

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 T. WHITFIELD,

Defendant.

PROCEEDINGS: PRETRIAL HEARING

BEFORE: The Honorable Philip J. Federico
Circuit Court Judge

DATE: August 14, 2024

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

REPORTER: Karen E. Roman
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(Pages 1 to 11)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 THE COURT: Well, I've got several matters,
3 obviously. Let me find them on my calendar so I
4 can read the numbers into the record -- 21-01099
5 and what's the other one?

6 MR. KOSKINAS: 21-01513.

7 THE COURT: Okay. We were going to try the
8 01-01099 first, right?

9 MR. KOSKINAS: Yes, sir.

10 THE COURT: We set it in March. I'm going to
11 have to move it.

12 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: So we might not be able to
13 help you in calendaring because Ms. -- Ms. Manuele
14 is out of town today.

15 THE COURT: Well, I just need to tell you guys
16 so you understand, I got to move that date. I was
17 making plans for next year, and I didn't realize
18 when I made them that I already -- I mean, I don't
19 like to set trials that far in advance for just
20 that reason.

21 All right. Mr. Whitfield has joined us. He's
22 here on his matter. Well, he's got several
23 matters, obviously. Let me find it on my calendar
24 so I can read the numbers into the record:
25 21-01099, and what's the other one?

1 MR. KOSKINAS: 21-01513.

2 THE COURT: Okay. And we were going to try
3 the 01099 first, right?

4 MR. KOSKINAS: The predicate, yes, sir.

5 THE COURT: And we set it in March. I'm going
6 to have to move it. We're going to have to have
7 Ms. Manuele here, I guess, to coordinate all the
8 calendars.

9 But this get together is -- the other one is
10 the one that the State is seeking the death penalty
11 on?

12 MR. KOSKINAS: Correct.

13 THE COURT: No movement or any change as far
14 as any discussions about that?

15 MR. KOSKINAS: No.

16 THE COURT: All right. No thoughts on -- I
17 mean, no offers to be made in that regard or --

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: We have had some slowdowns
19 in our -- (inaudible) -- investigation that we
20 weren't anticipating. I don't know if your Honor
21 recalls we were hopeful that we would have a
22 presentation to the State by the middle of July.

23 That's obviously -- well, it's not obviously
24 to your Honor. But it's obvious to the State that,
25 that has not happened.

1 So our hopes is that we will get something to
2 them within the next, maybe, eight weeks. And
3 then, obviously, we can have further discussions
4 about that.

5 THE COURT: So besides me telling you about
6 the trial-date issue, what do we need to discuss or
7 talk about today?

8 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Well, I suppose given the
9 trial-date issue, I don't know if your Honor would
10 like to see us sooner than what we would otherwise
11 propose because we would propose a pretrial in, you
12 know, like eight to 12 weeks. But since we're
13 having to reschedule the trial --

14 THE COURT: Well, you guys are so booked. My
15 schedule is not that bad. You guys are
16 the -- "cap" team, right?

17 Is there anybody other than you guys. You and
18 Jess --

19 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: Yes.

20 THE COURT: You three are it, right?

21 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No, but --

22 THE COURT: Who else is here?

23 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: -- Ms. Manuele and I are
24 the only first-chair qualified in the office.

25 THE COURT: Right. So it's not -- the -- my

1 point is that anything that gets scheduled along
2 those lines is going to have to involve you guys --

3 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: Correct.

4 THE COURT: -- which means it's going to take
5 a long time. So the sooner we can do it, the less
6 delay it's going to be getting that first case
7 actually to trial.

8 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: I would not disagree.

9 I mean, I think we should probably come back
10 sooner rather than later just for scheduling --

11 MR. KOSKINAS: How about next week?

12 (SIMULTANEOUS TALKING)

13 THE COURT: I thought you were gone --

14 MR. KOSKINAS: Whatever; week, two weeks --

15 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: We're --

16 MR. KOSKINAS: I am. But that's okay. I've
17 got my calendar. Ms. Stanzick (phonetic) here.

18 If we're just going to reset a trial date,
19 Judge. I'm not that far out anyways. I assume
20 that you're going to set it after March, so I'm
21 going to be fine.

