

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

STATE OF FLORIDA

vs.

CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD

Defendant.

TAKEN BY: Defendant
DATE: June 12, 2025
TIME: 11:14 a.m. - 11:25 a.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

DEPOSITION OF
OFFICER MATTHEW P KIRCHGRABER

PAGES 1-14

APPEARANCE:

THOMAS KOSKINAS, ESQ.

Assistant State Attorney
14250 - 49th Street North
Clearwater, FL 33762

JULIA SEIFER-SMITH, ESQ.
MARGARET RUSSELL, ESQ.
LARMARK 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 MATTHEW KIRCHGRABER

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 Officer Matthew Kirchgraber. M-a-t-t-h-e-w.
K-i-r-c-h-g-r-a-b-e-r.

Q We're here in the matter of Cornelius
Whitfield. My name is Julia Seifer-Smith. I'm an
assistant public defender, together with Margaret
Russell and Lamark McGreen we represent Mr. Whitfield
in this matter. Also present is Tom Koskinas from the
State Attorney's Office.

I have a short report, about half a page
long, that you wrote in connection with this case,
looks like probably on the same day.

Did you have an opportunity to review that
before you were sworn in?

A I did.

Q Did it jog your memory as to your

1 involvement?

2 A It did.

3 Q Can you tell me what your involvement was in
4 this case?

5 A I was assigned to the S.W.A.T. team. And
6 there was a S.W.A.T. call out to a residence off of I
7 believe Emerson Avenue South.

8 Q Can you tell me what you did like once you
9 got that S.W.A.T. call up?

10 A Yeah. We responded to the location. We met,
11 quickly briefed, and then I was assigned the south
12 west corner of the residence.

13 Q And did you make any kind of observations of
14 the residence from that point, like were you able to
15 see it?

16 A Yeah, yeah. I was very close.

17 Q Could you hear anything coming out of that
18 home, like any noises, any words?

19 A No, not that I recall.

20 Q Were you involved in Mr. Whitfield's
21 detention?

22 A No.

23 Q Were you able to see it occur? I know you
24 were on the opposite side of the home.

25 A No. I was on the opposite side of the house.

1 Q Did you hear anything about his detention?

2 A Just that he was taken into custody. And
3 then we were instructed to clear the residence from
4 the south west door.

5 Q So did you go in?

6 A I did.

7 Q Tell me about what you observed when you went
8 inside the home?

9 A It was -- I believe we entered through the
10 kitchen on the south side of the residence, made our
11 way north through a hallway, and then I observed three
12 obviously deceased people in the living room. I
13 believe it was two females and a male or two males and
14 a female. I don't recall.

15 Q Did you approach them at all?

16 A Yeah. I had to walk over them.

17 Q Did you touch them?

18 A No. They were obviously deceased.

19 Q So no need to check their pulse or anything
20 like that?

21 A In the S.W.A.T. team our first priority would
22 have been scene security to get the medics in there.
23 So the quicker I can search the house and clear it of
24 anything dangerous, I can have professional medics
25 come in and treat them. So it's much smarter for me

1 to do my job to get them in to do their job.

2 Q Got it. And where did you go from the living
3 room?

4 A From the living room I went west into a
5 bedroom, which I cleared, was empty, and I made my way
6 into the second bedroom where I saw another S.W.A.T.
7 officer holding a two year old child.

8 Q Do you recall who that person was, the
9 colleague of yours I mean?

10 A I can see his face. Oh, my God. Josh. Josh
11 something.

12 Q Jordan?

13 A Yes. Joshua Jordan.

14 Q And you said he was already holding this
15 child?

16 A I believe so.

17 Q Were you able to observe the child like if
18 there were any injuries or anything like that?

19 A No obvious gunshot wounds.

20 Q Did you hear the child say anything or make
21 any noise?

22 A I don't recall.

23 Q And do you know what happened with that kid?

24 A We escorted him -- I did not, but members of
25 the team escorted him out of the residence. And then

1 we conducted our deep clear, so pulling up beds,
2 looking in cabinets, making sure it is safe, safe and
3 then called the medics in.

