

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: COURT'S RULING ON MOTION TO SUPPRESS

BEFORE: THE HONORABLE PHILIP J. FEDERICO  
Circuit Court Judge

DATE: April 10, 2026

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

REPORTER: Carla Jessal  
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(Pages 1 to 29)

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

1 THE BAILIFF: All rise.

2 THE COURT: Be seated. Make yourselves  
3 comfortable.

4 All right. Ready for Mr. Whitfield?

5 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

6 (THE DEFENDANT ENTERED THE COURTROOM)

7 THE COURT: All right. We're here on State of  
8 Florida versus Cornelius Whitfield. Case numbers  
9 21-01099, 21-01513. There's an armed robbery in  
10 there and a series of homicides. We're here on the  
11 motion to suppress defendant's statements which  
12 we've heard previously and viewed hours of videos  
13 as well.

14 Is there anything else either side wants to  
15 indicate before the Court rules on the matter,  
16 State?

17 MR. KOSKINAS: No, sir.

18 THE COURT: Defense?

19 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No.

20 THE COURT: Okay. All right. I spent some  
21 time reviewing the case law relative to these  
22 issues. I probably should summarize what we've  
23 gone through and then what the basic case law is so  
24 that any court that eventually reviews this will  
25

1 know that at least I familiarized myself with the  
2 various things involved.

3 We had a motion to suppress. We heard from a  
4 variety of witnesses, live testimony. We reviewed  
5 the videotape of the interaction between law  
6 enforcement and the defendant that was over six  
7 hours. Counsel were kind enough to allow me to  
8 view that or view some of it, a large portion of  
9 it, in chambers so we didn't sit through the  
10 six hours, which I appreciate. So factually that's  
11 what we've reviewed.

12 I've had a chance to look at the case law.  
13 The State's burden is to establish by a  
14 preponderance of the evidence he knowingly,  
15 intelligently, and voluntarily waived his Miranda  
16 rights. I've got to determine competent  
17 substantial evidence that would support my findings  
18 and then I would reach the correct legal conclusion  
19 that the defendant knowingly, intelligently, and  
20 voluntarily waived his or her Miranda rights.

21 The Florida Supreme Court has repeatedly  
22 stated that it's a totality-of-the-circumstances  
23 test in determining whether defendant knowingly  
24 waived his or her Miranda rights.

25 What else? I'm just trying to think of what

1 else I want to put on the record as far as  
2 summarizing the case law that I've seen.

3 There's different things relative to the  
4 interaction between law enforcement and the  
5 defendant. If he has any limitations, his age,  
6 background, experience, lack of a written waiver of  
7 Miranda rights. All of those things, different  
8 factor, can go into it. Prior interaction with law  
9 enforcement. I mean, there's a number of things.  
10 Mental capacity, physical condition, demeanor,  
11 coherence, articulateness. As I said, it's a  
12 totality-of-the-circumstances test. Mental health,  
13 intoxication are, again, potentially factors in  
14 determining the validity of the waiver. Diminished  
15 mental capacity alone does not affect admissibility  
16 absence improper coercive police conduct. I think  
17 that's *Neeley* from 2013. I know you guys know all  
18 of this. Bear with me because I'm trying to  
19 demonstrate that I've looked at a number of the  
20 case law relating to these types of issues.

21 Let's see. *Benitez*. Defendant's diminished  
22 mental capacity along with improper coercive  
23 misconduct may be relevant to whether a defendant  
24 waived his rights, but diminished mental capacity  
25 not relevant to whether he knowingly and

1 intelligently waived his rights. Intoxication  
2 alone does not invalidate a confession unless the  
3 confessor is intoxicated to the degree of mania or  
4 unable to understand the meaning of his statements.

5 Also, the manner in which Miranda rights were  
6 administered can be a crucial factor in determining  
7 the validity of waiver. Evidence threatened,  
8 tricked, cajoled show the defendant did not  
9 voluntarily waive his privilege.

10 One interesting case I think was *Pitts* from  
11 the Second DCA in '06 in which they found that -- a  
12 trial court, I guess, had granted the motion to  
13 suppress and it was reversed finding that the  
14 police conduct prodding whether he wanted to tell  
15 his side of the story after ambiguously invoking  
16 his right to remain silent. The trial court had  
17 found and rendered the waiver involuntary under the  
18 circumstances. The appellate court reversed that  
19 finding, apparently, that it did not render  
20 involuntary by having the defendant or wanting to  
21 let the defendant know that telling his side of the  
22 story. So that's the basic case law that I  
23 reviewed. Obviously, there's a bunch more cases.

