 don't want to say.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Well, that's  
24 something we can explore, too, you know. Because  
25 it might not be making sense to you -- oh, I'm

1           sorry.

2                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:   Yeah.

3                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:   But it's something,  
4           you know, that as we talk and we're going through  
5           it, it could make sense.

6                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:   And you can stop  
7           talking to us whenever you want.  You don't have  
8           to -- at any time you can say I'm done.

9                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:   Well, what happens if  
10          we're done?

11                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:   Then that's it and no  
12          one hears Cornelius' side.

13                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:   So I'm free to go?

14                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1:   No, you're not free to  
15          go.

16                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:   I ain't did anything.

17                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:   Well, we would like  
18          to talk to you about that.  So you aren't free to  
19          go.  She is right.  That's why we would like to  
20          hear your side of this.  You're saying you haven't  
21          done anything.  We have some questions we'd like to  
22          ask to hear how that is.

23                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2:   Right, but --

24                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3:   We can't ask you  
25          unless you're willing to talk to us.  See what

1 we're saying?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Well, I know that  
3 my -- my family, or whatever, what could have led  
4 to that could have been things that I've done in my  
5 past or things I've done in prison. I don't know.  
6 So I can't really say, you know, as far as what  
7 happened, maybe it happened, how it happened. All  
8 I know is that -- that shit ain't what it is or  
9 whatever. And I don't know if the baby,  
10 everything, so and maybe I'm not.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Kind of like you're  
12 struggling and you're teetering on the edge there.  
13 You got a lot going on in your head.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: How about we start  
16 from when you woke up today.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I woke up. I smoked  
18 a whole bunch of cigarettes and I (unintelligible)  
19 a little bit. Rested. Watched (unintelligible).  
20 Watched TV.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: What'd you watch on  
22 TV? Anything good?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Some movies. And it  
24 was actually some -- somebody turned it on and it  
25 was on (unintelligible) actually (unintelligible).

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: You had the whole day  
2 to yourself to just chill and you --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I mean, you know.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: -- didn't watch  
5 anything good?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I'm not really a TV  
7 person like that. I really just be chilling to  
8 myself. But, um, you know, honestly, I'm a little  
9 all over the place, so.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Cornelius, I don't  
11 know you. I don't. I -- we've never met, right?  
12 I've been doing this for over 12 years and I --  
13 your name I don't never recall coming across my  
14 desk. It may have, but I don't remember it. But  
15 from the things I've heard, sounds like you've been  
16 going through it, right? Okay? Um, and while I  
17 understand that and I'm sorry that that's the case.  
18 We can get in depth on whatever you want, right?  
19 We talk about anything under the sun while we're in  
20 here. Okay? But really you gotta kind of make  
21 that decision, you know?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I mean, I mean,  
23 honestly, I don't -- I don't -- I don't know what  
24 to -- what to tell y'all as far as, like, you know,  
25 why things happened or how things happened and

1 shit.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: But, you know, only  
4 thing I can tell you is that, you know, sometimes I  
5 be doing things out on the streets that I ain't got  
6 no business doing.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You know, a little  
9 bit of everything.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Well, okay. I mean,  
11 I get that. You're trying to survive, right?  
12 Okay.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: When you're saying  
14 you're trying to do these things in the streets  
15 that you have no business doing, what kind of  
16 things are you talking about?

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Well, you know, I  
18 have done all kind of stuff already. So, you know,  
19 now I'm just really like just trying to figure  
20 things out, which routes would be the best routes  
21 to take, you know, stuff like that there. That way  
22 I don't end up, you know, having -- but right now,  
23 man, I don't know.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Which routes do you  
25 see yourself going right now?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I'm homeless. I  
2 don't even know where -- where is -- where's the  
3 child? Where's the baby?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Which baby are you  
5 talking about? Coco?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: My mom --

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Did they even  
8 (unintelligible) your -- your mom's house? You  
9 have a lot going on, don't ya?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah. And, honestly,  
11 I don't know -- I don't know if I need to say that.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Need to say what?  
13 Sorry.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Something that I  
15 thought, you know. But just like you say about  
16 that, something like that there, it kind of make me  
17 want to, but, you know, I just --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: What is -- again, I  
19 don't know you, man, but I can tell you this, this  
20 is your shot to let us know 'cause we're not gonna  
21 see each other again like this. I'm -- I'm --  
22 we're trying to give you an opportunity to provide  
23 us with whatever it is you may know about what's  
24 going on over there. We weren't there. You came  
25 out of the house, so you were there. I mean, I'm

1           sorry you're in that situation, but that's the  
2           fact, right? Yeah, so.

3                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Man, all I know is,  
4           man, when I came back in there, man, it -- it  
5           wasn't good.

6                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay. Well, um, I'm  
7           gonna agree with you. It's not good. It's  
8           pretty -- it's not good. All right. Again,  
9           there's so much that I would like to hear from you.  
10          I just -- I need to know you want -- you're willing  
11          to talk to us and answer questions because I can't  
12          get in depth with you on this. You understand what  
13          I'm saying? I want to make sure that you  
14          understand completely what your rights are and that  
15          you are willing to talk to us until you're not.  
16          You know what I'm saying, man?

17                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I know what you're  
18          saying.

19                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Yeah.

20                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You know, but, you  
21          know, I just want to know that that's what you  
22          saying.

23                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Yeah. If you --  
24          well, we -- if you -- if you want to talk to us,  
25          great. We'll get into it. You decide you don't

1 want to talk to us, we stop. You're in control,  
2 man. It's all you.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: If I was in control,  
4 I'd probably be gone right now.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: All I'm saying as far  
6 as whether we're talking or not, man, you're  
7 holding the cards.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Y'all might know more  
9 then what I think I know.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: We might. You don't  
11 know until we talk. That's very possible.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: So --

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: And you might know  
14 more than we do.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Yeah.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: That's very possible  
18 too.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Well, I know -- I  
20 don't -- I don't know what -- I don't know what --  
21 where to even start with, what's going on, you  
22 know, how --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Uh-huh.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You know, that's  
25 where you know and I -- I -- I'm trying.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You know, ease up a  
3 little bit.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Do you want water or  
5 something to drink?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I don't know.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Can of Sprite or some  
8 chips or something? I would say do you want a  
9 shirt, but I don't have another shirt. Because you  
10 look like you're cold.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah, I am. I don't  
12 know what he said. But, uh, yeah, uh, I don't want  
13 to sound crazy, man.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: But I been going  
16 through all kinds of stuff, this and that, hearing  
17 this and that, thinking this and that. I done got  
18 involved with these people, these people, and a  
19 whole bunch of other stuff. So I can't say what's  
20 going on at this very moment. You know, why things  
21 happened, I don't, and stuff like that there.

22 (Unintelligible) gonna continue that

23 (unintelligible), probably so. But that's neither  
24 here nor there 'cause that's out of my control, you  
25 know. So, um, I don't know, man, you know. Maybe

1 if y'all say something, I don't know, maybe it  
2 (unintelligible).

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Well, listen, if  
4 we -- if you -- not we. If you decide you want to  
5 talk to us, that's great. We can direct it. We  
6 can go over -- you know, we can start with little  
7 questions like what you just said about hearing  
8 things and not wanting to sound crazy and we can go  
9 from there. But it's really up to you. Like I  
10 said, we'll listen to whatever you want to talk to  
11 us about. We got time. I'm not trying to rush  
12 this at all. You got my full attention, man.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: You know, I can't --  
14 I -- you know, I just feel like I just, you know,  
15 can't say what some of the things or not 'posed to  
16 say some of this shit that I don't even know that I  
17 think I know of or whatever. So I don't know. I  
18 know of shit. I don't know. Half of the time I  
19 don't even be on what I been having going on.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Mentally. So for a  
22 lot of other things that's been going on lately in  
23 my life, I don't know, you know? But, uh, I don't  
24 know.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Well, let's see if we

1 can figure it out.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Well --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: At least put some of  
4 the pieces together. If not the whole puzzle, then  
5 let's see if we can put some of it together. Does  
6 that work for you?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Can't put it. All  
8 right. Let's go. Let's see what's going, you  
9 know, 'cause I -- I really can't really put the  
10 full puzzle together.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Okay.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I don't know the full  
13 puzzle.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: We can try.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Okay. We can try.  
16 These are all the questions I asked you, and if you  
17 want to sign right there and then we'll sign these  
18 two. Okay?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: All right. If --

20 (SIMULTANEOUS SPEAKING)

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: And that's so we can  
22 try and talk to you and try to put the puzzle  
23 pieces together. That way we can get at least some  
24 of the -- maybe the outer rim of the puzzle.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: The fray I think they

1 call it.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Yeah.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: I think.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: The order.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: The order. That's  
6 what it is.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: I haven't done a  
8 puzzle in a while. They make me dizzy.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: (Unintelligible).

