

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA  
CASE NO. 2021-01513 CFANO

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STATE OF FLORIDA

vs.

CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD

Defendant.  
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TAKEN BY: Defendant

DATE: June 12, 2025

TIME: 1:54 p.m. - 2:04 p.m.

PLACE: Criminal Justice Center  
14250 - 49th Street North  
Clearwater, Florida

REPORTED BY: Sharon K. Allbritton  
Shorthand Reporter  
Notary Public  
State of Florida at Large

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DEPOSITION OF  
OFFICER DENNIS PORTER, II  
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ALLBRITTON REPORTING

## APPEARANCE:

THOMAS KOSKINAS, ESQ.  
THEODORA DANZIG, ESQ.  
Assistant State Attorney  
14250 - 49th Street North  
Clearwater, FL 33762

JULIA SEIFER-SMITH, ESQ.  
MARGARET RUSSELL, ESQ.  
LAMARK MCGREEN, ESQ.  
Assistant Public Defender  
14250- 49th Street North  
Clearwater, FL 33762

P R O C E E D I N G S

WHEREUPON,

OFFICER DENNIS PORTER, II

the deponent herein, being first duly sworn, was  
examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH:

Q Can you please state your name for the  
record?

A Dennis Porter.

Q We're here in the matters of Cornelius  
Whitfield. We have a couple of case numbers.  
21-01099 CF and 21-01513 CF. But your involvement I  
think was just one police case number of 2021-6023.

Does that sound about right?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q My name is Julie Seifer-Smith, together with  
Ms. Russell and Mr. McGreen, and we're assistant  
public defenders who represent Mr. Whitfield. Also  
present for the state, Tom Koskinas and Theo Danzig.

So you've been sworn in by our court  
reporter. You just had an opportunity to review your  
report. And I think you said you had already read  
it --

1 A Correct.

2 Q -- some time ago?

3 A Uh-huh.

4 Q Was there anything else that you reviewed in  
5 connection with this case before being sworn in?

6 A No.

7 Q Anything that you need to review, anything  
8 else?

9 A No.

10 Q Okay. Can you tell me just a little bit  
11 about like your professional development and when you  
12 started with the department, what your job was back in  
13 2021, what your job is now?

14 A Sure. So I started with the police  
15 department in '97. Went through the police academy.  
16 I have experience in patrol, vice and narcotics,  
17 S.W.A.T. team. I've been on the S.W.A.T. team for, on  
18 and off since '98. I have been in canine for 12  
19 years. And I've been in intel now since I believe  
20 '26--- 16. Sorry.

21 Q So are you still with the department?

22 A I am.

23 Q In intel?

24 A Intel Division.

25 Q Do you also have a dog?

1 A No longer.

2 Q Okay. I'm sorry about that. We love talking  
3 to canine officers.

4 A Yeah.

5 Q Well maybe you have one at home, which is  
6 fine.

7 A Yeah.

8 Q So in 2021 what was -- I understand that  
9 S.W.A.T. is kind of like a part time.

10 A It is.

11 Q What was your primary role?

12 A Intel Division, in particular.

13 Q How did you get involved in this case?

14 A We were called as a S.W.A.T. call out.

15 Q Did you have any other involvement, like  
16 prior involvement like in your role as intel in the  
17 prior investigations into Mr. Whitfield?

18 A No.

19 Q Were you aware of like the prior homicide  
20 investigation and surveillance being done by SIU with  
21 respect to Mr. Whitfield?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And how were you aware of that?

24 A Just from in the office, inner office about,  
25 communications about just what was going on.

1 Situational awareness.

2 Q Okay. But you hadn't done any kind of  
3 research like in your capacity in intel for those  
4 investigations?

5 A I don't believe so.

6 Q Okay. When there was this initial kind of  
7 like S.W.A.T. call out, do you recall what the  
8 information was given and what was requested?

9 A That there was a shooting, right. There was  
10 an individual still inside the residence. Status of  
11 the victims was unknown.