24 I guess, factually, they talked to the  
25 defendant. We all saw it on the video. There was

1           some equivocal responses, but they established that  
2           he had the ability to read and he had the ability  
3           to write. The extent of that, I guess, is open to  
4           interpretation, but I would summarize by saying he  
5           had the ability to read and write.

6           They went over a written Miranda form with  
7           him. Probably the use of the term "silly  
8           questions" was a phraseology that upon reflection  
9           the officers might not have used or perhaps should  
10          have reconsidered, but I don't think that -- I  
11          think that's one piece or one small piece of what  
12          the entire interaction with him was. As I said,  
13          they went over the written Miranda form. They  
14          verbally read it to him. He eventually signed the  
15          form. So there was a written waiver of Miranda.

16          It was not the first time that he went through  
17          this situation or was inquired to this type of  
18          interaction with law enforcement. Obviously, he  
19          did not -- he signed the form immediately. There  
20          was some back and forth between himself and law  
21          enforcement officers. They did tell him, you know,  
22          they wanted to get his side of the story or get his  
23          side of the situation that they found themselves  
24          in, which, as I said, I think was similar to the  
25          case that I referred to earlier, *Pitts*.

1           They asked him -- and I thought this was  
2           fairly significant. He asked whether he was free  
3           to leave. He asked about that I think a couple of  
4           times if I remember correctly, and they said, no,  
5           he was not. So it was clear that he was inquiring  
6           as to his custody status, and I think they made him  
7           pretty clear that he was under arrest and not going  
8           anywhere. So there was no pressure based on that  
9           to say one thing or the other thinking that it  
10          might help have him not be in custody moving  
11          further.

12           So those are the things or some of the things  
13          that I thought were significant. You know, the  
14          time frame, I want to say it was, what, 25 minutes  
15          or so, 30 minutes, my recollection of the time that  
16          they went back and forth on the Miranda waiver. He  
17          gave some equivocal responses.

18           The question would be, you know, why were  
19          those equivocal responses. I don't think, based on  
20          my looking at all the evidence and his responses  
21          and their questions, he said he smoked weed  
22          earlier. I didn't find anything or think anything  
23          on the record suggested any kind of intoxication  
24          was affecting the questions and answers that they  
25          gave.

1           The question becomes mental status or any  
2           mental issues that he might have had. While the  
3           defense's motion was comprehensive in stating what  
4           they believe the evidence showed and was  
5           well-written, I don't know that I would make the  
6           same conclusions that were found in their motion to  
7           suppress. As I said, it was very comprehensive.  
8           It contained what the defense's thought process  
9           was, but I don't know that I would adopt or make  
10          the same conclusions.

11          He was able to go back and forth with the  
12          officers about the Miranda form. They indicated  
13          they wanted him to tell his side of the story or  
14          they wanted to find out what his beliefs about that  
15          were. I mean, there are times from the initial  
16          arrest until the ending of the six hours that it's  
17          obvious he's able to go through a back and forth  
18          with them. Is it the same back and forth that  
19          counsel or myself might have with law enforcement?  
20          No. But, you know, looking at the entire record of  
21          that, I think he was able to express and articulate  
22          his views or his -- what is the word I would say?  
23          His view of events.

24          When he first came out of the house, he was  
25          able to listen to commands. When they arrested

1 him, obviously, they had to go and do what they had  
2 to do as far as getting into the house, but he was  
3 able to follow commands. He was secured in cuffs.  
4 He was able to interact with the officers. There  
5 was no -- what's the word I would use?  
6 Brow-beating or any -- it was a calm interaction  
7 throughout the entire time would have been my  
8 evaluation of it.

9 You know, he went back and forth about, you  
10 know, the waiver. Asked them questions. They  
11 tried to clarify their questions. I didn't see  
12 anything that I thought was constitutionally  
13 impermissible about their inquiry or their back and  
14 forth with him about the waiver. Eventually, after  
15 clarifying for a period of time, he signed a  
16 written waiver. As I said, it's not the first time  
17 he's been through this process. They read him  
18 Miranda.

19 If you take in a vacuum the statement "gotta  
20 ask you some silly questions," I think that you  
21 could argue that's problematic. But I think if you  
22 look at the totality of the circumstances, once he  
23 was engaged, he talked to them as we saw for many  
24 hours. I don't think he had any hesitation. I  
25 guess you could argue, well, you're working

1 backwards from that analysis to the initial waiver,  
2 but I think the overall circumstances are something  
3 that you have to consider.