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: All right, Cornelius.  
11 So why don't we start with what we said we're gonna  
12 start with. You said you'd been here --

13 (PUBLISHING CONCLUDED)

14 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

15 Q So, Detective, what was the form that we saw  
16 Mr. Whitfield sign on the video?

17 A That's the Miranda rights advisement form.

18 MR. KOSKINAS: I'm showing defense counsel  
19 what's been marked as State's Exhibit Number 2.

20 Can I approach the witness?

21 THE COURT: You may.

22 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

23 Q I'm now showing you, ma'am, what's been marked  
24 State's Exhibit Number 2. Now, this is a copy, but it's a  
25 color copy. But do you recognize this object?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Is it in the same or substantially the same  
3 condition that it was in at the time that you possessed it  
4 during this interview?

5 A Yes.

6 MR. KOSKINAS: I would move to admit this into  
7 evidence as State's Number 2.

8 THE COURT: Any objection?

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No objection for the  
10 purposes of the hearing.

11 THE COURT: Received, State's 2. Thank you.

12 MR. KOSKINAS: Thank you.

13 (STATE'S EXHIBIT NUMBER 2 WAS RECEIVED IN EVIDENCE)

14 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

15 Q At the time of this interview did you have any  
16 understanding about the defendant's background?

17 A The background prior to --

18 Q Of the defendant.

19 A -- this day?

20 Q How do you -- I'm sorry?

21 A Prior to the day's event or from the initial  
22 encounter?

23 Q No, no. As you sit there in the interview, do  
24 you have any understanding of the defendant's background?

25 A No.

1 Q Meaning like his association with the criminal  
2 justice system?

3 A Just a prior criminal history.

4 Q You did have a -- and you were aware of that?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Were you aware whether he had been to prison  
7 before?

8 A Yes.

9 Q You were?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And had he?

12 A Yes.

13 Q He had. Did he make reference to being in a  
14 similar situation as this interview in the past?

15 A Yes.

16 Q He did. So was it your understanding that he'd  
17 been through this process --

18 A Yes.

19 Q -- previously?

20 A That's correct, yes.

21 Q Okay. Did you or the other detective in your  
22 presence use any kind of trickery or deception to get the  
23 defendant to answer the questions regarding his rights?

24 A No.

25 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Objection. That's for the

1 ultimate determination of this Court.

2 THE COURT: It kind of is. I mean, she can --  
3 I suppose she can give her perspective on it. Go  
4 ahead. She can answer.

5 BY MR. KOSKINAS:

6 Q Yeah. So you can answer the question.

7 A No.

8 Q Okay. And the defendant informed you regarding  
9 his educational background?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And what did he tell you?

12 A That he received a GED.

13 Q Okay. Did he appear to you to have the ability  
14 to read?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And did he acknowledge his ability to read?

17 A Yes.

18 Q He took some time with the document in front of  
19 him. Was it -- what was your impression of that?

20 A He said he can read a little bit.

21 Q Okay.

22 A So it matched his statement.

23 Q Did he ask for clarification about any of the  
24 items on the form in any way?

25 A No, sir.

1 Q Okay. Did he ask for clarification of his  
2 rights in any way?

3 A No.

4 MR. KOSKINAS: Okay. All right. I don't have  
5 any further questions.

6 Thank you, Detective.

7 Do you want the disk up or can I give it back to  
8 the clerk?

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: You can give it back to the  
10 clerk. That's fine.

11 THE COURT: All right. You're done with your  
12 direct?

13 MR. KOSKINAS: Yes.

14 THE COURT: Cross-examination.

15 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes, Your Honor.

16 **CROSS-EXAMINATION**

17 BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH:

18 Q Good morning.

19 A Good morning.

20 Q How are you?

21 A All right.

22 Q So did I understand you're a detective again; is  
23 that right?

24 A Officer.

25 Q Oh, okay. So still on patrol?

1           A     Yes.

2           Q     Great.  So I think you told us earlier that you  
3 have now been an officer or a law enforcement officer,  
4 detective, and other positions for a period of between  
5 ten and a half to 11 years --

6           A     Yes.

7           Q     -- as of today?

8           A     That's correct.

9           Q     So at the time of the interrogation that we just  
10 saw, since it was five years ago, between five and a half,  
11 six years as --

12          A     That's correct.

13          Q     -- sworn law enforcement?  Okay.  During that  
14 period of time and perhaps including the five years since  
15 then, I imagine you've done thousands of interviews; is  
16 that fair?

17          A     Thousands is a lot.

18          Q     Okay.  It is -- it is a high number.

19          A     Right.

20          Q     Would you say that's fair?

21          A     Maybe -- maybe a few hundred.

22          Q     Okay.  So -- and I said "interviews," but I want  
23 that to encapsulate both conversations with witnesses,  
24 potential victims, and also interrogations of subjects.  
25 Do you think that's still a few hundred?

1           A     I would say hundreds.

2           Q     Okay.  And when I say the word "interrogation,"  
3 you understand that to be like the questioning of a  
4 subject in custody; is that fair?

5           A     That's correct.

6           Q     Okay.  And during your time in law enforcement  
7 you've done numerous trainings in interviewing, generally  
8 as well as interrogations; is that right?

9           A     That's correct.

10          Q     Okay.  And I think you actually listed those out  
11 for me when we spoke last April.

12          A     Yes, ma'am.

13          Q     I have it as initial kind of interviews and  
14 interrogations; is that right?

15          A     Yes.

16          Q     Intermediate interviews and interrogations with  
17 the FBI?

18          A     Yes.

19          Q     Advanced interviews and interrogations also with  
20 the FBI?

21          A     Yes.

22          Q     Interviews identifying victims, as well as false  
23 statements?

24          A     Yes.

25          Q     Interviewing sex victims?

1 A Yes.

2 Q A separate training for controlled calls?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And also interviewing children. Did I miss  
5 anything?

6 A No. As far as interviews, no. That's it.

7 Q Okay. I'd say that's pretty comprehensive,  
8 isn't it?

9 A Yes, ma'am.

10 Q Okay. And in your career you've also done  
11 additional research, reading, watching regarding  
12 interrogation techniques; is that fair?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Right? So sometimes you're in the room and  
15 somebody else is actually leading the interrogation; is  
16 that right?

17 A Yes.

18 Q So you'd be able to watch your colleagues or  
19 watch people that you're shadowing in terms of how they're  
20 doing it, right?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. And would you say that interviewing  
23 witnesses versus victims versus suspects would be  
24 different types of interviews that would require, like,  
25 different skill sets or different approaches?

1           A     Yes.

2           Q     Okay.  So a different purpose, potentially a  
3 different tone; would that be fair?

4           A     Yes.

5           Q     And I don't think we spoke about it earlier, but  
6 how long had you been in major crimes by the time that you  
7 got involved in these cases?

8           A     So this one was 2021.  I joined the unit in  
9 2019.

10          Q     Okay.  So would that be about two years or  
11 getting on --

12          A     About two years.

13          Q     Okay.  And Detective Harris, I think, had  
14 already been in the major crimes unit by the time you  
15 arrived; is that correct?

16          A     That's correct.

17          Q     So you would have worked with him on previous  
18 cases; is that fair?

19          A     Yes.

20          Q     So there would have been prior cases where he  
21 was the lead and you were the assist and vice versa; is  
22 that correct?

23          A     Or crime scene.  It's not always -- we work  
24 together, but not always lead and secondary.  Sometimes  
25 you're the scene, sometimes you're the hospital.  It just

1 depends.

2 Q Of course. There are more than --

3 A Different roles.

4 Q -- just assist and lead --

5 A Yes.

6 Q -- as various roles. Okay. And so this would  
7 not have been the first interrogation that the two of you  
8 would have done together?