4 Q And in terms of your searches of the home,
5 that sounds like it's for security purposes like to
6 find if there are any other people in the home, either
7 subjects or potential victims, not looking for
8 evidence?

9 A Correct. I was looking for injured persons
10 and suspects.

11 Q So you're not looking for casings, you're not
12 looking for weapons, nothing like that?

13 A No.

14 Q Okay. Although, I imagine that if you saw a
15 weapon that that would be like kind of a point of
16 interest. Do you recall seeing anything like that?

17 A I don't recall seeing a weapon.

18 Q Any particular impressions of the home that
19 you remember now?

20 A Disheveled, dirty.

21 Q It sounds like you never saw Mr. Whitfield
22 because he was detained on the other side of the
23 house?

24 A Correct.

25 Q And you didn't see him on the scene after you

1 left the residence?

2 A No.

3 Q Any contact with him at the station?

4 A No.

5 Q Was the name familiar to you for any other
6 reason, like any other call outs prior to this?

7 A I was assigned to the Special Investigations
8 Unit. For approximately two weeks they were trying to
9 take him into custody for another murder. I don't
10 recall the exact details, but I was assigned to them
11 as part of the takedown team in case they could
12 positively ID him and they saw him leaving the
13 residence.

14 Q So like in your capacity as a canine you were
15 support for SIU?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q You were involved in any of the surveillance
18 itself or just --

19 A No, ma'am. Fifth Avenue South and 31st
20 Street or 28th Street there's a firehouse. We would
21 hide inside the firehouse for two weeks waiting.

22 Q Do you remember anything about like that
23 portion of the investigation, the surveillance? Like
24 do you remember what information was given from
25 homicide detectives, what information was researched

1 by the SIU folks?

2 A I got the bare minimum. I believe he -- a
3 firearm was involved and he had either a warrant or PC
4 issued for homicide or attempted homicide. That was
5 really -- I don't get too much of the investigative
6 stuff, just the meat and potatoes.

7 Q And it sounds like that address then was
8 familiar to you, 2968 Emerson?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Any other addresses that you remember being
11 associated with that part of the investigation, the
12 surveillance?

13 A The surveillance. I'm sure there was but I
14 don't recall.

15 Q Okay. And at no point were you involved in
16 like a takedown or like a conversation with anybody
17 like during that period of time of the investigation?

18 A No, ma'am.

19 Q Were you ever made aware of any conversations
20 that were had by supervisors in the police department
21 with Mr. Whitfield's mother during the time period
22 between February 2nd and February 16th?

23 A No.

24 Q Did you ever have any kind of contact with
25 his mother?

1 A No.

2 Q Any contact with anybody else in his family?

3 A No.

4 Q Any further involvement in this case that we
5 haven't discussed?

6 A No, ma'am.

7 Q Were you a part of a debrief for S.W.A.T.
8 after this?

9 A Yes, ma'am.

10 Q Do you recall anything about the debrief?

11 A No, ma'am.

12 Q And was there any kind of debrief regarding
13 like the SIU investigation that you remember?

14 A Not that I remember.

15 Q Were Danno or Axel involved in this case at
16 all?

17 A It would have been Danno, and no, he just
18 kept me company.

19 Q Well that was nice of him.

20 A It was.

21 Q Excellent partner.

22 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Any questions from anybody
23 else?

24 MR. KOSKINAS: No. Not from me.

25 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Thanks so much. We'll

1 reserve your right to read.

2 (DEPOSITION CONCLUDED AT 11:25 A.M.)

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CERTIFICATE OF OATH

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

I, the undersigned authority, certify that
OFFICER MATTHEW KIRCHGRABER, personally appeared
before me and was duly sworn.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 16
day of JUNE, 2025.

Sharon Allbritton

Sharon K. Allbritton

Notary Public
State of Florida
Commission# HH307873
Expires: January 1, 2027

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 MATTHEW KIRCHGRABER; and that
6 the transcript is a true record of the testimony given
7 by 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 16 day of JUNE, 2025.

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15
16 *Sharon Allbritton*

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SHARON K. ALLBRITTON
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