12 Q And was the location 2968 Emerson Avenue  
13 familiar to you for any reason?

14 A No, not offhand.

15 Q What did you do once you a received the call  
16 out?

17 A We responded to the area.

18 Q And did you have a particular responsibility  
19 once you got there?

20 A Yeah. I was a team leader on the S.W.A.T.  
21 team at that point, but I reported to the command post  
22 and was assigned as one team of two for a rescue team.  
23 And I was assigned to the south east portion of the  
24 residence.

25 Q Who went to the south east portion of the

1 residence with you?

2 A It was myself. And I believe it was operator  
3 Cody Sendom (phonetic). And I believe there was a few  
4 others.

5 Q And how did you get to that location, like  
6 the south east --

7 A On foot.

8 Q Okay. What were your observations when you  
9 got to the home?

10 A So we were in the back alley. There was a  
11 vehicle out there in the back and we were -- we stood  
12 behind that, behind a truck keeping eyes on the south  
13 and east portion of what we could see.

14 Q Did you see any kind of movement at the  
15 house?

16 A No, not from my location.

17 Q Were you able to see inside of the home from  
18 your location?

19 A No, ma'am.

20 Q Did you hear anything from the home?

21 A Just what was going on out front. I mean,  
22 there would have been other operators that responded  
23 to the front and they had the BearCat and things like  
24 that, the Rook.

25 Q So when you're talking about hearing things

1 from the front, is it like you're hearing like noises  
2 directly from the front as well as radio about what's  
3 going on?

4 A On the speaker, on the loud speaker, things  
5 like that as they're trying to communicate with inside  
6 the residence.

7 Q What did you hear happening?

8 A Just St. Petersburg Police Department, you  
9 know, come out. Normal just notifications of who we  
10 are, we're there, we're outside, you know, trying to  
11 engage anyone who may be inside the residence.

12 Q About how long did that occur, that kind of  
13 communication?

14 A I don't know for sure.

15 Q Did it seem like minutes, hours?

16 A It normally takes, you know, it takes some  
17 time normally. They give it out several times. They  
18 make the announcements over and over.

19 Q Did it seem like it was like more than 10  
20 minutes?

21 A I don't recall, ma'am.

22 Q Okay. And did you hear anything else happen,  
23 either over the radio or like just listening to what  
24 was occurring around you?

25 A Just loud noises. Because I know there's



1       some activity in the front. There was loud noises.  
2       And then, you know, that was-- then you could hear  
3       challenging. And I think at one point Mr. Whitfield  
4       came out. And then once out and in custody we were  
5       directed-- there was two rescue and arrest teams were  
6       directed to make entry into the residence.

7           Q       When say challenging, what does that mean?

8           A       Just communicating. Please come out. Come  
9       out the front. You know, show me your hands. Things  
10      like that, just typical verbiage.

11          Q       Did it sound like he did that? I know you're  
12      not able to see from your advantage point.

13          A       I just heard that. I didn't know what was  
14      going on. I couldn't see.

15          Q       So at a certain point were you told to do  
16      anything, like to move from where you were?

17          A       Yeah, once Mr. Whitfield was in custody.

18          Q       So you heard what, over the radio that he was  
19      taken into custody?

20          A       Yeah. They give communications, directions  
21      over the radio.

22          Q       Were you told what to do at that point?

23          A       Make entry into the house.

24          Q       And so --

25          A       And secure the residence.

1 Q -- what did you do, where did you go?

2 A There was the other people team that was to  
3 the west. We were south east. They were south west.  
4 We had medics. They had medics with them as well. We  
5 made entry into the back. I believe it was the south  
6 west corner there was a door. There's a bedroom,  
7 right. That's where I went. We went through that  
8 way. Went through that into a kitchen, and then from  
9 the kitchen into a living room.

10 Q What were your initial observations in the  
11 home?

12 A No subjects in the bedroom. Nothing in the  
13 kitchen. And then when we got into-- when I got into  
14 the doorway between the kitchen and the living room, I  
15 could see multiple individuals. I could see the  
16 S.W.A.T. medics making contact with them as well.