9 A Correct.

10 Q Okay. And I just want to orient us a little bit  
11 again. So the interrogation that we just saw occurred on  
12 February 16th of 2021; is that right?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. Your initial involvement began two weeks  
15 earlier on the very early morning hours of February 1st;  
16 is that right?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Or maybe it was the --

19 A The 2nd.

20 Q The 2nd.

21 A It went right from the 1st to the 2nd.

22 Q I apologize. Okay. So it would have been  
23 exactly two weeks; is that right?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. And so from that very first day that you

1 began your involvement the early hours of February 2nd,  
2 you knew that Mr. Whitfield was a suspect in your case; is  
3 that right?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. And so you were seeking to apprehend him;  
6 is that right?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. And during those two weeks you had  
9 engaged in a number of, I guess, acts or actions within  
10 the police department seeking his detention; is that  
11 right?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Okay. And I think we can kind of run through  
14 that. Like his information was given to the special  
15 investigations unit; is that right?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. And special investigations does  
18 surveillance of people that either have active arrest  
19 warrants or are sought for some other purpose; is that  
20 correct?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. That was only one of other things that  
23 were done; is that correct?

24 A That's correct.

25 Q Okay. It also included I believe it was like

1 pen registers with regards to phone numbers that you  
2 believe were associated with Mr. Whitfield; is that  
3 correct?

4 A Correct.

5 Q To the -- was there some travel around  
6 St. Petersburg in order to seek Mr. Whitfield?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. And you were engaged in that; is that  
9 right?

10 A In some of it, yes.

11 Q Okay. Can you tell me what else you did seeking  
12 Mr. Whitfield during those two weeks?

13 A So I was in touch with the U.S. Marshals to see  
14 if they would be able to apprehend him as well. In fact,  
15 the day of February 16th I was actively on the phone with  
16 the Marshals because I believed him to be back in the  
17 city.

18 Q So during the time period that we were just  
19 discussing, the two weeks, you thought that he had left  
20 St. Pete; is that right?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. And that's because in addition to just,  
23 like, sending, you know, these kinds of I guess requests  
24 out, you were actually following up on the information  
25 received; is that right?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And so you believed that he had gone where?

3 A Possibly to Georgia.

4 Q Okay. And did you follow up on that?

5 A We had the Marshals going. We had the pen taps  
6 trying to find the locations and the points of where any  
7 of his phone numbers might have been hitting.

8 Q Okay. Anything else that you personally were  
9 doing in order to attempt to try to find Mr. Whitfield?

10 A No.

11 Q Okay. Were you aware that your -- I believe it  
12 was your sergeant and I think a lieutenant, Demark and  
13 Elizondo -- I might have mistaken --

14 A Two sergeants, yes.

15 Q -- what their roles were. Okay. Two sergeants  
16 had actually spoken with Mr. Whitfield's mother very  
17 shortly after the homicide in your case?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. So there was personal contact that was  
20 being made with the family; is that right?

21 A That's correct.

22 Q Okay. Did you ever speak with Ms. Harilal  
23 between the 2nd and the 16th?

24 A No, not until I arrived out to scene.

25 Q Okay. So you never attempted to follow up

1 directly with the family on Emerson Avenue; is that  
2 correct?

3 A That's correct.

4 Q Okay. But you were engaged in looking for  
5 Mr. Whitfield on -- would you say on a daily basis during  
6 those two weeks?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. And so you were looking for him but also  
9 failing to find him; is that right?

10 A That's correct.

11 Q Okay. And it wasn't until you were alerted to  
12 an active shooting at what was known to be Mr. Whitfield's  
13 family location, family home, that he was found?

14 A Correct.

15 Q Okay. That must have been very emotional  
16 provoking to find that it was this site of an active  
17 shooting?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay.

20 A Any active shooting, yes.

21 Q Yes. And then to find that it was actually the  
22 subject of the case that you were investigating?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. I think you described a little bit of how  
25 you came to Emerson Avenue, that it was -- that you were

1 present on Emerson Avenue at the time that Mr. Whitfield  
2 was taken into custody, but you weren't involved in the  
3 actual physical detention of him; is that right?

4 A That's correct.

5 Q Is it fair to say that you didn't actually see  
6 that happen either? You were too far away?

7 A That's correct.

8 Q Okay.

9 A From where I was, yes.

10 Q Okay. And I think you had been doing other --  
11 other things, right? I know you mentioned a couple  
12 moments ago you made contact with Ms. Harilal,  
13 Mr. Whitfield's mother?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Okay. And is it safe to assume that you were  
16 also kind of just monitoring what was happening in terms  
17 of Mr. Whitfield coming into custody?

18 A "Monitoring" is a very loose term.

19 Q How would you describe it?

20 A Watching chaos unfold as the SWAT team came in,  
21 trying to call to negotiate, get any -- through any number  
22 to have him pick up. Trying to get the patrol units out  
23 of the area so the SWAT team could take the perimeter and  
24 take the house. So it was not your typical day by any  
25 means.

1 Q And SWAT actually demolished part of the house?

2 A That's correct.

3 Q And Mr. Whitfield emerged from the house; is  
4 that right?

5 A I believe so. I wasn't there when --

6 Q Okay.

7 A -- he was taken into custody.

8 Q I won't ask you any more questions about things  
9 that you didn't have personal knowledge of. That's fair.  
10 So you come to learn that he was in fact taken into  
11 custody; is that right?

12 A That's correct.

13 Q Okay. And so the next thing that you were going  
14 to do was attempt to have a conversation with him; is that  
15 about right?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. Now, Mr. Whitfield was taken into custody  
18 on the active arrest warrant in your case; is that right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. Because that was something else that you  
21 had done during those initial two weeks; is that correct?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. So Mr. Whitfield, once he was taken into  
24 custody by St. Petersburg Police, he was not free to go,  
25 correct?

1           A     That's correct.

2           Q     No matter what he said to you or to anybody  
3 else?

4           A     That's correct.

5           Q     Okay. And as far as you know, he must have been  
6 transported from Emerson Avenue to the St. Petersburg  
7 Police Department; is that right?

8           A     Yes.

9           Q     Okay. You weren't involved in that?

10          A     Correct.

11          Q     Okay. So the first time that you ever have any  
12 kind of initial contact with him is in that interview room  
13 that we saw the video of; is that right?

14          A     Yes.

15          Q     Okay. And I know we didn't watch it all, but  
16 there's a period of about an hour where Mr. Whitfield is  
17 alone or appears to be alone in the interview room; is  
18 that right?

19          A     That's correct.

20          Q     Okay. What we probably can't see in the video  
21 is that there was a uniformed officer standing at the  
22 door; is that right?

23          A     That's correct.

24          Q     And that's per protocol; is that right?

25          A     Yes.

1 Q Okay. Now, the video that's rolling is also  
2 available in the office, for lack of a better word, on  
3 kind of -- on like a live stream, essentially; is that  
4 right?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. You did not observe Mr. Whitfield via  
7 video before you went into the room, right?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. Like you didn't stand and watch and like  
10 make note of what he was doing in there?

11 A No.

12 Q Okay. And your initial contact or your initial  
13 impressions of Cornelius, like I said, was directly in the  
14 room once you went through it; is that fair?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay. And you observed that he was quite small;  
17 is that right?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Your initial impression was that he was  
20 disheveled; is that right?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. He's obviously, like from what you can  
23 see of his body, covered in tattoos; is that fair?

24 A Yes.

25 Q He had on no shirt and he had on pants that were

1 too big for him; is that right?

2 A No shirt, yes.

3 Q Okay. He appeared to be a bit of a mess; is  
4 that fair?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. When you initially went into the  
7 interview room, his hands were zip-tied behind him. I  
8 think it was two, maybe three zip-ties? I couldn't quite  
9 see.

10 A No. They're called flex cuffs.

11 Q Okay.

12 A So he had a pair of traditional handcuffs on and  
13 a pair of flex cuffs.

14 Q Okay. So two forms of, I guess, like  
15 limitations on his mobility or his freedom; is that right?

16 A Correct.

17 Q Okay. And the flex cuffs, it's like almost a  
18 zip-tie around each wrist securing him to, like, kind of  
19 the middle bit; is that fair?