4 I guess you find a person you're interviewing  
5 where they are. Is it true that based on the  
6 interaction he had some limitations as far as his  
7 mental state? Yes. As I said, do I think  
8 intoxication had anything to do with that? No. Do  
9 I think that the limitations that he has affected  
10 the interactions so that I could say -- and I want  
11 to get back to what it said there -- he knowingly  
12 and voluntarily waived his Miranda rights? I don't  
13 believe -- I think he -- based on the totality of  
14 circumstances, I believe he knowingly,  
15 intelligently, and voluntarily waived his Miranda  
16 rights. I've tried to layout what the  
17 circumstances are.

18 As I said, well-written in the defense's  
19 motion to suppress. I don't know that I want to go  
20 through everything that was in there. It was a  
21 rather, as I said, comprehensive writing, but I  
22 didn't draw the same conclusions about his  
23 interactions with law enforcement that they did  
24 relative to his mental state. I think, you know,  
25 the conclusions that were drawn in the motion are

1 not the same conclusions that I drew.

2 Is it somebody that's limited somewhat  
3 intellectually and in their ability to express  
4 themselves? Yes. Do I think that those  
5 limitations given all the circumstances, given the  
6 length of the interview, given the fact that he has  
7 been through this process before and given the  
8 clarifications that they gave him about him being  
9 free to leave, I think on balance in looking at all  
10 the circumstances that I can say that he knowingly,  
11 and intelligently waived his Miranda rights.

12 Therefore, based on all of those  
13 circumstances, I'll find that the State has  
14 established by a preponderance of the evidence that  
15 he knowingly, intelligently waived his Miranda  
16 rights and I'll deny the defense's motion to  
17 suppress the statements.

18 Procedurally, we're still -- do we have a date  
19 for trial? We have a date for trial, but do we --

20 MR. KOSKINAS: We do. We need to talk about  
21 that because we've checked on some of the  
22 witnesses, and to bring to the Court's attention,  
23 we've discovered that the medical examiner is gone  
24 that week. So that's problematic for the State. I  
25 don't know if we can pick a week right around there

1           that works for everybody. And then potentially I  
2           think the best course of action would be to set  
3           maybe a status check next week and we could -- we  
4           could check with our witnesses to confirm.

5           THE COURT: Is that the only issue you have  
6           witness wise or you don't know that yet?

7           MR. KOSKINAS: I think so, yeah. I think  
8           that's it. But the medical examiner is out of town  
9           until late that Friday is my understanding.

10          MR. BRADLOW: Unavailable until Friday.

11          MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah, unavailable through  
12          Friday.

13          THE COURT: So our plan was to -- the date we  
14          had was to start on a Monday, right?

15          MR. KOSKINAS: Yes. The 18th, I believe. Let  
16          me look.

17          MS. SEIFER-SMITH: That's correct.

18          THE COURT: And so the plan was for this  
19          trial, for this case number, we're going to be  
20          finished on that Friday was the original thought as  
21          I recall, A.t least that was our hope or what our  
22          intent was to try to and do, right?

23          MR. KOSKINAS: I don't think it's gonna take  
24          that long, but yes.

25          THE COURT: Well, I mean, but we wanted to

1 finish by Friday.

2 MR. KOSKINAS: Absolutely.

3 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

4 THE COURT: But she's -- is it a she or a he?

5 MS. TAKTIKOS: He.

6 THE COURT: He is not available until what,  
7 late Friday afternoon?

8 MR. KOSKINAS: No.

9 MS. TAKTIKOS: It's the following week.

10 MR. KOSKINAS: The following week.

11 THE COURT: Oh, no time that week with the  
12 M.E.?

13 MR. KOSKINAS: No time that week. Unavailable  
14 that week. Out of town.

15 THE COURT: So, obviously, if this was not a  
16 first degree murder with the implications, I would  
17 ask the defense if they could consider doing it by  
18 Zoom, right? Of course, that would have  
19 Sixth Amendment implications.

20 Any possibility to not have the case continued  
21 that we could have that discussion, or you would  
22 likely not want to entertain that possibility?

23 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Not likely. We will  
24 definitely not entertain that possibility given the  
25 circumstances just in case 1099CF by itself, but

1           also the implications further with regards to  
2           1513CF being a death penalty case that the State  
3           has made abundantly clear they are seeking to use  
4           any convictions in 1099 to enhance.