17 Q So it sounds like you all weren't the first  
18 people in the home, like your team?

19 A They were in front of us, yeah.

20 Q Okay. And did you have an opportunity to  
21 observe like who the medics had contact with?

22 A There were two elderly females and there was  
23 a male.

24 Q Did you approach them at all?

25 A No. I mean, I was there but no, I did not

1 approach them.

2 Q What did you do then?

3 A So I watched-- they made contact with a  
4 younger child on the west side of the residence.

5 Q This was some other team or--

6 A Other members. The ones that entered in  
7 front of us, they removed that child from the  
8 residence. Got the child out of the residence. And  
9 then we called for, you know, a deep clear, meaning  
10 other areas of the residence. And there was some  
11 garage area in the back and things like that. So we  
12 do a deep clear of the residence, meaning, now we're  
13 looking for places that people can hide, extra places,  
14 you know, cupboards, closets, small confined spaces,  
15 under beds, attic. We want to make sure the residence  
16 is clear of any other individuals.

17 Q Did you find any more people?

18 A No, ma'am.

19 Q And I know the purpose of this kind of search  
20 is not for anything of evidentiary value.

21 A No.

22 Q But did you see anything that you thought  
23 might be important for detectives or crime scene  
24 later?

25 A No.

1           Q     Do you recall now seeing any weapons,  
2     anything like that?

3           A     No, ma'am.

4           Q     After that deep clear what did you do next?

5           A     Exit the residence. Once it's secured it's  
6     secure at that point, right, and then the S.W.A.T.  
7     team members will, you know, pass that off to the  
8     detectives or the officers there that are going to  
9     secure that, right, secure the crime scene.

10          Q     Did you do any further work at that scene?

11          A     No.

12          Q     Did you participate in a debrief?

13          A     I did.

14          Q     Do you recall the content of debrief?

15          A     That's just basic operational, how we  
16     responded, what our actions were, you know what I  
17     mean, when we respond to things like that. It's just  
18     an overview. Typically that's how it's conducted.

19          Q     Okay.

20          A     But nothing specific. No, ma'am.

21          Q     Did you have any contact with the child?

22          A     No.

23          Q     And did you ever have any contact with Mr.  
24     Whitfield?

25          A     No.

1 Q Did you even see him at all that day?

2 A I don't believe so.

3 Q And did you participate in any kind of  
4 debriefs, not necessarily S.W.A.T. related, but intel  
5 related, major crimes related with respect to the  
6 investigations?

7 A No, nothing case related.

8 Q I don't think I have any further questions.

9 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Anybody else, Ms. Russell.

10 Okay.

11 MR. KOSKINAS: That's it. Thank you, sir.

12 (DEPOSITION CONCLUDED AT 2:04 P.M.)

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## 1 CERTIFICATE OF OATH

2  
3 STATE OF FLORIDA )

4 COUNTY OF PINELLAS )

5 I, the undersigned authority, certify that  
6 OFFICER DENNIS PORTER, II, personally appeared before  
7 me and was duly sworn.8 WITNESS my hand and official seal this 21  
9 day of JUNE, 2025.10  
11 *Sharon Allbritton*

12 Sharon K. Allbritton

13 Notary Public  
14 State of Florida  
15 Commission# HH307873  
16 Expires: January 1, 2027  
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1 STATE OF FLORIDA )

2 COUNTY OF PINELLAS )

3 I, SHARON K. ALLBRITTON certify that I was  
4 authorized to and did stenographically report the  
5 deposition of OFFICER DENNIS PORTER, II; and that the  
6 transcript is a true record of the testimony given by  
7 the deponent.

8 I further certify that I am not a relative,  
9 employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties,  
10 nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'  
11 attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am  
12 I financially interested in the action.

13 Dated this 21 day of JUNE, 2025.

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15  
16 *Sharon Allbritton*

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SHARON K. ALLBRITTON  
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