20 A Sort of, but not really.

21 Q Okay. You needed to get like as -- you needed  
22 to get cutters in order to get those off; is that right?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. And so those were on him from SWAT?

25 A SWAT, correct.

1           Q     So those would have been on him from the period  
2 when he was actually taken into custody at Emerson Avenue  
3 up until the point when you actually entered the room and  
4 removed them; is that right?

5           A     Yes.

6           Q     Do you know how long that was?

7           A     No, I don't.

8           Q     Okay. Well, he's on video for at least an hour.  
9 So certainly longer than an hour; is that right?

10          A     Right.

11          Q     Okay. And in terms of those initial  
12 impressions, I think you told me when we'd spoken in  
13 April -- or last April that he seemed to you as though he  
14 was entirely mentally sound; does that sound right?

15          A     Yes.

16          Q     Okay. You had no impressions that he was tired  
17 or hadn't slept; is that right?

18          A     Correct.

19          Q     Okay. And you didn't have any impressions that  
20 he was under the effects of alcohol or narcotics; is that  
21 also right?

22          A     Correct.

23          Q     Okay. Now I want to talk to you about like, you  
24 know, your actual kind of engagement with him in  
25 conversation. I know we were just able to see it, but I

1 think it's probably helpful for us to talk a bit about it  
2 now. So your initial questions to him were just  
3 identification questions, like his full name; is that  
4 fair?

5 A Correct. Demographics.

6 Q Okay. And he was initially kind of slow to  
7 respond; is that also fair? And soft spoken?

8 A That's fair.

9 Q Okay. You'd agree -- sorry, those were two  
10 questions. I apologize. But you'd agree with both?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Okay. And in responding to your questions even  
13 just about his name and his nicknames, he laughs  
14 throughout; is that fair?

15 A At bits and pieces, yes.

16 Q Okay. And you and Detective Harris also  
17 laughed?

18 A Correct.

19 Q Okay. And when you asked his age he laughs  
20 again and is unable to give you his exact age; is that  
21 right?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Kind of throughout this process, those initial  
24 questions, he's intensely rubbing his hands together. Do  
25 you remember seeing that?

1 A I don't remember.

2 Q If it was --

3 A Like going through --

4 Q If you --

5 A I was listening to it. I wasn't viewing.

6 Q Okay. So if he was, then it would be on the  
7 video, fair?

8 A Correct.

9 Q Okay. And then you qualify your next questions  
10 as being silly, like I'm going to ask you some silly  
11 questions. Do you remember that?

12 A The silly ones being can you hear.

13 Q Well, I think you actually say, Initially, I'm  
14 going to ask you some silly questions, but --

15 A As we go they get sillier, yes.

16 Q Okay. You'd agree that a homicide investigation  
17 is serious?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. Constitutional rights are serious?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Okay. A confession in a homicide investigation,  
22 pretty serious, right?

23 A Correct.

24 Q Okay. And so a valid waiver of constitutional  
25 rights, that would be pretty important, right?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Not silly?

3 A The demographics were silly. Yes.

4 Q Okay. So information pertaining to a valid  
5 waiver, like imbibition of alcohol, drugs, prescription  
6 drugs, those would also be serious, not silly?

7 A Correct.

8 Q Okay. Just like an ability to see, read,  
9 listen, comprehend?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Those would also be serious?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And important. But you told Mr. Whitfield that  
14 you had to ask him some silly questions, fair?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay. And then those silly questions began with  
17 whether or not he was taking any prescriptions or any  
18 drugs; is that right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And in response he said, "Probably so. I smoke  
21 so many drugs. I smoke. I drink. I do all that."  
22 Right?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. And Detective Harris interjected I think  
25 at this point and he asked a specific question of

1 Mr. Whitfield, "Are you on any medication?" Do you recall  
2 that question one?

3 A Yes. I believe before that I asked, "Are you on  
4 any prescription medications?"

5 Q Okay. Now, Mr. Whitfield's response was, "No,  
6 not at this moment." Do you remember that?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. You didn't follow up and ask him what  
9 medication it might have been, when he was on it, or for  
10 what it was, correct?

11 A No.

12 Q Because you didn't follow up with him at all  
13 regarding medication or prescriptions, correct?

14 A Because he said no.

15 Q Okay. And neither did Detective Harris,  
16 correct?

17 A Correct.

18 Q Okay. And then you asked him, "Are you under  
19 the influence of alcohol right now?" Do you remember  
20 that?

21 A Correct.

22 Q And Mr. Whitfield said no?

23 A Correct.

24 Q Okay. And with response to a question about  
25 illegal drugs, Mr. Whitfield admitted that he had smoked

1 some weed earlier?

2 A Yes.

3 Q We understand weed to be marijuana, right?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. And he appeared to be a little bit kind  
6 of hesitant about giving that information, so Detective  
7 Harris said, "We don't really care. We just need to  
8 know." Do you remember that?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. And that was kind of it for the questions  
11 about what Mr. Whitfield might have kind of imbibed or  
12 taken into his body during that day; is that right?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. No questions about sleep or how he's  
15 feeling or anything like that, right?

16 A No.

17 Q Okay. And then you asked him those, like,  
18 questions that you truly have described as being silly,  
19 right? Can you hear; can you read; can you write?

20 A Right. And to clarify, when I've already had a  
21 conversation with someone and you're actively speaking and  
22 asking them if they can hear and they're responding to  
23 you, it does appear silly.

24 Q Okay. So that's why you say silly?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Okay. But you also ask him if he can read; is  
2 that correct?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. And his response was "not real good,"  
5 right?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Okay.

8 A He said, "Yes. Not real good."

9 Q And in response to your question of can you  
10 write, he shrugged and said "I guess," and then later  
11 said, "I can read. I can write"?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Okay. Now, at no time did you give him  
14 something to read; is that correct?

15 A That's correct.

16 Q Okay. At no time did you give him something and  
17 ask him to write; is that correct?

18 A Until he signed his name.

19 Q Okay. I mean, we've seen it's not exactly like  
20 Cornelius Whitfield with all of the letters very obvious.

21 A Everybody's signature is different.

22 Q Okay.

23 A So I can't.

24 Q So you don't actually -- you didn't make an  
25 assessment of whether he --

1           A     Correct.

2           Q     -- can in fact write?  I'm so sorry, just for  
3 our record and our poor court reporter --

4           A     Aside from signing his name, I did not get a  
5 written alphabet from him.

6           Q     Okay.  You made no inquiries into his mental  
7 state, fair?

8           A     Fair.

9           Q     You never asked if he had any mental health  
10 diagnosis?

11          A     No.

12          Q     Okay.  And, again, like no further questions  
13 about any prescriptions or medications that he may or may  
14 not have been prescribed but wasn't taking?

15          A     Correct.

16          Q     Okay.  You never asked him if he had slept the  
17 night before?

18          A     No.

19          Q     You didn't ask him when he last ate?

20          A     No.

21          Q     And at no point in time over the course of the  
22 six-hour video did you ask him how he was feeling?

23          A     No.

24          Q     Okay.  Um --

25          A     I did ask if he was cold and if he'd like to

1 shirt, trying to find a shirt for him.

2 Q Okay. Now, I think you didn't offer him clothes  
3 until after he was stuck on that last question of Miranda;  
4 is that fair? What we saw on the video?

5 A Correct.

6 Q Okay. So from the outset you hadn't offered him  
7 clothes?

8 A Correct.

9 Q Okay. Now, at a certain point he said that he  
10 was hearing things in his head, but this didn't prompt you  
11 to ask him, What are you hearing, what are they saying,  
12 correct?

13 A No, not at that time.

14 Q Okay. Now, would you agree that over the course  
15 of the several hours that Mr. Whitfield was in that room  
16 that he engaged in a lot of kind of odd behaviors?

17 A Odd to me, yes. Could be normal for him.

18 Q Okay. And so the odd behaviors that you saw  
19 were what, like him looking at things that weren't there,  
20 right?

21 A Yeah.

22 Q Okay. He was very fidgety, correct?

23 A Yes.

24 Q He did a lot of hand rubbing; is that right?

25 A Yes.

1 Q A lot of inappropriate smiling, right?

2 A Yes.

3 Q A lot of inappropriate laughing?

4 A Yes.

5 Q He engaged in a lot of bizarre statements, fair?

6 A Fair.

7 Q Okay. And none of this prompted you to ask him  
8 like how he was feeling or how he was doing mentally; is  
9 that right?