5           THE COURT: Yeah, I figured and I assumed as  
6           much you're gonna -- regardless, depending on how  
7           it turns out, you're gonna get second guessed  
8           regarding any decisions that you guys make. Not  
9           presupposing any result, but if it's the worst  
10          result for your client, you're gonna get second  
11          guessed about every decision. And not having the  
12          M.E. to testify in person may be deemed by somebody  
13          as problematic. So I understand the position and I  
14          thought that's probably what the response was gonna  
15          be.

16          So when you say "around there," I mean, I know  
17          defense counsel are -- defense counsel is one of  
18          the few that tries these type of cases in our  
19          circuit, right? Your team is one of the few that  
20          try them, and there are a lot of those cases.

21          I want to give back to you there's an exhibit,  
22          too, that I had as far as the testimony there. Is  
23          that the only one that you show that I had? I  
24          believe it is, but just make sure there's not  
25          anything else. I thought I went through everything

1 and that was the exhibit I had to return.

2 When you say weeks around there, do you have a  
3 suggestion that you want to give me, State?

4 MR. KOSKINAS: Well, no, because I think it --  
5 whatever is available on the Court's calendar, we  
6 were going to check with the witnesses to confirm  
7 the availability of those witnesses in the next --  
8 next week sometime. So I can't really give you  
9 any -- offer any intelligent dates at this point  
10 that I know everybody's available because I didn't  
11 know the Court's schedule.

12 THE COURT: Well, I'm covering -- Bulone is  
13 having knee replacement starting next week. So I'm  
14 covering part of his calendar over the next month.  
15 A good part of his calendar. But I -- he may be  
16 back by the end of May. So I don't know that  
17 that's going to be a problem for us. Moving it up  
18 it might be tough to do and I don't know that  
19 you're gonna be ready if I move it up. So we're  
20 set on May 18th. The next day is Memorial Day on  
21 that Monday. I originally was going to be gone, so  
22 I didn't have much the rest of the week. I'm gonna  
23 be here, but I don't know that you want to start on  
24 a Tuesday the day after Memorial Day and try to get  
25 it done by Friday. And if you can then --

1 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We cannot.

2 THE COURT: You can't do that?

3 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We can't do that.

4 THE COURT: All right. Well, that solves that  
5 discussion. I mean, I could do June 1st or  
6 June 8th if you want to. I mean, you've got to  
7 have -- confirm all your witnesses are available,  
8 right?

9 MR. KOSKINAS: We do.

10 THE COURT: Do you have any potential  
11 witnesses that you might call, Defense?

12 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Just one or two officers.

13 THE COURT: So as long as everybody is  
14 available on their list --

15 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct.

16 THE COURT: -- then that would be okay with  
17 you, right?

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct. And I can get  
19 those names over to the State today if that wasn't  
20 previously filed. It might have been. Sorry, the  
21 case has been running for so long things sometimes  
22 fall out of my head.

23 THE COURT: So I could do the 1st or the 8th  
24 of June. I don't know --

25 MR. KOSKINAS: What says Defense?

1           THE COURT:  -- what's better for them or what  
2 possibilities exist.  I can't do the 15th.  I had  
3 one on the 22nd, but it looks like that's going  
4 away.  I can't do the 29th of June.  So those  
5 are -- I'm not gonna be here the week that leads  
6 into July 4th.  Let me see.  July is not great.  So  
7 June 1, June 8th, or June -- I don't know if I want  
8 to say June 22 because that may still be there.

9           MR. KOSKINAS:  Yeah, I can't do that one,  
10 Judge.

11          THE COURT:  Okay.

12          MR. KOSKINAS:  I'm out of town.

13          THE COURT:  So the 1st and the 8th would still  
14 be available if you guys have any chance of making  
15 that happen.  Presumably, your M.E. is not a  
16 problem on either of those days?

17          MS. TAKTIKOS:  I would hope not.

18          MR. BRADLOW:  He's back.

19          MR. KOSKINAS:  Yeah.  He's back, yeah.

20          THE COURT:  You're not saying you can.  You're  
21 just saying if we pick one of those days you can do  
22 your best to make it happen?

23          MR. KOSKINAS:  Yes.  And what I'd like to do  
24 is set a status next week.  If we can come up with  
25 a week for the trial, we can try and confirm with

1 the witnesses so we're not repeating this.