22 THE COURT: Well, I have time before then, but
23 they didn't have time before then. So, I mean --

24 MR. KOSKINAS: Ms. Barnes' mother is very
25 appreciative to setting it before that.

1 THE COURT: Yeah, I mean --

2 MR. KOSKINAS: She's in court here today.

3 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: So I think we can be
4 available on the 20th or the 21st for scheduling
5 purposes.

6 THE COURT: Either Tuesday or Wednesday?

7 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Correct.

8 THE COURT: Whatever you want, whatever is
9 good for you guys. Let me just reset the pretrial
10 to whichever you want; you want Tuesday or
11 Wednesday. I hate to drag everybody back --

12 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: Prefer Tuesday,
13 your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Huh?

15 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: Prefer Tuesday.
16 Wednesdays I'm in court in the morning.

17 THE COURT: You okay?

18 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: Unfortunately, me and
19 Ms. Manuele have depositions at nine, so if we
20 can --

21 THE COURT: I can take you first.

22 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: Okay.

23 THE COURT: I mean, what's more important than
24 this guy -- (inaudible) -- other than that?

25 MS. SEIFRED-SMITH: Well, depositions in

1 another case, but --

2 THE COURT: I understand. I'll take you first
3 at 8:30 on Wednesday. I mean, it's just picking
4 another trial date. But I think -- then it's
5 figuring out when the next pretrial is to see how
6 discovery is going, right?

7 All right. So let's do it Tuesday --

8 MR. KOSKINAS: Judge, as far as the trial
9 date -- and maybe they can take that back to
10 Ms. Manuele and speed things up on Tuesday when
11 everybody shows up.

12 THE COURT: Well, let me see what I can tell
13 you. I don't have anything else in March of '25.
14 That week I'm going to be gone. I wouldn't want to
15 do it the week of the 17th because I'm leaving on
16 like that Thursday or Friday. I'm going to be gone
17 that next week of our trial date set.

18 But the 3rd and the 10th I would be available
19 in March, available throughout April, other than we
20 got Easter as a holiday on the 18th.

21 I mean, you thinking four days, or we thinking
22 longer for this, a full week?

23 MR. KOSKINAS: No. I think four days. I
24 think four days is probably fine.

25 THE COURT: So -- I mean, I pretty much have

1 anything in April, the first two weeks in March.

2 Let's see. February I got --

3 MR. KOSKINAS: Well, if you're going to
4 February, I got some trouble. But if you stay in
5 March, I'm fine.

6 THE COURT: I got March 3rd or March 10th. I
7 got -- then I would have the 7th, 14th, 21st or
8 28th in April. So any of those would work.

9 The only qualification being the week of the
10 14th. You got Easter on the 18th.

11 But if you think four days -- because this is
12 the non -- non-DP case, right?

13 Okay. So any of those dates would work. So
14 maybe prescreen him. We'll get together on
15 Tuesday. Come up with another date, and then talk
16 about when our interim next pretrial needs to be
17 for discovery purposes.

18 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Okay.

19 MR. KOSKINAS: Thank you, Judge.

20 THE COURT: All right. He's welcome to come
21 over. I don't -- you know, I don't -- I'm not sure
22 I want to drag him over twice in two weeks to talk
23 about a trial date. But I -- I don't want to
24 discourage him from coming over. He's welcome to
25 be here at any and all hearings.

1 But all we're going to do is reschedule a date
2 to another date, and then figure out when the next
3 pretrial is. But if he wants to get out of the
4 monotony of sitting over there and come over,
5 that's fine.

6 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Mr. Whitfield has indicated
7 he would like us to waive his presence for next
8 Tuesday.

9 THE COURT: Fine. I don't have a problem with
10 that.

11 All right. Sounds good. See you next
12 Tuesday.

13 **(PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED)**

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

I, Karen E. Roman, 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 3rd day of March, 2025.

/s Karen E. Roman
Karen E. Roman
Registered Professional Reporter