10 A Correct.

11 Q Okay. And then you got to what you called at  
12 some point the serious questions; is that fair?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. Although you and Detective Harris  
15 continued to kind of laugh and smile throughout this  
16 portion as well, correct?

17 A To build rapport, yes.

18 Q Okay. So you would agree that you did continue  
19 to laugh and smile throughout this part?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Okay. And we saw the Miranda rights waiver  
22 form, which I think is State Number 2. All of that is  
23 your handwriting with the exception of the signing line  
24 which you said was Mr. Whitfield's and the witness line  
25 which was Detective Harris; is that correct?

1           A     Correct.

2           Q     Okay.  Now I want to talk -- well, I guess let's  
3 just go in order.  So the first question is, you know,  
4 like do you understand that you have the right to remain  
5 silent, basically, right?

6           A     Correct.

7           Q     Okay.  And what was Mr. Whitfield's response?

8           A     Without seeing it, it was yes or yeah.

9           Q     I'm happy to give you --

10          A     Sure.

11          Q     Just so that we're all clear.

12                MS. SEIFER-SMITH:  Do you mind if I approach?

13                THE COURT:  No, not at all.

14   BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH:

15          Q     Okay.

16          A     So he replied yes.

17          Q     Okay.  And then there's -- obviously, there's  
18 the question that's part of the form and then there's an  
19 "A" and then there's a space for an answer.

20          A     Yes.

21          Q     So is it fair to assume that that is like a cue  
22 for you to write down what the person you are speaking  
23 with is saying?

24          A     Yes.

25          Q     Okay.  But you obviously didn't write down every

1 single thing that Mr. Whitfield said to you?

2 A Right. That's cumbersome, plus it's recorded,  
3 so we have it there.

4 Q Okay. But, obviously, you changed from like  
5 "yes" to "yeah" like as we're looking at the form; is that  
6 right?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. Now I want to -- and I know they're not  
9 numbered, so let's orient you. So number 3, which is do  
10 you understand that you have the right to have an attorney  
11 present while you are being questioned, he gave kind of a  
12 different, sort of longer response. Do you recall that?

13 A He did. I believe that was the one where he did  
14 like the head nod, the yeah -- or the yes, yeah, uh-huh,  
15 like five different ways to say -- to indicate yes.

16 Q Well, he kind of hesitated initially and then he  
17 said a number of different things like yes, a yeah, and  
18 then he said, "Yeah, right. You just made me think of  
19 something." Do you recall him saying that?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Okay. And you didn't inquire any further about  
22 what that made him think of?

23 A No, ma'am.

24 Q Okay. So he interjected that this  
25 constitutional right has made him think of something. You

1 inquired further not at all?

2 A Correct.

3 Q Okay. You just carried on with the next  
4 question; is that fair?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. And then the fifth question, do you  
7 understand that you can decide at any time to exercise  
8 these rights and not answer any questions or make any  
9 statements. You wrote "yeah," but really he was initially  
10 nonresponsive. Do you recall that?

11 A Without going specifically through there, I  
12 mean, it's a long interview.

13 Q Okay. It would be on the video, correct?

14 A Okay. Yeah.

15 Q Okay. Do you remember him saying something like  
16 "I should have been real" and then he says some, like,  
17 kind of incomprehensible things?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. And during, like, that kind of response,  
20 he's shaking his head; he's smiling; he's laughing --

21 A Yes.

22 Q -- is that right? And there -- you didn't --  
23 you tell him a joke, right?

24 A Correct.

25 Q You were --

1           A     Correct. That would be game for, you know, odd  
2 behavior.

3           Q     Okay. It was -- he was not -- initially  
4 nonresponsive to that question, correct?

5           A     Correct.

6           Q     Okay. And then that last question he really got  
7 stuck on for quite a while, the having these rights in  
8 mind do you wish to talk to us now. He does not affirm  
9 this for maybe ten, 15 minutes; is that fair?

10          A     That's fair.

11          Q     Okay. He initially shakes his head. He says,  
12 "I don't really understand what's going on right now." Do  
13 you recall that?

14          A     Yes.

15          Q     He asks if he's free to go; is that right?

16          A     And I make it clear that he's not.

17          Q     Yeah. Which was probably fairly obvious to him  
18 before that, right?

19          A     I'm not gonna make assumptions for what someone  
20 else thinks.

21          Q     Okay. Fair enough. And it's during those ten  
22 to 15 minutes while he has not affirmatively said like,  
23 yes, I'm willing to talk to you that you offered him  
24 clothes, right? You said like --

25          A     Clothes, something to drink.

1 Q Some food?

2 A Of that nature, yes.

3 Q It's at that point that you offer it. You  
4 hadn't offered it earlier, correct?

5 A Correct.

6 Q Okay. And during this time he's also saying  
7 things that indicate kind of like really not a great  
8 mental state, right?

9 A I'm not a mental health professional, so I can't  
10 justify his or like comment on his mental status.

11 Q Well, at one point you tell him like, oh, you  
12 really seem like you were teetering on the edge.

13 A Right.

14 Q That was in response to what he was saying to  
15 you, right?

16 A Yeah. Trying to make a decision, yes.

17 Q And you also say like, "It seems like there's a  
18 lot going on in your head"?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. And that was in response to his behavior  
21 and what he was saying; is that right?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. And he also says things like "I've been  
24 going through a bunch of stuff" and he's hearing things in  
25 his head and out on the street, right?

1           A     Correct.

2           Q     And he doesn't want to sound crazy, but he kind  
3 of sounds crazy, right?

4           A     That's true.

5           Q     Okay. Now, in terms of what you knew of  
6 Mr. Whitfield before you went into the room, I think on  
7 direct you indicated that you knew that he had had prior  
8 contact with the criminal justice system; is that right?

9           A     Yes, that's correct.

10          Q     Okay. And you had described that as a prior  
11 criminal history?

12          A     Yes.

13          Q     That's not like a full file of each time that  
14 Mr. Whitfield had police contact; is that right?

15          A     Yes, that's correct.

16          Q     It's more of like a list of the cases that the  
17 St. Petersburg Police Department had with Mr. Whitfield;  
18 is that fair?

19          A     Yes.

20          Q     So you wouldn't have known if he had ever been  
21 read Miranda by any other officers or detectives; is that  
22 fair?

23          A     On that day that I interviewed him --

24          Q     Correct.

25          A     -- no.

1 Q Okay. So you didn't know if that was the first  
2 time that Mr. Whitfield had ever been read Miranda,  
3 correct?

4 A For the criminal history that we had, he -- I  
5 don't know who would have Mirandized him before, but it  
6 would have been common practice even decades ago to read  
7 him Miranda.

8 Q So --

9 A For like for his other interviews and  
10 interrogations.

11 Q So you knew that he had been interrogated  
12 before?

13 A Correct.

14 Q Okay. How did you know that?

15 A Our -- is he a lieutenant or major? I believe  
16 it was a major at the time, Major Furse (phonetic), he had  
17 had dealings with Cornelius Whitfield before and had  
18 interviewed and interrogated him.

19 Q And when was that?

20 A Years before.

21 Q Okay.

22 A Yeah. The exact year I don't know. I would  
23 have to pull the history up to look at it.

24 Q Okay. And you didn't have an ability to  
25 actually like view the interrogation, correct?

1           A     No.

2           Q     I believe actually St. Pete only fairly recently  
3 started video recording interrogations, correct?

4           A     We were doing it in the old building. So when  
5 the old police department was there.

6           Q     Okay.

7           A     I know they were doing them there.

8           Q     You had had no prior contact with Mr. Whitfield,  
9 correct?

10          A     Correct.

11          Q     And you hadn't spoken to anybody who had like in  
12 depth in terms of whether or not he was read Miranda, if  
13 he understood it?

14          A     Correct.

15          Q     If he had any cognitive issues, anything like  
16 that, fair?

17          A     Correct.

18          Q     Okay. So you just had spoken to the major who  
19 said that many, many years ago I had contact with  
20 Mr. Whitfield and I read Miranda?