2 THE COURT: Preliminarily, either of those  
3 dates work for the defense?

4 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We can't do the week of the  
5 8th. The week of the 1st is very not -- it's  
6 really not ideal. I have depositions on a first  
7 degree homicide that have been set for several  
8 months.

9 THE COURT: So do you --

10 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: And potentially a  
11 conference.

12 THE COURT: I mean, I want to be mindful of --

13 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We are available the 22nd,  
14 but I think that Mr. Koskinas --

15 MR. KOSKINAS: I'm not.

16 THE COURT: You can't?

17 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I'm set with your Honor the  
18 week of July 13th on Mr. Lassiter, but we have that  
19 enormous wrench of Mr. Troy Lassiter not having  
20 representation right now.

21 THE COURT: Agreed.

22 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: So that's hampering my  
23 ability to be ready.

24 THE COURT: Yes, I recall that conversation.  
25 Mr. Dorsten is off now, right?

1 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct.

2 THE COURT: And so we're having to get  
3 somebody. I believe we talked about the second  
4 list, right?

5 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct. So we filed the  
6 paperwork. Unfortunately, it's not an  
7 instantaneous process. I know Mr. Troy Lassiter is  
8 attempting to seek other counsel. But while all  
9 that happens, I can't set the remaining  
10 depositions. And there are other things in the  
11 works that I think may prevent us from going to  
12 trial on July 13th on that case.

13 THE COURT: I would agree that the idea that  
14 somebody is gonna get that, be ready -- and we want  
15 to try those cases together, right?

16 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I do not.

17 THE COURT: I know.

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: However, the prosecutor has  
19 a different perspective.

20 THE COURT: Yes. I've got another thing on  
21 that Monday, the 13th, but that's not gonna take  
22 precedence over this. This would have to take  
23 precedence. I mean, I've got a trafficking case  
24 set on that in addition to the Lassiters on the  
25 13th, but I'm gonna prioritize this over that.

1 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Is that a possibility for  
2 the State, the week of July 13th?

3 MR. KOSKINAS: It is, yeah.

4 THE COURT: The what?

5 MR. KOSKINAS: It is. The 13th of July would  
6 work for the State. Now, we'd have to confirm with  
7 the witnesses, but I think all the attorneys are  
8 available on both sides.

9 THE COURT: I can make that happen. The only  
10 hesitation I have is that I have mental health  
11 court. Actually, I don't on the week of the 13th,  
12 do I? No, I don't. So you'd have me from Monday  
13 through Friday.

14 MR. KOSKINAS: There you go.

15 THE COURT: Okay. So we're tentatively  
16 discussing July 13th as the reset date for trial  
17 from 5/18. So we're going to indicate that based  
18 on our conversations, the trial date is going to be  
19 continued from May 18th; is that what we're  
20 agreeing to today and we're proposing --

21 MR. KOSKINAS: We have to request a  
22 continuance based on the unavailability of the  
23 medical examiner. Yes, Judge.

24 THE COURT: And you want to, for the record,  
25 object saying you would be ready on the 18th or

1           you're not prepared to say that at this point?

2           MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We would be ready on the  
3           18th. I would also like to note that the trial was  
4           set on February 12th of this year and we're just  
5           receiving notice regarding the unavailability. To  
6           be fair to Mr. Bradlow, he emailed me earlier this  
7           week, but, obviously, the Court was not aware of  
8           the lack of readiness of the State until today,  
9           which is April 10th.

10          THE COURT: Okay. All right. I think despite  
11          the defense's objection, I think I would grant the  
12          continuance. Especially if we can get it -- if we  
13          were talking sometime next year, I might have a  
14          different feeling about it. But the M.E. is the  
15          M.E. I understand you're not in a position to  
16          allow them to testify by Zoom? And if I was in  
17          your position I would feel exactly the same way. A  
18          different type of case I might say let's do it by  
19          Zoom, but I understand the defense's concern and  
20          recognize why that argument probably needs to be  
21          made. So why don't we check what day next week --  
22          let me see what I --

23          MR. KOSKINAS: I think later in the week would  
24          be better for us to have more time to confirm with  
25          the witnesses that we know we're gonna call. And I

1 need to get the names from the defense about --

2 THE COURT: The cops that they're gonna need?

3 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes. I will do that today.