21          A     Yes.

22          Q     Okay. Nothing further in terms of like what was  
23 discussed?

24          A     Going back reading it, reviewing it, no.

25          Q     Okay. All right. Fair. And, sorry, you don't

1 know even when that was?

2 A Correct.

3 Q Okay. So when he was a juvenile or when he was  
4 an adult?

5 A Correct.

6 Q Got it. Okay.

7 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: If I could just beg a  
8 moment of the Court's indulgence?

9 THE COURT: Sure.

10 BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH:

11 Q Now, we -- we only watched like a short-ish clip  
12 of about 25, 30 minutes of that video, but it goes on  
13 for -- gosh, it's a total of six hours and five minutes;  
14 is that fair?

15 A Yes.

16 Q During that time you -- you and Detective Harris  
17 don't remain in the room the entire time; is that fair?

18 A That's correct.

19 Q Okay. You exit the room on a few occasions; is  
20 that right?

21 A Yes.

22 Q When you're out of that room you have  
23 conversations with colleagues; is that right?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And then you reenter the room --

1           A     Yes.

2           Q     -- periodically. Okay. And each and every time  
3 you reenter the room you don't reaffirm Mr. Whitfield's  
4 alleged waiver of constitutional rights and his desire to  
5 speak with you; is that also fair?

6           A     That's fair.

7           Q     You just pick up the conversation again,  
8 correct?

9           A     Yes.

10          Q     And throughout you're not, like, asking him how  
11 he's feeling, if any of his feelings have changed, what  
12 kind of mental state he's in, anything like that; is that  
13 right?

14          A     Correct.

15          Q     Okay. And we discussed some of his kind of like  
16 odd or bizarre behaviors. You'd agree with me that that's  
17 throughout the entirety of the recording; is that fair?

18          A     Yes.

19          Q     Okay.

20                MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I don't think I have any  
21 further questions at this time.

22                THE COURT: Thank you.

23                MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Sorry. I'll just pack up  
24 my things. Oh, I apologize. Yeah, I'll bring that  
25 back to the clerk. Thanks so much.

1 THE COURT: Thank you, Counselor.

2 Any redirect?

3 MR. KOSKINAS: No, sir.

4 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, Detective.  
5 You may step down.

6 THE WITNESS: Thank you, your Honor.

7 THE COURT: Do you want her to remain?

8 MR. KOSKINAS: No, I don't think so.

9 THE COURT: She can be excused? You okay with  
10 ex --

11 MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah. Unless they want her for  
12 next week, I have no problem releasing her.

13 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No, I wouldn't think so.

14 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. KOSKINAS: You're released. Thank you.

16 THE COURT: Additional witnesses, State?

17 MR. BRADLOW: Yes, your Honor. Jason Harris  
18 with the St. Petersburg Police Department.

19 THE COURT: All right. Have Mr. Harris step  
20 in, please.

21 THE BAILIFF: Face the clerk. Raise your  
22 right hand to receive the oath.

23

24

25

1  
2 THEREUPON,

3 JASON HARRIS,

4 the witness herein, having been first duly sworn, was  
5 examined and testified as follows:  
6

7 THE COURT: Good morning, Detective.

8 THE WITNESS: Good morning, sir.

9 MR. BRADLOW: May I inquire?

10 THE COURT: Whenever you're ready, Counselor.

11 MR. BRADLOW: Thank you, Judge.

12 **DIRECT EXAMINATION**

13 BY MR. BRADLOW:

14 Q Good morning, sir. Could you please introduce  
15 yourself to the judge.

16 A My name is Jason Harris.

17 Q And where do you work?

18 A I'm a detective with the major crimes unit of  
19 the St. Petersburg Police Department.

20 Q How long have you worked at St. Petersburg  
21 Police Department?

22 A Since I retired in August of '07 and sworn since  
23 March of '08.

24 Q And how long have you been in major crimes?

25 A Since December of 2017.

1 Q Okay. And while on major crimes or throughout  
2 your career have you had the opportunity to interview  
3 witnesses?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Or, excuse me, defendants?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Have you had any training in regards to  
8 interviewing defendants in criminal cases?

9 A Yes.

10 Q What sort of training have you had?

11 A I took a class called Interviews and  
12 Interrogations. I believe that was when I first went to  
13 the detective side, around that time.

14 Q And, ballpark, how many defendants have you  
15 interviewed throughout your career?

16 A Oh, I have no idea.

17 Q Are we talking dozens?

18 A Yeah.

19 Q Okay. Did you become involved in the Cornelius  
20 Whitfield case?

21 A Yes, I did.

22 Q What was your role in that case?

23 A I was assigned as the lead detective to the  
24 incident that occurred I believe it was on February 16th,  
25 2021.

1 Q Were you assigned a role in the case that  
2 involved the Whitfield home or the prior alleged murder?

3 A The Whitfield home.

4 Q Okay. Did you have the opportunity to take part  
5 in an interview of Mr. Whitfield in this case?

6 A Yes, I did.

7 Q Officer Marrero, formerly Detective Mensah,  
8 previously just testified, but were you present with  
9 Marrero during the interview in this case?

10 A I was.

11 Q Prior to the interview occurring were you on  
12 scene at the Whitfield home where the crime occurred?

13 A I don't believe I was there. I think before I  
14 got there I was sent to the hospital to speak with the  
15 victim.

16 Q Okay. When did you first come in contact with  
17 Mr. Whitfield in this case?

18 A After speaking with Ms. Harilal at the state --  
19 at the hospital.

20 Q And just for the court reporter, what was that  
21 name again?

22 A I believe it was Shirlelene Harilal.

23 Q Okay. Did you at any point question  
24 Mr. Whitfield prior to the recorded interview in this  
25 case?

1           A     No.

2           Q     Would the video of that interview that occurred  
3 at the St. Petersburg Police Department include all of the  
4 questioning that occurred between the St. Petersburg  
5 Police Department and Mr. Whitfield?

6           A     As far as I know, yes.

7           Q     Okay. One moment. Did you use any sort of  
8 tactics trying to coerce Mr. Whitfield to waive his  
9 Miranda rights?

10          A     I did not.

11          Q     Okay. Did you actually make attempts through  
12 the first approximate half hour of the interview to try to  
13 steer the conversation back towards the waiver of those  
14 rights?

15          A     I absolutely did.

16          Q     Okay. And did you do that just once or on  
17 multiple occasions?

18          A     Multiple occasions.

19          Q     Did you use any sort of trickery in your  
20 speaking to Mr. Whitfield trying to get him to waive his  
21 Miranda rights?

22          A     I did not.

23                MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Objection. Relevance.

24                This is for the Court to decide.

25                THE COURT: Yeah, it kind of is. Go ahead.

1 MR. BRADLOW: All right. Fair enough.

2 BY MR. BRADLOW:

3 Q Are you familiar with Mr. Whitfield's background  
4 as far as criminal history goes?

5 A I am a little bit more today, but I hadn't been  
6 at the time, no.

7 Q Okay.

8 A I knew about the prior case from a couple weeks  
9 prior, but I didn't know much more than that.

10 Q Fair enough.

11 MR. BRADLOW: Can I have one moment,  
12 your Honor?

13 THE COURT: Sure.

14 MR. BRADLOW: No further questions from the  
15 State.

16 Thank you, sir.

17 THE COURT: Cross-examination?

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes, please.

19 **CROSS-EXAMINATION**

20 BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH:

21 Q Good morning.

22 A Good morning. How are you?

23 Q How are you?

24 A Good.

25 Q Good. Okay. So when you became involved on

1 February 16th of 2021, you had been a law enforcement  
2 officer or sworn officer for about 14 years; is that fair?

3 A Yes. About that.

4 Q Sorry to make you do math.

5 A Yeah. It's about 13 and what, yeah.

6 Q Okay.

7 A I'm terrible at math.

8 Q And you just mentioned on direct that you had  
9 done at least dozens of interrogations; is that fair?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Or would you say more, like hundreds?

12 A Are you saying since -- up until now or are you  
13 talking up until that point, I guess?

14 Q Let's say now first.

15 A Let's say now?

16 Q Okay.

17 A I would say dozens, yeah.

18 Q Still just dozens, not hundreds.

19 A I have no -- again, I have no idea.

20 Q Don't sell yourself short, Detective.

21 A I have no idea.

22 Q Okay.

23 A I've done my share I would say.

24 Q Certainly interrogations, which are like  
25 interviews of subjects, you'd agree with me with that

1 definition?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Okay. Certainly, that would be something that  
4 is effective in your line of work in terms of gathering  
5 evidence to support an arrest?

6 A Correct.

7 Q Okay. So certainly something that you would  
8 probably seek to employ in most, if not all,  
9 investigations if possible, fair?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. You've worked more than a dozen cases  
12 during your time in major crimes?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And before you were major crimes in 2017 you  
15 were working other cases that could have necessitated an  
16 interrogation; is that also fair?

17 A Yes.

18 Q So since, gosh, when you started, do you think  
19 maybe at this point it's probably more like hundreds of  
20 interrogations of subjects?

21 A It's possible.

22 Q Okay. And I think you only mentioned the one  
23 training that you had done which was kind of at the  
24 beginning of your detective career; is that right?

25 A Yes. And I'm not even sure when that was. I'd

1 have to look at the records.

2 Q Okay. Fair enough. But, certainly, like there  
3 are occasions when you, as like a lead investigator, you  
4 might be leading an interrogation, but you work with  
5 colleagues; is that fair?

6 A Correct.

7 Q Okay. So you might be involved in an  
8 interrogation where somebody else is doing the  
9 questioning; is that also fair?

10 A That's true, yes.

11 Q Okay. And so, I mean, I think we're all human.  
12 We learn by experience. So like you would have learned  
13 something from your training, but you're also picking  
14 things up from your colleagues as well; is that right?

15 A I always try to, yes.

16 Q Okay. Good attitude.

17 A Yes.

18 Q Now, I think you mentioned that you were aware  
19 of the homicide investigation regarding Mr. Whitfield that  
20 Detective Mensah at the time, so Officer Marrero, was  
21 involved in as the lead but had not personally been  
22 involved in that investigation up until the 16th; is that  
23 about right?

24 A I don't -- I don't recall having anything to do  
25 with the initial investigation for Detective Marrero's

1 case.

2 Q Okay. I think when we spoke a few weeks ago  
3 during your deposition you thought, like in terms of your  
4 knowledge of that case, it was just kind of generally that  
5 there was an active warrant for Mr. Whitfield during that  
6 time, but you didn't really know all the details of the  
7 investigation.

8 A Yes.

9 Q Does that still seem about right?

10 A Correct. And it was an apartment that involved  
11 potential friends, I guess, but my -- my knowledge of the  
12 ins and outs of everything is very limited.

13 Q Okay. And you didn't know much about the means  
14 by which, like, other officers, detectives, or the  
15 resources of the department were being used to seek  
16 Mr. Whitfield; is that fair?

17 A Correct.

18 Q Okay.

19 A I -- I did know about the surveillance units  
20 being at the house, but I didn't know the degree of what  
21 everybody else was doing.

22 Q Okay. Your, like, true involvement with  
23 Mr. Whitfield as a suspect or a subject didn't really  
24 begin until the afternoon of the 16th, is that fair, when  
25 you were tapped in by -- was it Sergeant Elizondo?

1           A     I believe it was Sergeant Demark.

2           Q     Demark. I apologize.

3           A     They were both our sergeants at the time, so it  
4 could have been either, but I want to say it was  
5 Sergeant Demark.

6           Q     Okay. And by the time that you actually made  
7 like kind of physical contact with Mr. Whitfield at the  
8 department, he was already under arrest for that previous  
9 case; is that correct?

10          A     Yes.

11          Q     Okay. Because there was an active arrest  
12 warrant that had been essentially executed when he was  
13 detained; is that fair?

14          A     Yes.

15          Q     Okay. So he was not free to go no matter what  
16 he said to you or Officer Marrero?

17          A     Correct.

18          Q     Okay. I want to talk a little bit about like  
19 your kind of initial impressions of Cornelius based on,  
20 you know, like seeing him and like interacting in terms of  
21 that initial conversation. Like he was very small, right,  
22 like physically small?

23          A     I mean, everybody is kind of small compared to  
24 me. So it's like I'm --

25          Q     Fair. It's all relative.

1           A     Yeah.

2           Q     He wasn't fully clothed, right?  He was  
3 shirtless?

4           A     Correct.

5           Q     Okay.  He was only wearing some baggy pants and  
6 I think shoes; is that right?

7           A     I don't know if he was wearing shoes or not,  
8 but, yeah, he was wearing pants.

9           Q     Okay.  Tattoos covered most of his visible body;  
10 is that right?

11          A     Yes.

12          Q     Okay.  And he was -- initially, he wasn't given  
13 a shirt or a jacket; is that right?

14          A     No, he was not.

15          Q     And he wasn't even offered a shirt or jacket for  
16 some time?

17          A     I think when we started doing Miranda at some  
18 point he was offered, but we didn't have a shirt to give  
19 him.  Somehow we came up with a jacket finally, but it  
20 wasn't that we didn't want to give him one.  There wasn't  
21 one readily available at the time.

22          Q     Okay.  So the problem solving was ultimately a  
23 jacket --

24          A     Right.

25          Q     -- at some point later down the line; is that

1 right?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Okay. He wasn't initially offered anything to  
4 eat or drink; is that right?

5 A He was during -- when we got in there, well,  
6 either it was just before -- I think it was before we  
7 started Miranda. I'd have to look at the video. But he  
8 was offered drinks or chips.

9 Q Safe to assume that -- I think you mentioned on  
10 direct the video covers the entirety of the questions,  
11 right?

12 A Yes.

13 Q So if you don't recall something as we sit here  
14 today, best reference is to go back to the video?

15 A Absolutely.

16 Q Okay. So in terms of, you know, like when he  
17 was offered either food or drink or clothing, we should  
18 refer to the video for when that actually happened?

19 A Yeah. Yes.

20 Q Okay. Fair. And Miranda was really handled by  
21 Officer Marrero, or Detective Mensah, right?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. Was that something that was predetermined  
24 by the two of you?

25 A I don't -- again, I don't really recall. My

1 guess would be it would have just been whoever had the  
2 Miranda form. We just went with that. I don't think  
3 there was like a pre -- I don't recall there being a  
4 predetermined thing like you're gonna do this, I'm gonna  
5 do that. It's possible, but I don't -- I don't recall  
6 that.

7 Q By the time you two entered the interrogation,  
8 Detective Mensah, Officer Marrero, had been seeking  
9 Mr. Whitfield for two weeks; is that right?

10 A That's my understanding, yes.

11 Q And she had been doing a number of things to try  
12 to detain him; is that -- is that fair?

13 A I would assume so. I -- I don't know what those  
14 would be. But, yeah, I mean, if she was actively looking  
15 for a suspect, that would make sense.

16 Q So she was kind of raring to go, like really  
17 ready to talk to him once -- once you-all got to the  
18 station?

19 A I can only speak for myself. So I guess if you  
20 can ask her that. I would imagine so.

21 Q Okay.

22 A I would want to talk if it was my case.

23 Q Okay. Now, in particular, there was a very  
24 lengthy period of time where Mr. Whitfield was kind of  
25 stuck on that last question of having these rights in mind

1 do you wish to talk to us now. Do you recall that?

2 A Yes, I do.

3 Q Okay. And he kind of like went on all sorts of  
4 tangents during -- about ten to 15 minutes that you-all  
5 were in the room together, correct?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And he talked about how -- essentially how he  
8 was hearing voices, right?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Those voices were telling him what to do?

11 A Yes.

12 Q That he was like hearing things in his head?

13 A Yes.

14 Q That he was hearing things on the street?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And that he felt as though he was being mocked  
17 and there was something about like the television  
18 reflecting that mockery back at him, I think?

19 A Yeah. I vaguely remember that, yes.

20 Q Okay. And at no point in time did anybody stop  
21 him and say like do you have any mental health diagnoses?

22 A Well, no. I don't believe anybody asked him  
23 that, no.

24 Q Okay. At some point during some of those very  
25 kind of initial questions, so I guess -- sorry to step

1 back. So initial questions tend to be asked of a subject  
2 to see if they're under the influence of anything, get  
3 their basic demographics, things like that. Fair?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. And Mr. Whitfield was asked questions  
6 like that; is that right?