4 THE COURT: Do you want to get together  
5 Thursday next week in the morning --

6 MR. KOSKINAS: That works.

7 THE COURT: -- for trial status check? All  
8 right. So the date that we're proposing --

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Could we do the 17th?

10 THE COURT: Friday?

11 MR. KOSKINAS: He's got mental health court.

12 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Do you have mental health  
13 court?

14 THE COURT: No, I don't. I do it every other  
15 week. I can do it on the 17th if you want.

16 MR. KOSKINAS: That's fine.

17 THE COURT: Is that what you prefer?

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I'm sorry?

19 THE COURT: The 17th?

20 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes, please.

21 THE COURT: All right. So Friday morning --  
22 next Friday, the 17th, 4/17, at 8:30. Madam Clerk,  
23 we're gonna do a trial status check on the number  
24 that was set on May 18th. The date we're proposing  
25 is July 13th. And both sides are going to check.

1           You're going to give them the names of the  
2 witnesses you're gonna want to call so they can  
3 absolutely confirm the law enforcement officers  
4 you're interested in.

5           And then you're going to check on the rest of  
6 your witnesses, right?

7           MR. KOSKINAS: We will.

8           MS. TAKTIKOS: Correct.

9           THE COURT: Do we want to pick another backup  
10 date or let's just hope that that date works?

11          MR. KOSKINAS: We can pick a backup date.  
12 That might be prudent.

13          MS. SEIFER-SMITH: That's fine with us.

14          THE COURT: Actually, my August is not great.

15          MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I mean, I'm also available  
16 the week of July 20th.

17          MR. KOSKINAS: Yeah, the following week. Are  
18 you guys okay the following week?

19          MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

20          THE COURT: Again, I have something, but it's  
21 a burg. I'm not gonna let that stand in the way.

22          MR. KOSKINAS: So the week of the 13th or the  
23 week of the 20th.

24          THE COURT: Yes. I would prefer to shoot for  
25 the 13th.

1 MR. KOSKINAS: Certainly.

2 THE COURT: But you guys tell me if you're  
3 available either the 13th or the 20th. We can do  
4 it those weeks.

5 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Just as an FYI, the week of  
6 the 20th of July apparently the jail is going to be  
7 in disarray because of their new software. So  
8 they're asking for some limitations on trials, but  
9 I think that, you know, a five-year-old or  
10 five-and-a-half-year-old at that point trial should  
11 probably take precedence.

12 THE COURT: I will call somebody if I have to  
13 to figure out what we're doing on the jail thing.

14 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I mean, there are no jail  
15 witnesses that I know of. So at least there's  
16 that. It's just Mr. Whitfield that we need to make  
17 sure we get over every day.

18 THE COURT: Whatever I gotta do or whoever I  
19 gotta call, I'll make that happen if it's the 20th.  
20 Just so you guys know, they had a bunch of trials  
21 set on May 18th anyway. I had talked to or  
22 somebody had talked to the -- they had another  
23 homicide. They had a couple other things. It was  
24 gonna be hard for the jury coordinator to get  
25 jurors for May 18th anyway. So maybe in the end --

1 I'd hate to have gotten everything ready, announce  
2 ready, and then they go we don't have enough jurors  
3 or we're gonna send you 40 to get started on a  
4 first degree murder. That would not have been a  
5 good plan.

6 So next Friday, the 17th, right, we're going  
7 to get together and talk about either the 13th or  
8 the 20th. If you can find out between now and then  
9 and let them know, that would be helpful, State.

10 MS. TAKTIKOS: Will do. What time on Friday?

11 THE COURT: What do you want, 8:30, 9:00?  
12 What do you guys got going on?

13 MS. TAKTIKOS: Doesn't matter to the State.

14 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We have another death  
15 penalty case down the hall. So maybe if we could  
16 just come here at 9:00?

17 THE COURT: All right. So let's do 9:00 a.m.  
18 next Friday for a trial status check, Madam Clerk.

19 Do you want him brought over?

20 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Yes.

21 THE COURT: So let's put a bring for  
22 Mr. Whitfield on that. You know what, make it a  
23 pretrial on the trial status check and put him as a  
24 bring if you can, Madam Clerk. Okay?

25 THE CLERK: Yes.

1 THE COURT: 4/17 at 9:00 a.m., and we'll  
2 either hopefully confirm the 13th or the 20th.  
3 Okay? Any other matters to address at this point?

4 MR. KOSKINAS: I don't believe so, Judge.

5 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess.  
6 Thank you.

7 (COURT ADJOURNED)

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**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