7 A Yes, he was.

8 Q Okay. And Detective Mensah handled the  
9 questioning, those kind of demographic and like if you  
10 have imbibed anything today --

11 A Right.

12 Q -- questions.

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay.

15 A I think I asked him if he was on any  
16 prescription medication because I don't think he quite  
17 understood the question or --

18 Q You did ask him that.

19 A Yes.

20 Q You asked him like, Do you have any medications?

21 A Right.

22 Q Do you recall his answer?

23 A I think he said no.

24 Q He said, "No, not at the moment."

25 A Okay.

1           Q     You didn't follow up with him about that,  
2 correct?

3           A     I don't recall.

4           Q     Okay. If you did, it would be on video, fair?

5           A     It would be, yes.

6           Q     Okay. You never asked him about like anything  
7 further regarding medication throughout the conversation  
8 that you had with him?

9           A     No, I did not.

10          Q     Okay.

11          A     I don't think so.

12          Q     So like why he would have been taking  
13 medication, when it was, who prescribed it, anything like  
14 that?

15          A     No.

16          Q     Okay. And you never asked him about his sleep,  
17 like if he was sleeping, if he had slept the night before?

18          A     I don't believe I asked him that. It may have  
19 came up at some point in time. It would have been from  
20 him. But, no, I don't believe I asked him anything about  
21 sleep. And I don't remember if Detective Marrero did  
22 either.

23          Q     I think when we spoke about a month ago, your  
24 impression was that he'd indicated that he wasn't  
25 sleeping.

1           A     I believe that may be the case.  Again, I'd have  
2 to -- I'd have to see if -- yeah, it's possible.

3           Q     Okay.  And I'm sure you know from working the  
4 difficult hours job that you have that not sleeping can  
5 have profound deleterious effects on someone's mental  
6 acuity and their mental health, et cetera, fair?

7           A     Sure, yeah.

8           Q     Okay.  Now, throughout your time in the room  
9 with Mr. Whitfield, he engaged in a lot of very odd and  
10 bizarre and sort of concerning behaviors; is that fair.

11          A     That's fair.

12          Q     So much so that you took a lot of time to write  
13 it down in your report; is that right?

14          A     Yes, I did.

15          Q     And I think you told me that that's kind of  
16 unusual for you to actually like document somebody's  
17 interaction with you in terms of like an interrogation  
18 because it's all on a video?

19          A     Yes.

20          Q     But this was so profound to you that you decided  
21 to write it down and memorialize it for your report?

22          A     I felt like it was important, yes.

23          Q     Okay.  And kind of amongst those things were his  
24 inappropriate giggling or laughter or smiling really  
25 throughout the time that he was with you-all?

1           A     I don't know if I documented that in my report,  
2 but I think that --

3           Q     Do you recall seeing that, though?

4           A     There were times where like -- so I guess it  
5 depends on inappropriate. Sometimes when you're  
6 interviewing people, you might crack a joke, try to kind  
7 of break the ice, try to bring the emotions down a little  
8 bit. I know of like when we're -- when he was asked about  
9 how he got his nickname, he kind of started laughing about  
10 that, which I didn't think it was strange. I thought it  
11 was, okay, well, it's his nickname.

12          Q     He also laughed and smiled on occasions when --

13          A     Yes, yes.

14          Q     -- there weren't jokes, though, right?

15          A     Correct, yes.

16          Q     Okay. Which would be, I guess, like not really  
17 appropriate for the context; is that fair?

18          A     Yeah.

19          Q     Okay. There were occasions when he was not  
20 responsive to questions?

21          A     There were pauses and silence. I don't know  
22 that -- I would say during the Miranda portion he was  
23 pretty responsive up until the very last question.

24          Q     Okay. And I guess when I'm being not -- asking  
25 the question of like nonresponsive, it can be twofold,

1 like not actually responding like you just answered --

2 A Uh-huh.

3 Q -- or he might answer a question in -- on  
4 something totally irrelevant and not -- like not  
5 responding directly to the question. That's --

6 A It would seem that way, yes. Again, though, but  
7 it may have made complete and total sense to what he was  
8 trying to say. We just -- it just wasn't coming through.  
9 I -- I don't know. But I can see what you're saying, yes.

10 Q Okay. And you indicated, I think, that the  
11 there were definite signs that he was going through some  
12 stuff?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And that from the outset he had stated that he  
15 was hearing things in his head, right?

16 A Yes.

17 Q That voices were telling him things to do and  
18 also things not to do?

19 A Yes.

20 Q He told you about a phobia, or I think he said  
21 "phobic," that he was phobic of phones. Do you remember  
22 this?

23 A Yes, I do.

24 Q And he gave some examples. Like he might be on  
25 the phone with you, but he's talking to Detective Mensah

1 you gave as an example. Do you remember that?

2 A I remember him talking about phones and having  
3 confusion about, you know, who he was actually talking to.  
4 I don't remember the exact details, if it was him talking  
5 to me on the phone but he was actually talking to another.  
6 I do remember the phone thing, but I don't remember the  
7 details.

8 Q You talked about like, you know, his kind of  
9 phobia of being on the phones --

10 A Yes.

11 Q -- because people can disguise their voices.

12 A Correct.

13 Q So he wouldn't know who he was talking to.

14 A Yes.

15 Q And that people might tell him to do things over  
16 the phone and he would do them, but he wouldn't know why  
17 he was doing them, essentially.

18 A I remember the doing them and not knowing why  
19 and being told to, but I don't -- I don't remember if that  
20 had to do with phones or -- If it's on there, it's on  
21 there. I just --

22 Q Okay.

23 A I'm not disputing it. I just don't recall the  
24 phone -- I remember there being a part about the phones.  
25 I just don't --

1 Q Yeah.

2 A Yeah.

3 Q If -- he indicated certainly some paranoia about  
4 electronics, right?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Like there's the phones. There's the  
7 television.

8 A Yes.

9 Q He seemed just kind of like generally phobic of  
10 electronic devices, fair?

11 A That's fair.

12 Q Okay. And he clearly had like confusion of  
13 thoughts, like his -- when he was speaking, thoughts would  
14 run together. He didn't make a lot of sense often.

15 A Yeah, there were -- there were times where  
16 things would kind of go off the rails a little bit.

17 Q Okay. And he didn't engage in this kind of  
18 bizarre behavior with just yourself and the other  
19 detective, but also he had -- I don't know that I would  
20 call it an altercation, but like an incident with the  
21 forensic tech at the very end of the interview. Do you  
22 recall that?

23 A I do.

24 Q And I think you also thought that this was kind  
25 of odd behavior. He pulled the paper away with regard to

1 his nail clippings?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Okay. So this wasn't like, you know, truly  
4 disrupted or tampered with the evidence. It was just like  
5 an odd engagement with that person; is that fair?

6 A That's fair.

7 Q Okay.

8 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: If I could just beg a  
9 couple moments of the Court's indulgence?

10 THE COURT: Okay.

11 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I don't have anything  
12 further. Thank you.

13 MR. BRADLOW: No redirect, your Honor.

14 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, sir.

15 Can we excuse him for purposes of next week,  
16 too?

17 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

18 MR. BRADLOW: Yes.

19 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. Appreciate  
20 it.

21 THE WITNESS: Thank you, your Honor.

22 THE COURT: Any other witnesses today, State?

23 MR. KOSKINAS: No, sir.

24 THE COURT: Defense, any today?

25 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No.

1 THE COURT: Okay. So we're coming back. You  
2 have a couple more. Are they available next  
3 Friday?

4 MR. BRADLOW: I talked to the liaison. They  
5 are out this week, but they're back -- are back  
6 Friday next week. So we still need subpoenas, but  
7 they are around. They should be available.

8 THE COURT: So I'm going to listen to the six  
9 hours between now and next Friday. Those two  
10 witnesses, arguments, ruling next week. Right?

11 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I think so.

12 THE COURT: Okay. Anything else this morning?

13 MR. KOSKINAS: No, sir.

14 THE COURT: All right. Appreciate it. Thank  
15 you.

16 (COURT ADJOURNED)

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

**CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER**

STATE OF FLORIDA     )

COUNTY OF PINELLAS   )

I, Carla Jessal, 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 19th day of May, 2026.

/s Carla Jessal

Carla Jessal

Registered Professional Reporter